

Speak JESUS



Proclaiming the gospel with works and words



Connecting compassion ministries and faith sharing is mission critical for the UK church at this time. We know one of the most common pathways to faith is people encountering Christians at a point of need and hearing the good news, but we also know many churches are struggling to join the dots. Jubilee+ is a passionate advocate for those most affected by poverty, deeply committed to the gospel and a thought leader in this area. *Speak Jesus* is a must read for every church leader who wants to be as fruitful as possible in evangelism and make the most of the opportunities we face today.

PHIL KNOX
Head of Gospel Impact
Evangelical Alliance



I've been so excited to see Jubilee+ produce this *Speak Jesus* resource. In this season, mercy ministries have become an essential part of the Church's witness, but social action and evangelism should never be separated. This resource will be a catalyst for confident gospel proclamation, inspiring creative and compassionate witness that avoids mission drift and keeps the good news of Jesus at the very heart of our social action.

SAM WARD
UK CEO
The Message Trust



When Jesus said: 'Let your light shine' he meant both words (Mark 4) and deeds (Matthew 5). If the Church forgets to do both we hide our lamp under a bushel. That's why I'm so thankful for this Jubilee+ *Speak Jesus* resource. It will help us to shine brightly, combining the witness of life and lip — just as Jesus intended!

GLEN SCRIVENER
CEO
Speak Life



David Nasmith, the founder of London City Mission in 1835, was deeply moved by the poverty, pain and brokenness he saw around him, and did not let it pass him by. Yet he knew that eternal hope and fulfilment could only be found in repentance and faith in Jesus. The local church is God's plan for sharing that eternal hope with those suffering poverty, pain and brokenness in our own society. We are called to show God's love — but we are also called to talk about it too. This Jubilee+ resource is so important for anyone wondering how to do both.

CARL KNIGHTLY
Director of Church Engagement
London City Mission



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Jubilee+ is grateful to everyone who has partnered with us and supported us in producing this resource, including the charities and churches that contributed content and shared ideas. We'd like to say a special "thank you" to Steve Hurd and the team at Euangelion for inviting us to launch *Speak Jesus* at their conference, and to the Douglas Trust for enabling us to distribute it wider than we could have on our own.

Speak Jesus is supported by...



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Why Speak Jesus?

BY NATALIE WILLIAMS, CEO, JUBILEE+



Not long after I became a Christian at the age of 15, I spotted someone selling the *Big Issue* in my local town centre. Instinctively, I knew that following Jesus meant caring about people facing poverty, so I went over to buy a copy. I handed some money to the vendor and she passed the magazine to me.

But then I lingered awkwardly because I suddenly thought: “But how will she know I bought it because of Jesus?”

Nervously, I blurted out: “I’m buying this because I’m a Christian.”

She looked confused. I didn’t know what else to do, so I turned around and quickly walked away.

Looking back, I love that my heart was eager to please Jesus and tell people about Him. But I do laugh about that memory: I was so zealous about the good news but so immature in my faith.

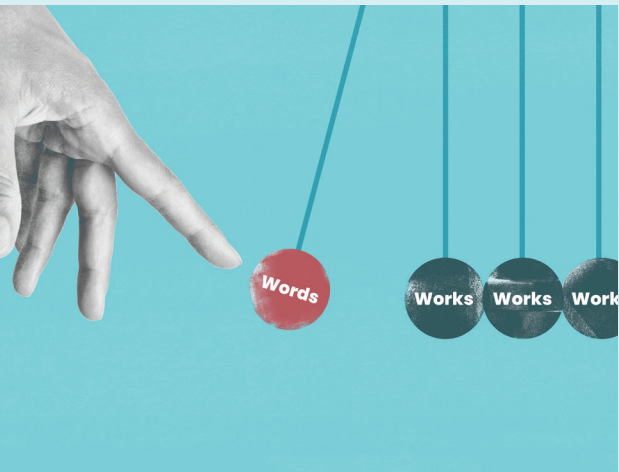
I wonder how many of us, mature or not, are confident in proclaiming the gospel with actions and words. Do we know how to show *and* tell people that there is a God who created them, loves them, and sent His Son Jesus to die for them?

Historically, it seems there are seasons where the Church focuses on one or the other: for a decade or two we are very energised about meeting practical needs, but then the pendulum swings and we drop that so we can get back to the ‘core business’ of declaring the good news of the gospel with words. Sometime later, we “remember the poor” (Galatians 2:10), but then the pendulum starts to swing back again as we find ourselves speaking about Jesus less and less in our mercy ministries.

At Jubilee+ we believe words *and* works are vital.

Jesus began His public ministry by finding the place in Isaiah where it reads: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18). Through the gospels we see that this had both spiritual and physical implications. Jesus forgave the sinner and fed the hungry. He healed the sick and embraced the marginalised.

What’s more, He identified with those without food, shelter, and clothing, telling His disciples that when we meet their needs, we are actually meeting *His* needs. So often when I’m helping someone in poverty, I feel like I’m representing Jesus to them. But what Jesus says in Matthew 25:40 is that when I help someone, *they* represent Him.



In the gospels, people often came to Jesus because they were facing a crisis. That’s still true today. In 2025 the Evangelical Alliance commissioned some research into what had drawn adults in the UK to put their faith in Jesus in the last five years. As part of the *Finding Jesus* interviews, almost 300 people were asked: *What prompted you to begin exploring the Christian faith?*

The top answer was: *I needed help with life* (37%). The EA’s Phil Knox writes: “Our participants cited coming to toddler groups, football projects, debt relief initiatives and other ministries that meet people’s human need for community and connection.”¹

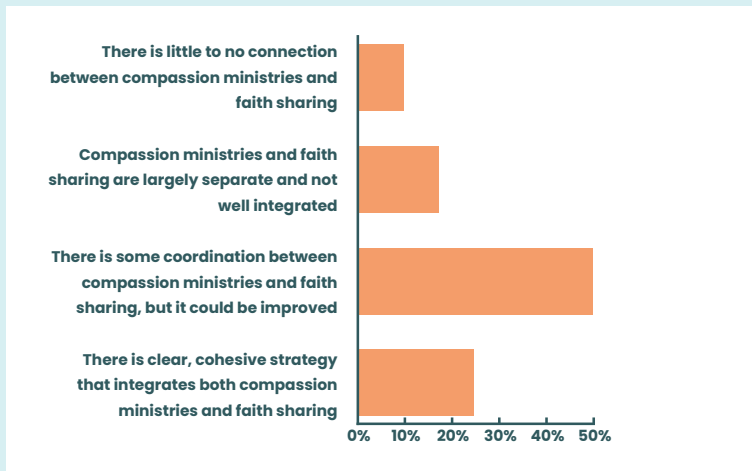


Among the stories the EA heard were many of people who turned to a local church project for help when they were trapped in poverty, debt or addiction, and encountered the mercy of Jesus through the kindness of His followers.

In fact, the vast majority of churches Jubilee+ connects with see more non-Christians each week in their social action projects than through anything else they do. In my church, more than 100 people a week visit our foodbank – that’s more people in seven days than participate in our Alpha courses over a whole year!

But an EA survey of member churches found that only 25% have “a clear, cohesive strategy that

integrates both compassion ministries and faith-sharing”, half say the connection between the two could be improved and the remaining 25% admit there is a significant disconnection.²



It’s possible that the harvest is plentiful, but the evangelists are looking in the wrong direction! Or maybe they haven’t been invited into the field...

Alongside the statistical research, Jubilee+ has heard far too much anecdotal evidence that the disconnect is growing. Mercy ministries that once prioritised prayer – as a team before sessions started and offering it to people who came for support – have reduced or removed it. Whether due to external pressures (such as restrictions placed on us by funding sources) or internal concerns (for example not wanting to exploit people when they are vulnerable), some of us have gradually stopped talking about Jesus in our social action initiatives.

¹ Knox, P. (2025), ‘Joining the dots between foodbanks and faith sharing’, eauk.org.

² Evangelical Alliance (2025), ‘Changing Church 2025’, p19.



I have experienced seasons when my confidence in the gospel has been shaken. When I am living with disappointment that Jesus hasn't changed my circumstances or frustration that He hasn't brought breakthrough for someone I love, it can knock my faith and weaken my resolve to tell people about the good news that can be found in Him.

For some of us, it's not that we've lost confidence in the gospel but that we have become jaded with the Church. Maybe you no longer share the gospel with people who come to your compassion projects because people in your church wouldn't step up to volunteer so now most of your volunteers don't believe in Jesus anyway.

Whatever the reason – and there are several other common ones I haven't mentioned – we are in danger of a growing separation between our social action and our evangelism.

Why does this matter?

Well, when we fall into the trap of only talking about Jesus but not caring for people's physical needs, the Bible asks, "What good is that?" (James 2:16). God rebukes His people when they honour Him with their mouths but fail to do anything about the urgent needs around them (see Isaiah 58, Matthew 25:31–46 and James 1:27–2:17). The apostle Paul urges followers of Jesus to "learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives" (Titus 3:14, NIV).

But when we only care for people's physical needs, we are drastically short-changing them. It is like

giving someone a slice of bread but not letting them know there's a whole banquet available to them. Jesus is a redeeming, restoring, renewing Saviour who calls His people to "satisfy the needs of the oppressed" (Isaiah 58:10, NIV) while also telling them that satisfaction for their souls is available too.

When people encountered Jesus, He often met their immediate needs first. But He also offered to meet their deepest need too. He gave people hope for their present crisis *and* hope for their eternal crisis. And so must we.



If people don't experience genuine love from us, our words can ring hollow. But I don't think Jesus asks us to choose between loving people and telling them about Him. Imagine you discovered the cure for a terminal illness. You could care for people, sit with them, feed them and comfort them, but if you never told them there was a cure, would that really be the most loving thing? Our actions open hearts, but our words explain why we have hope.

LEANNE GILLIES, WORCESTER

Community Café Coordinator and Formed training participant

The good news

A framework for sharing your faith

BY JAZ POTTER, ASSOCIATE PASTOR, GATEWAY CHURCH ASHFORD

In a nutshell, what is the good news that we have to share with people we meet?

We have the exciting opportunity to tell people that God made them and knows them far better than they know themselves, and that His verdict on them isn't indifference – it's love. But the story doesn't stop at love; it also names something true about all of us: something is broken. Not just 'out there' in the world, but in us too – what the Bible calls sin. It's the reason relationships fracture, guilt lingers, and even our best efforts can't put us right with God on our own.

That's why Jesus came. Not to tidy us up from a distance, but to enter our mess Himself, fully God and fully human, and, on the cross, to carry the weight of everything wrong in us and in the world. He died for us, but He didn't stay dead. His resurrection is God's public declaration that sin and death don't get the final word, not over Jesus, and not over us either.

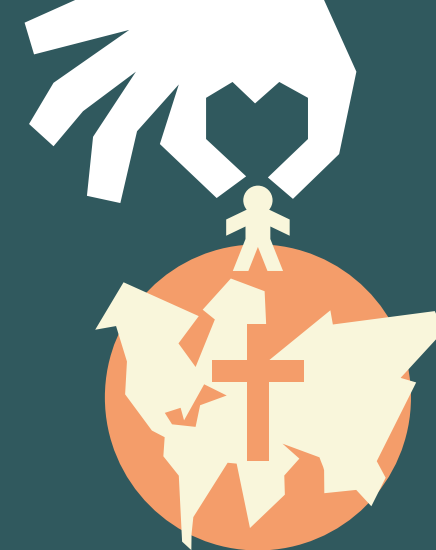
Here's where it gets personal: what Jesus accomplished isn't automatically ours until we respond. Turning around (what the Bible calls repentance), trusting Him with our lives (what the Bible calls faith), and following Him (what the Bible calls Lordship or discipleship), is how we step into what He's already done. Not by earning it, not by being 'good enough', but by receiving it as the gift it always was.

That's the whole of it, really: God made us, loves us, and has come for us in Jesus, who lived, died and rose again so we could be forgiven, made new, and brought home.

It's a big story to hold in a small conversation. But it doesn't need to be complicated to be true, and most people, offered it simply and without pressure, find they're more curious than defensive.

Unconditional compassion

When we are sharing our faith with people we are supporting, it is really important that every team member understands the inevitable power dynamic at work. For example, if someone is turning to us for their daily food, it is an unavoidable reality that we hold power and they do not. Therefore, we need to be very careful that the help we offer is in no way transactional. We don't want people to ever feel like support is only available if they listen to a gospel presentation, accept prayer, or show an interest in Christianity. We can be bold in sharing our faith without putting conditions on our compassion.



What's 'Christian' about compassion?

Christians don't have a monopoly on compassion. We are not the only ones who feel moved by the needs around us. But there are (or should be) some distinctives that set us apart from everyday charitable acts that anyone can do. Here are three:

Mercy

The culture around us is deeply polarised. Politicians, news outlets and social media regurgitate an age-old narrative that some people are 'deserving' of our compassion while others are 'undeserving'. But followers of Jesus have been shown incredible mercy, so our posture can be like Christ's, which is not: "Tell me why you deserve my help." But rather: "How can I show you the mercy of God today?" It's a fundamentally different starting place.

God's mercy is rich (Ephesians 2:4), unrestrained (Psalm 40:11), relentless (Lamentations 3:23), racing after us (Psalm 23:6) and rejoicing (Micah 7:18). Ours can be too, as Jesus invites us to: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

Power

We cannot meet everyone's needs. We cannot even meet all the needs of the person right in front of us. But the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us (Ephesians 1:19-20) and God is a supernatural God. It can feel scary to step out in faith to pray for people, but when we cannot meet their needs, we know One who can. Praying for miraculous provision, healing or breakthrough points people to Jesus, the One who is able to do extraordinary things when we cannot.

Hope

Jesus doesn't offer an easy or comfortable life, but He does promise that He will be with those who put their trust in Him. He heals hearts, renews minds, and transforms lives. He is faithful to forgive our sins. He sets us free from chains of sin, addiction, debt, and bitterness. He reconciles us to the Father, and to each other. He clothes us with His righteousness, guards us with His peace, and fills us with His joy. Through the Holy Spirit, the love of God is poured into our hearts and one day we will worship Him forever. What a hope we have! How can we not share it?

Power in practice...



I got to know a handful of mums through our toddler group, not because I ran it, but because they lingered afterwards for lunch in our café, and I made a habit of asking after their news. Eventually I invited them round for pizza.

Sitting in the garden that evening, one mum admitted she'd been seeing a spiritualist, searching for answers. Something in me bristled. Gently, I said I knew Jesus, and that I could pray, and the Holy Spirit might have something to say. It took a bit of courage to offer that in the moment, but God is kind, and He tends to show up when we step out. (Inwardly, I was praying hard that He actually would.)

Suddenly, they all wanted prayer. I got to pray for and prophesy over each of them in turn. There were tears, there were hugs, and God met every one of them.

I invited them to church that Sunday, half-expecting no one to come. They all did, with husbands/partners, with children. None of them have left since. They did Alpha, joined small groups, and have all been baptised. They tell everyone they meet about Jesus, and now they're some of the most solid disciples I know.



Jaz Potter

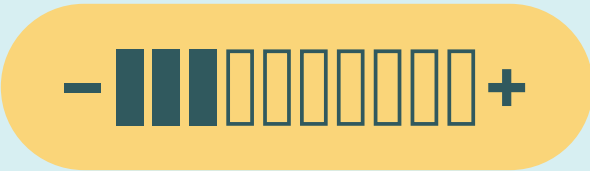
A toddler group, a café, a pizza invite and the power of God led to lives being transformed forever.



How to use this resource

We've used a volume bar to indicate how subtle or explicit we think it is in terms of gospel proclamation and we've outlined on these pages why we think *Speak Jesus* can help those involved in mercy ministries, church leaders, and evangelists and pastors.

Gospel proclamation



Mercy ministry teams

At Jubilee+ we believe that Jesus is good news for everyone trapped in poverty – whether that's economic, relational, aspirational, or spiritual poverty, or a combination of these.

We know from experience that sharing our faith with people who are in the middle of a crisis or perpetual hardship can be complex. We absolutely want to be sensitive when we are speaking to people, especially those who are vulnerable. That's why it's so important we find gentle and kind ways to offer people the holistic hope and transformation that's available to them through the gospel. (See 'Practical tips'.)

Our hope is that *Speak Jesus* will encourage and inspire you to keep taking every opportunity to point the people you are supporting to Jesus who can meet their deepest needs.

Or, if you have been reluctant to talk about Jesus or seem to have drifted away from it, we hope this resource will give you some ideas and pointers that help you start or return to offering hope for people's eternal crisis as well as their immediate one.

Whatever your situation, we hope you'll find it helpful to share *Speak Jesus* with your team of volunteers and then discuss which ideas could work for you and how you'll put into practice the parts of this resource that are most relevant for your context.

Gentleness evident to all

(Philippians 4:5, NIV)

Offer, don't impose.

Many we serve are in real crisis, debt, addiction, grief, isolation. That's exactly why we need to be careful how we invite, not just whether we do.

A few habits protect both the person and the ministry:

Ask, don't assume. "Would it be alright if I prayed for you?" leaves a genuine door open to say no.

Watch for compliance, not consent. Someone desperate or dependent on our help may say yes to please us, not because they mean it.

One invitation is enough. If they decline, let it go warmly, and keep loving them practically regardless.

Never leverage need. Faith offered alongside food, debt advice, etc. must never feel like the price of admission.

Love holds; it doesn't push.

Church leaders

Through our connections with partner churches, Jubilee+ hears far too often from church leaders who are concerned that their mercy ministries don't see many people come to Christ, and as a result are questioning whether they should invest their energies elsewhere and close down these projects.

Our answer is always an emphatic: "No!" The Bible is crystal clear that we're to share our food with the hungry, provide for the homeless, and so on. Not everyone who was fed, healed or set free by Jesus worshipped Him, but He met their needs anyway.

Loving our neighbour – especially those in need – is not a means to an end. It's a reflection of our devotion to Jesus and fundamental belief that every person is made in the image of God, giving them inherent dignity and worth. At the same time, we absolutely want to see people come to know Him!

We hope you'll be able to use *Speak Jesus* with your teams – not just your mercy ministry teams, but also your broader leadership team – to inspire and equip them to keep stepping out in sharing their faith. But we also hope it'll be a helpful tool for you to bring together your compassion leaders with your evangelists, as well as those responsible for hospitality and welcome in your church.

Evangelists and pastors

Your mercy ministries need you!

Margz from Liverpool was brought up in a Christian family, but her own faith had lapsed many years ago. She visited her community grocery not long after having a heart attack "feeling very low, lost, isolated and in a difficult place". One of the team offered to pray for her.

That was the start of Margz's journey back to faith. She says: "If I'd just gone along, done a shop and had a normal interaction with someone there, I wouldn't have been so profoundly affected. I'd have just left. It was the prayer and compassion that made the difference."

That's why, when they invited her to the Christmas service, she decided to go. That was four years ago and today Margz is an active member of church life, serving on the worship team, at Alpha, on the youth

camp, and even preaching. We met Margz when she was on our Formed training programme for potential leaders with a background of hardship.

No doubt there are many deeply compassionate people in your church who are committed to meeting the practical needs of people in poverty. What if they'd love to offer to pray for someone like Margz, but they don't know how or they lack the confidence?

That's where evangelists come in. Perhaps you can get involved in the ministry and teach by example, but even if you can't do that, you can come alongside those who are there week-in, week-out and train them (see p12 for more on this). Likewise, there's plenty of scope for pastors to get involved, either directly by discipling people who come to faith through mercy ministries, or in equipping others to do so.

We hope this resource will help you join the dots between your gifting and the place where most churches welcome many non-Christians every week.



Order more copies of *Speak Jesus* at jubilee-plus.org/speak-jesus



Training our teams

Often we want to share our faith, but we don't know how to. This is why we need evangelists "to equip [God's] people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12, NIV).

Jon Wales, an evangelist in one of our partner churches, believes we need to be trained in four specific areas...

#1 C: Confidence

(what we are sharing)

It's one thing to be familiar with the Bible, doctrine, liturgy, traditions of the faith, etc., and another to be able to effectively communicate the hope we have in Jesus.

Building confidence in what the gospel is will not only cause us to worship, but also to witness. God made us, loves us and has come for us; He understands our condition; He delights to show mercy; He has defeated our greatest enemies – sin and death; He has made a way so we can know Him; in Him we find redemption, forgiveness, abundant life, hope, joy, peace, righteousness.

The gospel is glorious and people need to hear it!

#2 C: Competence

(how we share)

Many of us are afraid of messing it up, getting it wrong, or causing offence. Helping us to develop our listening and story-telling skills, teaching us how to handle conflict and be trauma-informed, and training us with tools such as Four Points or Speak Life's 'sowing seeds', will help us to grow in our competence to tell people about Jesus in winsome ways.

Evangelists can help us to feel confident in handling doubts or hard questions (such as suffering, other religions, etc) and give us wisdom in how we present the gospel so we're not offering it as a quick-fix to solve all of life's problems.

#3 C: Compassion

(why we share)

We can easily think we've nailed this one, but true compassion offers people hope for eternity as well as hope for today. We share our faith in Jesus for the same reasons we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, and provide shelter – compassion.

When Jesus was moved with compassion, He met people's physical needs (Matthew 15:32) and He taught them about the good news of the kingdom of God (Mark 6:34). Evangelists can help us see how compassion drives both serving and talking.

#4 C: Contextualisation

(who we're sharing with)

This is where evangelists can learn from those involved in mercy ministries, as well as vice versa, considering:

- Who is the person in front of me?
- Where do I start?
- What do I emphasise?
- What does the person in front of me need to hear to experience God's love?

These are all key questions that can help us grow in our ability and willingness to tell people about Jesus.

Evangelism training is available from **Euangelion**. To find out more, email: steve.hurd@arkchurch.org.uk

Your faith is relevant

BY JON KUHRT, CEO, HOPE INTO ACTION – A CHRISTIAN CHARITY
EMPOWERING THE CHURCH TO END HOMELESSNESS

Poverty is more than a lack of material resources. For example, homelessness often comes about as a combination of different forms of poverty:

- **Poverty of Resources:** issues of debt, unemployment, welfare benefit problems, lack of affordable accommodation and basic material items such as clothing and food.
- **Poverty of Relationships:** many people have nowhere to go because they have no one to go to. Issues of family breakdown, neglect and abuse create trauma and deep scars which perpetuate loneliness, a lack of trust and isolation.
- **Poverty of Identity:** many people struggle with low self-esteem and poor mental health, and often the issue of addictions is closely wrapped up with these inner issues of identity.

Many social issues are complex because these different forms of poverty are working together to undermine people's attempts to improve their lives. For example, for many of our tenants at Hope into Action, an addiction has robbed them of resources, ruined their relationships and scarred their identity.

Poverty and homelessness are both structural and social problems, but they are also relational and personal.

We believe the Church has a unique role to speak Jesus into each of these forms of poverty. This is what we see in the early church in Acts where a radical community shared their resources and built new relationships across social and ethnic divides because they had found a new identity in Christ. This is what Jesus calls us to today – and it's why the Christian faith is so relevant to responding to human need. This is what we are privileged to see every day as formerly homeless tenants find acceptance and new life through the love of the local church.

Poverty is about a lack of resources – but runs far deeper than material needs. The gospel of Jesus should offer a chance for people to experience material generosity but also to build new relationships with others which are mutual and two-way.

And most deeply, it can offer the opportunity to experience a renewal of their very identity through finding purpose, meaning and belief in a God who loves them.



HOPE
into
ACTION



Do they know you're Christians?

BY NATALIE WILLIAMS, CEO, JUBILEE+

Simple signs

The foodbank at Kings Church 1066 (my home church) has a great reputation across my town, but that's partly why I regret that when we set it up in 2012, we gave it a name that has nothing to do with the church. It's called Hastings Foodbank. Dozens of local decision-makers and probably thousands of community members can tell you about the difference it has made to people facing poverty in Hastings and the surrounding areas, but a far smaller number would know, today, that it's run by Christians.

That is something we've been working to address for a number of reasons, one of which is that we don't want people to be surprised when we offer prayer, invite them to a church event, or share our faith in Jesus with them.

One of the easiest ways to start reconnecting a mercy ministry with the church or Christians that run it is signage. A few years ago, we renamed the section of the building our foodbank and other mercy ministries operate in to *Hope at King's*. A logo was designed and signs put up outside and inside emblazoned with that name.

We don't think that's too 'in your face', but another option is to put up words on the walls – whether Bible



verses or famous historical quotes. On one of the walls in their Manchester building, the Message Trust has a great quote from William Booth about fighting for the rights of the vulnerable.

Posters on toilet doors and above sinks or hand-dryers are another very 'low volume' way of communicating that we are Christians and this is a church-run project, while also highlighting an upcoming event, a parent-and-toddler group, or something else you are running that people might want to connect with.

If you don't have your own building, flyers or leaflets on tables or in display stands are a simple alternative that gives people the option to take a look. Or even having free Bibles available for people to take away.

Gospel proclamation



Low-key cards

Not all volunteers in our mercy ministries will feel comfortable or confident to offer prayer, share their faith, or even to point people to other activities and events that they might be interested in. So another 'low volume' way of ensuring that people know we are happy and willing to pray for them is printing a simple prayer card.

Prayer cards are a very low-key way of offering to pray for people. They can be popped into a grocery bag or simply handed to someone to take away with them. Prayer cards don't need to be complicated – they can be anonymous and even feature an online version for those who don't want to bring or send them back to you.

Turning up the volume slightly, another option is to include a 'free entry' card when you're giving out food, clothing or other items. For example, the baby bank at one of our partner churches puts a card giving a year's free entry to the weekly parent-and-toddler group into every Moses basket they give out. Many of the pregnant women who are referred to baby banks are isolated, so this about offering relational support as well as material items.

Maybe you don't have multiple ministries that fit neatly together like a baby bank and a parent-and-toddler group, but what else could you offer? A ticket to an event? An invitation to a course? When we start thinking like this, there are so many possibilities for how we can not only



connect people into what the church is doing but also offer more holistic and ongoing support at someone's point of crisis or need.

And if you can't do that, how about going a bit more 'high volume' by inviting your volunteers to write personal tracts so they can offer them to people they have a conversation with?

Putting it into practice...

In just the first three months after opening their Community Grocery, more than 100 people signed up for courses at Welcome Church, a Jubilee+ partner church in Woking, with 66 going on to attend cooking lessons, mental health wellbeing groups, Alpha, job clubs and more.

Welcome Church invited grocery members through flyers, forms and conversations that were a simple but effective way to communicate that the church behind the grocery wants to offer more support to those who would like it.

A little help from my friends

Give people time

One of the kindest things we can do for people is give them our unhurried time. When our mercy ministries are busy and the needs seem never-ending, this can feel really difficult. But when we take the time to get to know people, listen to their stories, maybe share a meal (see pages 24–25), it can be very powerful.

We don't necessarily talk a lot about relational poverty, but loneliness and isolation are increasingly significant issues in the Western world. While it used to be thought of as an issue predominantly affecting older people or those who live alone, the research



is growing that young people and men are also struggling to find community and feel a sense of belonging.¹

Asking people to volunteer in our mercy ministries with no responsibilities other than to befriend isn't just about looking for opportunities to tell people about Jesus – it's an important part of offering more holistic and empowering support for someone facing a crisis or trapped in poverty.

The simple act of sitting with someone over a cup of tea and listening to whatever they want to share, may give you opportunities to signpost them to where they can find community or get further support. And it may give you the chance to tune into the Holy Spirit as He prompts you to sow seeds of faith to those who are interested (see overleaf for some ways to do this).

I prepare myself spiritually before each foodbank session by praying before coming in, so that I'm ready to share Jesus. You have to be intentional – it's more important to be ready to take opportunities to share my faith than it is to make sure all of the food is in exactly the right place.

CATHERINE PASK
Head of social action at Jubilee Church, London

¹ OECD (2025), Social Connections and Loneliness in OECD Countries, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/6df2d6a0-en>

Gospel proclamation



Invite the evangelists

For a long time it's baffled me that people who describe themselves as evangelists or evangelistically-gifted aren't firm fixtures in mercy ministries, because there are always people who come not just for support, but also wanting someone to talk to.

Of course we need those who are zealous about sharing the gospel to be sensitive to the person in front of them, but that should always be the case: we're supposed to be gentle, gracious, reasonable and respectful when we talk about Jesus (see 1 Peter 3:15–16 and Colossians 4:6).

Have a conversation with them about this so you build trust to invite them in. Give them some guidance, then let them spend time with those who might be curious and open. You might also invite them to train your volunteers about how to make the most of every opportunity (Colossians 4:5).



Gospel proclamation



Putting it into practice...

At one of the Hope into Action houses in Cambridge, one tenant became curious about why her church befriender was volunteering. This led to several conversations about faith and then the tenant wanted to go to a Hope into Action conference. After that, she asked her befriender for a Bible, visited church, and now wants to be baptised.

In Hope into Action Portsmouth, the church volunteers consistently offered friendship, practical help and encouragement with no agenda to one tenant, who over time became curious about the faith that motivated such kindness. He later said he had "seen Jesus in action" and found a new sense of hope and belonging as a result.

That will help those who might not describe themselves as evangelists, but who want to step out in sharing their faith more and wish they had the tools or boldness to do so. What can also help, as well as the 'sowing seeds' examples on the next few pages, is a simple framework such as *Who Cares?*²

Who Cares? was an initiative launched in Norfolk in 2012 that has to date asked 40,000 people the question: "What hurts the most?" The purpose wasn't to conduct a massive study, but to unlock conversations with people based on one simple but meaningful question, and to respond with compassion and the hope of the gospel. Rob Tervet came up with the idea. He said: "Effective evangelism often begins with listening to people and hearing about their deepest needs... Many people feel like no one truly cares about their deepest pain. We want to show them that someone does."³

² Find out more about *Who Cares?* here: <https://vimeo.com/140933545>
³ <https://www.norwichfgb.co.uk/Publisher/ArticlePrintable.aspx?id=354703>

Sowing seeds

How to speak life – sowing seeds in regular conversation

BY GLEN SCRIVENER, CEO, SPEAK LIFE

We want people to know Jesus — our family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, clients, everyone. But it's tricky. When it comes to faith, the people in our lives are in so many different places.

Some of my friends think Christianity is the worst. They reckon it's naive, naff, or just plain nasty and they're very closed to a conversation.

Far more of my friends shrug their shoulders and say: "Good for you, Glen, whatever gets you through the night." Perhaps they've even had some experience of faith in the past. But if they have, they feel it's no longer for them. Still, they're far from hostile.

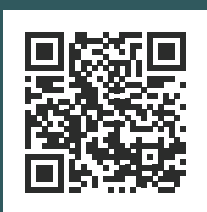
Then there are those with more of a Christian history. For these people it's complicated. There is a genuine

attraction to Christ (or there used to be), but there are also a thousand distractions and obstacles in their way.

And then there are the total surprises. Out of nowhere they confess that they've been wanting to know if God is real and they're all ears for what I have to say. It's so mixed!

But this is normal, according to Jesus. In Matthew 13, Jesus tells us that His Kingdom grows like seeds falling on very different soils. God's word is scattered across the path, the rocky soil, the thorns, and the good soil (verses 3–9), and each of these soil types map onto the four kinds of people I've just described — from very closed to very open. Which means that responses to the gospel will be mixed to say the least.

But Jesus doesn't give any of us a 'Plan B'. Or C, or D. It's all plan A: **sow the seed**.



So here are four seeds you can sow into regular conversations. They're not 'silver bullets' guaranteed to make their mark, they're open-ended sentences that may look very weak but

which might cause great fruitfulness if used by God. All of them are based on the free 321 course which is a tool you can use to share Christ online or in person. I've also written at greater length about eight seeds you can scatter in conversations in a book called *How to Speak Life*. But here are four of them in brief...



Jesus tells us that His Kingdom grows like seeds falling on very different soils. God's word is scattered across the path, the rocky soil, the thorns, and the good soil.



SPEAK LIFE 321



Seed #1: That's what I love about Jesus...

Perhaps you're talking about politics or some scandal in the

news or in your community. The conversation gets onto corrupt or hypocritical leaders. At that point you can say: "That's what I love about Jesus, apparently absolute power does not corrupt, because the one with absolute power came to serve, suffer and die!" The way you finish this sentence is up to you but if it's a heartfelt testimony to Christ, it is powerful.

Of course, when you drop it into conversation, it might 'bounce off' the person like seed bouncing on the path and gobbled up by birds. It might feel awkward or futile. But when we put words to the greatness of Jesus, we are right at the beating heart of evangelism. Fundamentally evangelism is a heart-to-heart communication that Jesus is Lord. If you end up pointing your friend to the free 321 course, that's the point of the first section: all about meeting Jesus, the heart and soul of the faith.



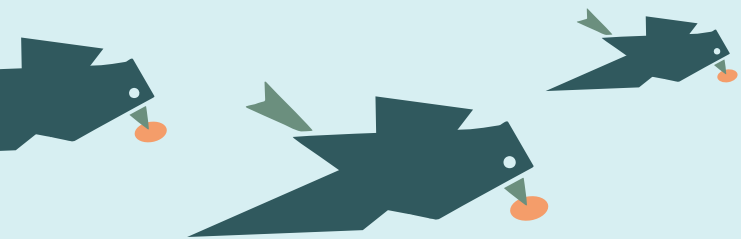
Seed #2: I couldn't have got through that time without Jesus...

Here's a way of dropping some personal testimony into conversation. But this is less about how you journeyed from the darkness to the light. This is about how Jesus has come to join you in the dark.

The biggest pit is obviously death and judgement. But in conversation we can also speak of the 'mini pits' we find ourselves in. Perhaps for you it's been health or mental health issues, or a relationship breakdown, or redundancy, or a hundred different things. How has Jesus met you in your darkness? How has He been light to you?

Here we're in the realm of 'pastoral evangelism', which is vital. Too often we separate pastoral care and evangelism as though they are very different kinds of communication. But really, pastoral care is evangelising Christians. Evangelism is pastoring non-Christians. In the context of whatever 'dark valley' you've been talking about, you can testify to the ways Jesus has pastored you through this dark valley. Your friend has dark valleys to navigate — how can you personally and specifically recommend the Good Shepherd?





Seed #3: That's what I love about my church...

I am constantly speaking about my church in evangelism. I will

enthusiasm about so many aspects of it: the way so many generations are united together; the different nationalities, cultures, and classes all getting along; our care for one another; our ministries serving the community; the wealth of wisdom and experience to be called on; the fact that every week we confess our sins out loud together; that we take time out every week to reset, hear truth from the world's all-time bestseller, pray and sing together – awesome! Most of all I speak of the fact that we call ourselves 'church family' and we actually are family – brothers and sisters through thick and thin.

To be 'one with Jesus' means being 'one' with all the other people who are one with Jesus. Being Christian involves others – it involves church. And evangelism must involve church.

Remember that Jesus said: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Testifying to this reality in church is powerful in evangelism and leads naturally to the question: "Do you want to come and check it out for yourself?" Speak highly of church wherever possible and invite people warmly.



Seed #4: That's why I'm a bit weird...

This one's about being prepared to talk about your Christian

distinctives. If being a Christian makes any difference to your life, then you – like me – are a bit weird. Even if it's just about going to church when you could have a lie in on a Sunday morning, there are decisions you make to follow Jesus that don't actually make sense without Him.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15, NIV)

Here it's the non-Christian who's initiating the conversation. Why? Because the Christian is living so distinctively it demands an explanation. The non-Christian is asking: "How are you still standing after the year you've just had?" Or: "Where do you get your positivity from, because it's clearly not from your life circumstances right now?!" Or: "Why do you live that way? I don't think I would."

Peter says "be prepared" to put words to the 'weirdness' of your walk! Maybe you foster, or volunteer, or you've moved cities just to help with a church plant, or you've made some counter-cultural parenting decisions or schooling decisions, or you're single but not doing singleness the way the world does it.

Can you explain the deepest reason to your friend – the Jesus reason – in as jargon-free a way as possible? If you can, you're at the heart of evangelism, describing the Lordship of Jesus in a life-transforming way.

Evangelism: full of messes, misses and multiplication!

If you 'sow' these sentences into normal conversations it won't always be smooth. In fact, it may feel like a mess, but in His parable of the four soils, Jesus prepared us for messes. And He prepared us for misses too. If you're scattering seeds across multiple different soil types, how will it feel? 'Hit and miss' is the phrase – mainly miss! But that's normal according to Jesus.

Evangelism is full of messes and misses – but it's also about multiplication. There is good soil out there and when the seed meets it, life erupts. In fact, it multiplies, "a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (Matthew 13:8, NIV).

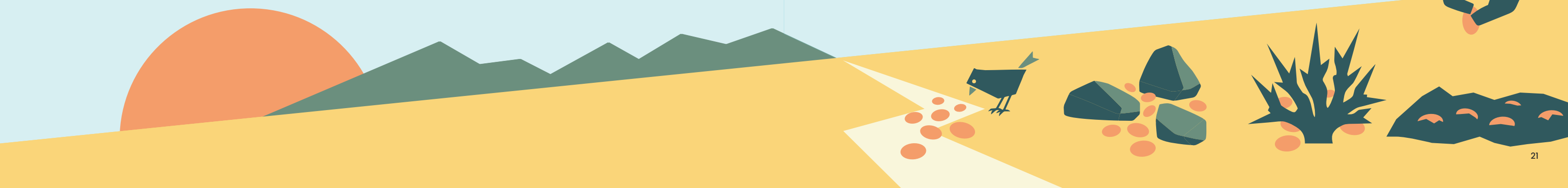
So get sowing. We have good seed, there is good soil and the Lord of the harvest says that "the fields are white" (John 4:35).



More than 40,000 people are doing the 321 course online and more than 1,000 churches are doing it in person. Directing people to 321course.com or – even better – doing the course with your friend, can be a great way to take the conversation forwards.



For more seeds to scatter and other help with evangelism, pick up *How to Speak Life: Sharing Your Faith in 321* wherever books are sold.



Thinking strategically – creating pathways

Making it easy for people to go on a journey

BY SAM WARD, UK CEO, THE MESSAGE TRUST



We can help people on their journey to faith by thinking strategically about how to create a pathway that connects their first step to their next steps, right through to becoming a disciple who discipled others. On the right is one example. As you design your own pathway, think through each stage:

1. First contact

How do people first encounter your ministry? What makes your activity welcoming, accessible and valuable? What barriers might stop people taking that first step?

2. Building relationships

How will you intentionally deepen trust? Where do conversations happen? How do volunteers learn names, hear stories and become genuine friends rather than simply programme leaders?

3. Creating gospel opportunities

At what points can people naturally encounter Jesus? This might include testimonies, Alpha or 321, Bible discussions, prayer, church invitations or simply faithful conversations that arise through trusted relationships.

4. Belonging

How will someone begin to feel that they belong before they fully believe? Think about smaller communities, serving opportunities, meals, mentoring and regular church connection.

5. Growing as disciples

Once someone comes to faith, how will you help them grow?

Who will walk alongside them? What next steps will they take? How will they learn to follow Jesus in everyday life? (See pages 36–37 for ideas about this.)

6. Replication (the destination)

The destination is not simply church attendance. The goal is disciple-makers.

How will those who have been reached begin reaching others? How will they serve, lead, share their faith and help others walk the same journey?

Questions to ask as you build your pathway:

- Who are we trying to reach?
- What strengths does our ministry already have?
- What barriers make church feel difficult or unfamiliar?
- Where do relationships naturally deepen?
- Where are we intentionally creating opportunities to share Jesus?
- What is the next step after every stage?
- Who owns each part of the journey?
- Where are people currently getting stuck?
- How will we know someone is moving forward?
- What would it look like for today's guest to become tomorrow's disciple-maker?

Every ministry is different, so every pathway will look different. The principles remain the same. Build genuine relationships. Be intentional about creating opportunities for the gospel. Make the next step clear. And never lose sight of the destination: people becoming lifelong followers of Jesus who, in turn, make disciples of others.

the message proximity_

Football ministry example

Deeper relationships create greater opportunities for the gospel

↓ First contact, open access football (midweek)

↓ Meet in the pub after

↓ Watch key matches together (church big screen)

↓ Form a team to play in a Christian tournament

↓ Start training as a team (pray before each session)

↓ Celebrate with food (welcome them to my house)

↓ Enter a league and play regularly (offer lifts)

↓ Invite to church before match

↓ Pray before each game (gospel team talk)

↓ FIFA nights at my house (with food)

↓ Put captain on a leadership course

↓ 4 Points course at my house

↓ Alpha at church

↓ Discipleship group

↓ 1-to-1 discipleship

➡ Destination replication

DISCIPLE-MAKERS



CONNECT

First contact
We welcome, serve and build bridges of trust.



BELONG

Relationships grow
People feel known, valued and start to feel they belong.



EXPLORE

Space to explore
People ask questions and discover more about faith in a safe space.



BELIEVE

Decision to follow Jesus
People come to faith and become part of God's family.



GROW

Become disciples
We walk alongside, build faith, and equip for everyday life as followers of Jesus.



MULTIPLY

Living on mission
Empowered disciple-makers who reach others and help them take the same journey.



Eating together

BY NATALIE WILLIAMS

Meals have been a massive part of my story. When I first became a Christian, I was intimidated by the way my new Christian friends served food. I hadn't seen a table laid out with multiple dishes to choose from apart from at Christmas. Though I struggled with the 'unspoken rules' of eating in people's homes, the fact that I was invited helped me to feel a sense of belonging, even though I also felt like I didn't fit in.

Food forms communities. Every culture has traditions based around food. And food forms memories – whether it's a dish your dad is famous for or that time your friend served you mashed potato that was more like soup.

Putting it into practice...

For two years in their early days as a church plant, one of our partner churches in Shrewsbury ran a monthly Sunday 'God and pizza' evening in the community centre on their estate. Local people came along to ask any big questions they had about God and life in general while sharing pizza together.

Now they hold a weekly drop-in for all ages that also involves food, which has enabled them to build deeper relationships, seeing people from the estate come to church services and even taking funerals for members of the community.

Gospel proclamation



Creating opportunities to share food with people you're meeting in your mercy ministries can be a key way to help people feel a sense of belonging and to start to see themselves as part of your church community. It might be meals on special occasions, such as a Christmas dinner that's open to anyone who doesn't have anywhere to go.

It could be a more regular activity, like the Wednesday lunchtime service including food that the Jubilee+ partner church in Nottingham runs every week which has now become connected to a recovery service for those struggling with addictions.

Or could you start to go beyond church-based meals and invite people into your home (if they're comfortable with that) – with others rather than just you and them. Another option is inviting yourself and a friend to theirs (Jesus did that!), offering to treat them to a meal together (giving them the choice of where to go – fast food, pub chain, or somewhere fancy), or just inviting them to eat your lunch together on a bench.



I discovered all the wonders of God through Make Lunch. I am now a Christian and go to church. It has made my life whole.

Make Lunch club visitor

A seat at the table

BY SAM CRAVEN, TLG

TLG transforming
lives for good



Jesus knew the power of the table. Tax collectors, religious leaders, friends, strangers, the curious and the sceptical all found themselves sharing food with Jesus.

A shared meal can meet a vitally important physical need, but it can also create an opportunity for something deeper. When we sit down and eat together, barriers begin to fall, conversations become easier and trust begins to grow.

Through TLG Make Lunch, churches across the UK welcome families during the school holidays with 'Community, belonging and meals that matter'. What begins as practical support often becomes much more. As families build relationships, children gain confidence, and volunteers become trusted friends, opportunities for authentic conversations about faith arise.

Where can a seat at the table lead?

At Make Lunch, we've found that when people experience genuine welcome, friendship and belonging, an invitation to a church event or activity actually becomes a sign that they are valued and wanted.

Many churches involved in Make Lunch tell us they have seen this happen. One church partner told us that the families they are connecting with "see the church building as a safe place to come and feel safe to ask questions about what we believe".

A recent survey encouraged us that because of the experience they have had at Make Lunch, 98% of participants feel more welcome to attend church events.

One mum started her journey as a visitor to a Make Lunch club with her two boys and went on to become a core team member at the club. In the application form for the volunteer role, we asked about her Christian faith and lifestyle. She answered: "I used to be an atheist because that was the way I was brought up. I discovered all the wonders of God through Make Lunch. I am now a Christian and go to church. It has made my life whole. I used to feel empty and alone and now I feel full of joy and love. I feel like I have a hand holding mine through this journey called life."

More than 80% of churches partnering with TLG through Make Lunch report children or family members connecting beyond the TLG programme with the wider support of the church. By creating spaces where people can belong, we are building authentic relationships and sharing the life-changing hope of Jesus.

Find out more
about Make Lunch
here

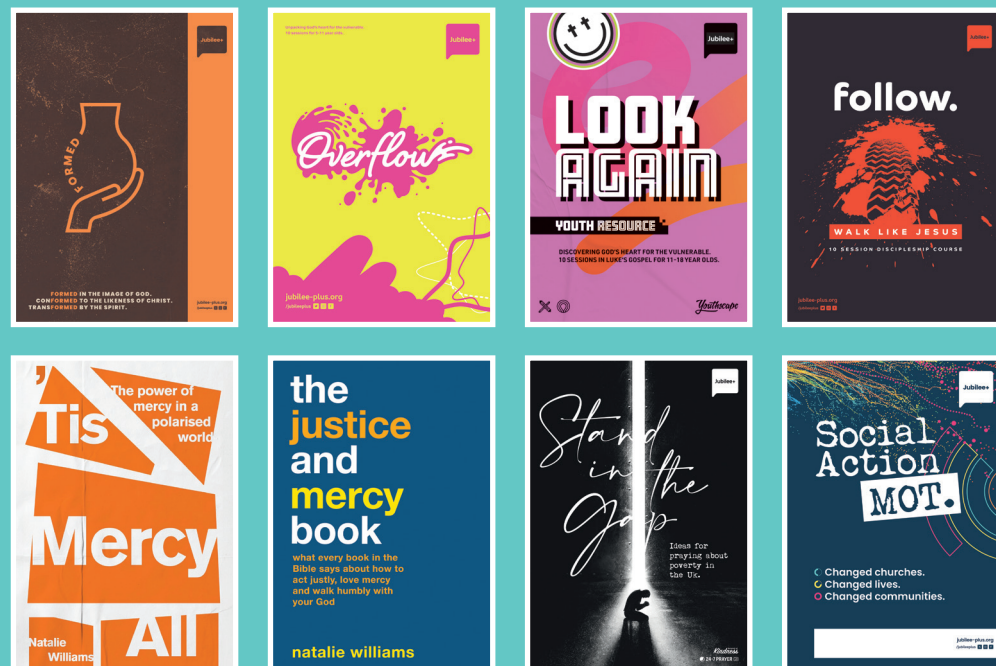




Jubilee+ Partner Churches.

Helping churches to
act justly, love mercy and
walk humbly with Jesus...

One of the ways that Jubilee+ equips our partner churches and beyond is through the resources we publish. These range from discipleship tools for all ages, through to books, ideas for praying about poverty, and more...



Jubilee+ would love to help you become more effective in...

- Bringing the good news to those in poverty in your community
- Discipling people from all walks of life into leadership
- Building mercy and justice into the DNA of your church

Find out more here



Creating memories

Fun events can be 'low volume' or 'high volume' events in terms of presenting the gospel, which means they're a very versatile opportunity to invite people we meet in our mercy ministries to come along to something where they will have an opportunity to mix with Christians in either a low-key or totally evangelistic setting. Here are some ideas...

Just fun

Summer fayres and indoor boot sales are two events tried and tested by one of our partner churches as a very easy way to invite people through the door. These can be run with very little evangelistic content or can include something more overt, such as a stall where prayer is available. Holiday clubs can also be a really helpful way to support families for whom the summer break from school, in particular, can be a challenge.



With the community

Community BBQs, street parties or even clear-ups are excellent ways to get to know people and again can provide a gentle way to share your faith while supporting the local neighbourhood. If other people

are running events in your community, they may be open to your church or mercy ministry having a stall.



Special occasions

One of our partner churches has been delivering TLG Early Intervention for 10 years. To celebrate a decade of supporting children through one-to-one coaching in local schools, they recently held a 10th birthday party, inviting all 75 children who have been coached over that time, along with their families. Many of them had already attended one of the Easter, Summer or Christmas parties this church runs for them, where the gospel content is small but significant, and gifts are given to each child such as 'Real' chocolate eggs telling the Easter story.¹



10
10

¹ <https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/pages/real-easter-egg>

Alternative options

Occasions such as Halloween are great opportunities to provide something alternative for both kids and adults in the local community. From throwing a Light Party at your church through to being ready with 'light packs' for trick or treaters, there are a variety of fun ways to share the message of hope and light we carry.



Jubilee+ team member Charlie Macdonald, who wrote our *Overflow* kids' curriculum and *Look Again* youth resource, has an annual tradition of being ready with fun messy games, sweets and a leaflet for any kids who knock on her door on Halloween. She said: "We've got a bit of a reputation now for being the house where you can have a bit of a laugh, hang around for a little bit, and 'earn' some sweets, but you do also get that invite too."

Testimony tasters

Creative and fun evenings such as 'Labels' included a jazz trio and a hog roast for people to enjoy while taking a look at the photography exhibition one



Jubilee+ partner church had put together. Lining the walls were photos of church members – one surrounded by

'labels' that were true of them before they came to Jesus; the other featuring words that are now true of them. During the evening, one 10-minute testimony was shared live, and there was a gentle invitation to the Alpha course.

The same church also ran a 'Curry + Stories' event, where guests were invited to enjoy great food while watching five short videos of church members sharing their testimonies about how Jesus had transformed them. Again, one more was shared live with an invitation to Alpha.



Connecting courses

You don't necessarily need to hold special events to advertise courses such as 321 or Alpha. A number of our partner churches have embedded them in their mercy ministries. This is done in a sensitive way with no pressure to join in but provides an opportunity people to explore the Christian faith, if they want to, while they are at the venue for food, advice or other kinds of support.

Connecting evangelistic courses to existing sessions can be a really helpful way for those who are interested to access such courses without feeling intimidated by coming at a separate time. This also helps churches in communities that are not used to going out for an evening 'event' or course to do it in the daytime, or while they're out for something else.



Open air events

This is definitely at the 'high volume' end of the spectrum, but several of our partner churches in Eastbourne join forces every summer, along with other churches across the denominations in their town, to put on an open-air event on the seafront where the gospel is boldly proclaimed. One woman who was baptised in one of these churches recently said as part of her testimony that she was walking along the promenade one Sunday when she stumbled across one of these open-air events, and that was the start of her journey to placing her faith in Jesus.



Putting it into practice...

Our friends at TLG actively encourage their church partners to run what they call 'Family Faith Fun Days' through providing funding and resources. These have taken many forms, from Easter story trails, beach trips and forest school sessions through to community BBQs, Light Parties, prayer stations and family festivals.

While the activities vary, the principle is the same: creating welcoming spaces where relationships can deepen, church and community can mix naturally, and families can encounter the Christian faith in ways that are authentic and accessible.

One church shared: "It was amazing to see that so many families came together to celebrate and hear the gospel message. We wondered if families might avoid the short service and come for the fun day, but the large majority came for it all. One family signed up to Alpha as a result."

Another reflected: "The best thing was seeing lots of families from local schools come along, people talking about how special the prayer station area was, and feedback from people who really enjoyed the day."



Sharing with older people

Tailoring our activities to specific groups

BY ALEXANDRA HUGGINS, CEO, FAITH IN LATER LIFE

Faith in Later Life is a UK charity inspiring and equipping the local church to reach older people with the gospel, disciple them as followers of Jesus, and mobilise them in God's mission.

Around the UK, churches who are seeing older people come to faith are often those who are intentional about creating places of welcome, compassion and belonging. Coffee mornings, lunch clubs, care-home visits and midweek gatherings can become lifelines where friendships grow, and the gospel can be shared naturally. These churches are also offering opportunities for older people to explore faith more deeply, ask questions and encounter Jesus.



Dementia cafés

Dementia cafés can offer vital friendship and practical support to people living with dementia and those caring for them, while also creating opportunities to share the hope of Jesus.

Frinton Free Church runs a twice-monthly Dementia Café, led by a trained professional and supported by volunteers, many with personal experience of dementia. Bobby and Shirley first connected with the church through the café after Bobby was diagnosed

with dementia. This led them into the wider life of the church, where they found friendship, support and the power of prayer. Shirley later began volunteering and said of the church community: "I don't know where we'd be without this place."

Care-home ministry

Regular care-home visits and services can help older people who are no longer able to attend church to explore faith, to worship and to receive spiritual and pastoral support.

King's Church Aberdeen brings accessible Songs of Praise-style gatherings to local care homes, combining familiar music, simple gospel messages and time for relaxed conversation. Volunteers are encouraged not only to lead services, but also to listen, build relationships and, where possible, visit residents who are unable to join communal gatherings. Through this ministry, the church has seen people come to faith in Jesus for the first time, while others whose faith had lapsed have found it renewed.

Faith-exploring courses

Later life can bring questions about purpose, loss, hope and eternity, making both believers and those who do not yet know Jesus open to exploring or deepening faith.

Alongside other well-known courses, *Hymns We Love* offers a gentle and accessible approach for older people. Familiar hymns, short films and discussion are used to explore the gospel message behind the songs. Churches have seen older people come to faith in Jesus, while older believers have found confident hope for the journey ahead. One participant commented: "For the first time,

Gospel proclamation



I understand why Jesus had to go to the cross, and now I'm no longer afraid of what's ahead of me."

Pre-evangelism activities

Activities such as men's sheds, craft groups, film afternoons and coffee mornings can help older people who do not yet know Jesus build friendships with Christians and find a safe place to ask questions about faith.

Maureen attended her local church's knitting group for several years without showing any interest in Christianity. After her husband died, she began asking questions about God. The friendships she had formed within the group gave her a natural place to explore them. She later joined an Alpha course and gave her life to Jesus!

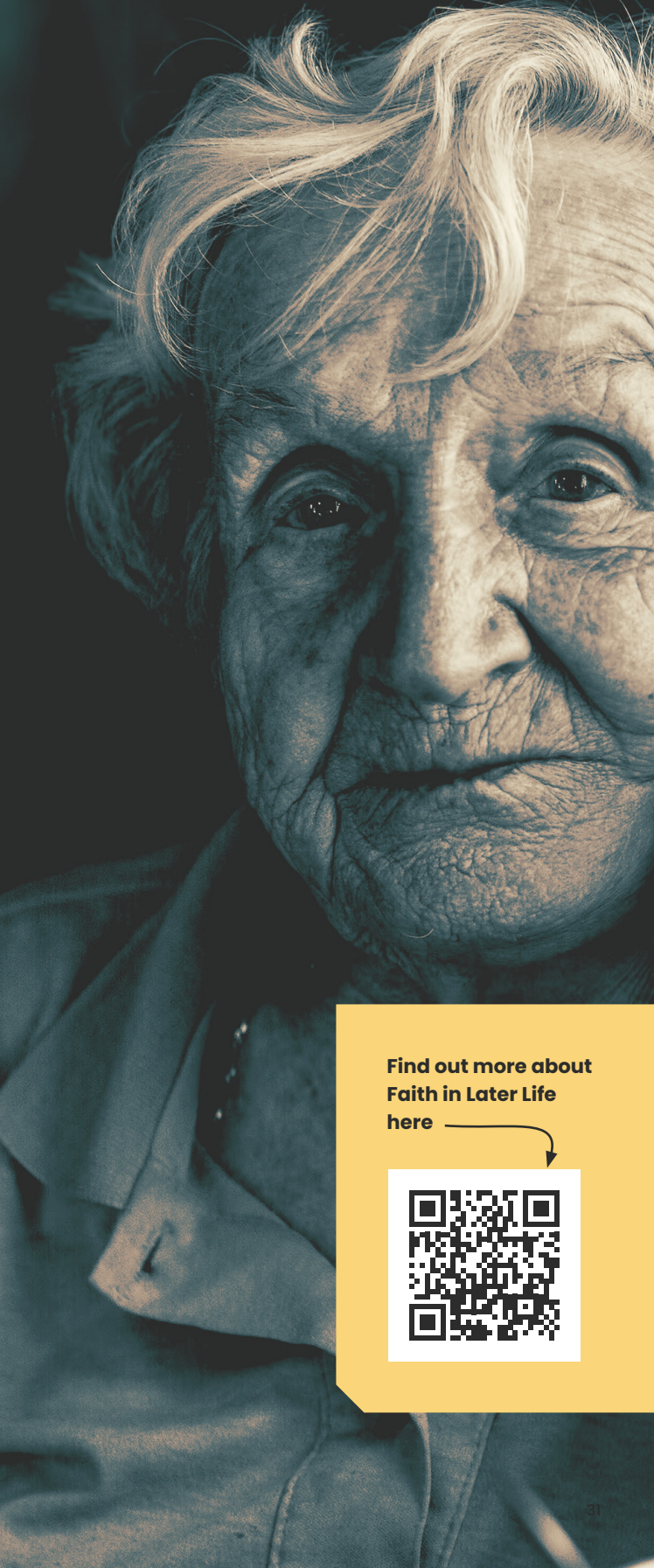
Bereavement support

Bereavement can be especially significant in later life, amid many other unwanted changes. At such times, older people who do not yet know Jesus may turn to the church for comfort, support and hope. The Anna Group at Gold Hill Baptist Church offers widows lunch, friendship, practical support and the opportunity to hear about the difference Jesus makes. Around half of those attending have no active Christian faith; several have begun attending church, two have joined Alpha, and one woman who arrived at a loss rediscovered her faith.

Churches can also offer support through The Bereavement Journey, Blue Christmas or memorial services, bereavement cafés, and one-to-one listening and prayer. Care for the Family's bereavement support training can help pastoral and seniors teams walk sensitively and confidently alongside those who are grieving.



**Faith in
Later Life**



Find out more about
Faith in Later Life
here



Listening and learning

All of us involved in mercy ministries hope that we are loving people well, but how can we be sure? And how can we avoid developing a 'saviour complex' or thinking of ourselves as 'higher' than others when we're helping them up?

At Jubilee+ we used to use this image a lot...



But we stopped because we believe it can subliminally reinforce the wrong dynamic. We're not reaching down to people – we're coming alongside them.

Knowing our own hearts and motives is hard. It's easy to be motivated by the needs around us or the needs within us, rather than by our love for Jesus and our love for the person in front of us. Being people who act justly and love mercy also involves walking humbly with our God (Micah 6:8) and that means we adopt the posture of servants who have plenty to learn.

Voices matter

Listening to the people we are supporting, helping, witnessing to and inviting to church is vitally important. Taking the time to hear from people who come to our ministries or our meetings about how they have found them can be eye-opening.

If we're open to change, they can help us to massively improve the way we do things. That's what we did at Jubilee+ Voices. We asked people with current or recent experience of poverty to tell us honestly (no holds barred) what it was like for them to step into a church ministry or meeting for the first time. So much of what we heard was fascinating.

One woman told us that she was welcomed by so many people on a Sunday that it scared the life out of her! Another told us that seeing the person preaching on a platform on a Sunday who had served them in the foodbank during the week helped her to feel that leaders in church were normal, approachable people. When we passed that on to one of our partner churches, their senior pastor started serving in their foodbank too.

We have a lot to learn, and the people we're helping have a lot to teach us. Creating spaces where people can talk to us about their experiences will really help us to love well. We'd recommend trying Jubilee+ Voices or your own version of it in your church.



Language matters

At Jubilee+ we don't use the phrase 'the poor' unless we're directly quoting Scripture, because it makes poverty someone's identity. A massive study by the Frameworks Institute, in which they interviewed 20,000+ people in poverty, found that the vast majority find being referred to as 'the poor' offensive.

Sometimes preachers use the phrase 'the last, the least and the lost' as a short-hand way of referring to those on the margins. These words were used by Jesus but never grouped like that. When spoken by Jesus, it was usually in the context of saying these labels or positions are subverted in the kingdom of God.

It would be more accurate to refer to people society writes off as those Jesus has come to find, raise up and make rich in faith (see Isaiah 61:4 and James 2:5 for example). The good news of His gospel is that those some might label 'last, least, lost' are welcomed as the 'first, favoured and found'.

Language matters, and not just in how we refer to poverty. If we want people from all walks of life to be comfortable in our churches, we need to think about some of the words that come out of our mouths quite naturally, and what they might communicate. For example, one of our first questions is often: "What do you do for a living?" which can embarrass someone who doesn't have a job or lead them to assume, "Ah, everyone here has a job, so I don't fit." A subtle shift would be to ask: "What does your average week look like?" which gives space for a variety of answers.

Another thing we often say to make conversation is: "Are you going anywhere nice this summer?" Instead, we could ask people: "Do you have anything planned for the summer?" so answers can vary from days out in the park through to exotic holidays. It might also lead to an openness about how difficult someone finds the school holidays.

Subtle shifts in our everyday questions can make the difference for someone starting to feel they belong in your church community.

Leadership matters

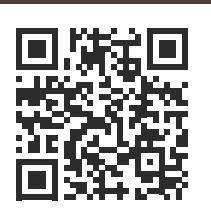
However much we listen and whatever language we use when we speak, if we don't have people from all walks of life in leadership, some people will struggle to believe that people 'like me' are welcome here.

Isaiah 61 presents a wonderful vision for people who are in poverty, captivity, or broken-hearted. It goes beyond beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, and praise for despair, into becoming "oaks of righteousness" (v3) who bring God glory and do good to others.

God cares about the whole person and has plans for people beyond what we imagine. He transforms those with the most painful backgrounds into rebuilders, restorers and renewers (v4). That's why it's so helpful when people who lead upfront are also involved in practical acts of compassion. And why it's crucial that we help people emerge into leadership even when they feel their life experiences might rule them out. In fact, especially when they disqualify themselves.

Throughout the Bible, we see that God raised leaders from the margins. It wasn't something He did once or twice – it was His habit. It still is. He doesn't usually go after the noble, influential, strong or wise. He tends to choose the foolish, weak and lowly (1 Corinthians 1:26–29).

Which begs the question: do we? When we are looking for leaders to raise up, are we looking in the same direction as God?



FORMED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.
CONFORMED TO THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST.
TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT.

Show and tell

Loving people with words and works

BY CARL KNIGHTLY, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH ENGAGEMENT, LONDON CITY MISSION

LCM equips churches to share the good news, reaching people not only with words, but through practical acts of gospel love. As James reminds us, faith is made visible through action (James 2:14-17); the gospel is something we proclaim, but it is also something we demonstrate.

Showing the gospel opens doors

Every Friday, a queue forms outside a church in east London long before the doors open. Some come because their cupboards are empty; others because they're lonely. One woman arrives early so she can collect food for her family before heading to her part-time job while her husband battles cancer and cannot work. An elderly man walks an hour each week, not only for food, but for the warmth of community.

The foodbank began as a practical response to need, but volunteers soon realised that handing over bags wasn't enough. Encouraged by Faith Edwards, an LCM missionary who works alongside the church, Kevin and the church team moved from a transactional model to a more relational one.



They welcomed people outside, offered prayer, learned names and listened. They started to build relationships through natural, intentional conversations.

That shift mattered. Conversations grew. People became more open to prayer and to invitations to church. Practical care created space for spiritual conversation, and words about Jesus were given credibility by patient, consistent love.

Ibra's story shows this clearly. He first came to the foodbank as a guest, but now volunteers with the church, helping wherever he can. He came with practical needs, but also a deep hunger for connection and belonging.



Practical care created space for spiritual conversation, and words about Jesus were given credibility by patient, consistent love.



Ibra* is profoundly deaf, and at first volunteers didn't realise how isolated this made him. Jess, one of the team, learned some sign language, and others followed. When the team prayed, they used voice-typing so he could read along. These simple actions opened the door to deeper conversations, and showed Ibra that he was seen, valued and included.

Through those friendships, Ibra began to understand the Christian faith. From a Muslim background, he noticed the kindness of people who prayed because they loved Jesus. Then, in conversation with Faith and the team, he signed that he had given his life to Jesus. His joy was unmistakable. The church first demonstrated God's love with actions, then they worked hard to communicate it with language.

Speaking the gospel needs love

Sally's story started the other way around. Sean was an older man in her neighbourhood: gentle in conversation but repeatedly drawn into violence. He listened when Sally spoke about the gospel, welcomed prayer and didn't resist spiritual discussion. Yet nothing seemed to change.

Sean hadn't known love in any secure or protective sense. He had suffered neglect and abuse, and violence had become one of the few ways he knew to connect with others. Sally came to understand that Sean's experiences of neglect and abuse may have profoundly shaped his ability to trust and relate to others. How could he grasp the love of God if he had no framework for love at all?

This changed Sally's perspective. Sean didn't need more explanations. He needed to see love embodied through shared meals, time, care and friendship.

Words were still necessary, but they needed to be carried by visible compassion. The gospel had to be shown as well as spoken.

Words and actions belong together

Both stories remind us that Christian witness should not be reduced to practical help or spoken truth alone. If we only feed, welcome or care, people may receive kindness without understanding why or having their eternal need met. But if we only speak without costly love, our words may seem distant or unconvincing.

Jesus modelled this perfectly. In John 6, He fed the crowd and revealed Himself as the Bread of Life. He met physical hunger while pointing to the deeper hunger only He can satisfy. Jesus teaches and He feeds; He speaks truth and shows compassion.

The call for the Church is the same. In places like east London, and in neighbourhoods where people like Sean carry deep wounds, we must resist choosing between actions and words. People need food, friendship, inclusion and safety. They also need to hear of Jesus, whose love gives eternal hope to all who follow Him.

Ibra's joy and Sean's need both challenge us to become communities where the gospel is credible because it is lived. Let us be people who pray, speak, invite and explain — but who also learn another person's language, share a meal, offer time, and make room for those who have been overlooked.

*All names have been changed.



A tale of two churches

Stories of loving our neighbours

Welcome Works

The Jubilee+ partner church in Woking is a wonderful example of holding mercy ministries and evangelism together. Dub Everitt, who oversees Welcome Works – the name for the social action ministries at Welcome Church – writes...

Our aim at Welcome Works is beautifully simple:

- Love people practically.
- Love people into community.
- Love people towards Jesus.

These are not three separate priorities. They belong together.

Loving people practically

Our desire is not simply to help people get through today, but to help them take their next step. We

believe in offering a hand up, not simply a handout. Emergency help has an important place, but our normal approach is to restore dignity, build resilience and empower people towards greater independence.

Every person who walks through our doors is made in the image of God. They are not projects to complete or problems to solve. They are precious people whom God loves deeply.

Loving people into community

Practical support alone is not enough. So many people feel overlooked, ignored or isolated. We have the privilege of helping them to experience the opposite.

Our Community Grocery is more than somewhere to shop. It's a place where people experience welcome, acceptance, encouragement and genuine relationships. We want every cup of tea, every conversation and every course we run to help someone discover that they matter. We believe people flourish when they are loved by a community.

Loving people towards Jesus

Practical support matters. Community matters. But neither can meet humanity's deepest need.

Only Jesus can.

Our greatest hope for every person who walks through our doors is not simply that life becomes a little easier, but that they discover the hope, forgiveness and new life found in Jesus Christ. We don't force conversations. We care before we share, loving people faithfully, trusting that God is already at work and will create opportunities for us to pray, share our stories, and invite people to explore faith.

All three parts of our vision matter. Practical help on its own can become transactional. Community on its own can be caring but powerless to bring lasting change. But practical love wrapped in community is warm, relational and transformational. Affordable food can change someone's week... Community can change someone's year... Only Jesus can change someone's eternity.

Accessible to all

Three years ago, the Jubilee+ partner church in Huddersfield moved one of its venues into an area called Lowerhouses, which is in the 13% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. Anna Harris, Ark Church's community worker, writes...

Our church building is the only community space in Lowerhouses. Other than a small convenience store and a primary school, there is little else. So what we run for the community makes a real difference.

Currently we run a weekly toddler group, fortnightly FoodShare, twice monthly lunch club, monthly community meal and bi-monthly International Café. We also run HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) holiday clubs throughout the year, providing activities and a hot meal to children during some of the school holidays.

When we moved to Lowerhouses, only one family who lived in the area was part of our church. We now regularly see 13 households (around 35 adults and children) from Lowerhouses on a Sunday. Eight of these households have come directly as a result of our social action/community projects.

We first met Cathy* when she brought her four grandkids, one of whom lives with her, to our holiday club. She spotted a flyer for our lunch club and decided to come along. Then she started helping out at the holiday club. Next she brought her grandchildren to our Light Party, where we invited everyone along to our Café Church, our monthly Sunday service with food.

Since coming to that, Cathy and her grandchildren have been coming every Sunday. She hasn't yet put her faith in Jesus, but she's finding belonging in our community and two of her grandchildren are exploring Christianity – it's wonderful to see one of them singing his heart out in worship each week!

The three key things I've learnt since we moved to Lowerhouses are:

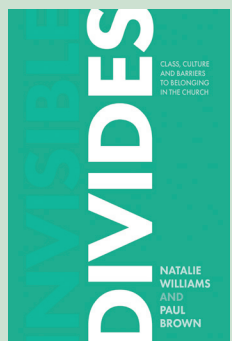
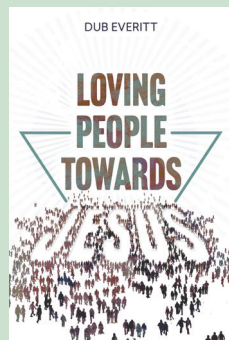


Pray. It seems obvious, but it's when we started a regular prayer meeting in the community, for the community, that we started seeing more fruit. It's been wonderful to see God answer our prayers as we have prayed for specific people, seen them come to faith, and had the joy of baptising them.

It's messy. When our church moved to Lowerhouses, we were predominantly white middle class (with a handful of exceptions). This is beginning to change significantly, which means we're having to adapt what we do so that the gospel is accessible for everyone. This also means looking at our attitudes and prejudices, and addressing concerns about noisy children, parenting styles and people smoking at the entrance. Our team has been reading through *Invisible Divides*, finding it a great tool for helping us to think this through.

Relationship is key. We spend lots of time getting to know people and building genuine mutual friendships. We don't have a cold strategy to get bums on seats! It's about loving people and pointing them to Jesus in a way that works for our location and demographic. One of the best ways we have found to get to know people in our community is inviting them to volunteer in our community projects and working together in team with them.

*All names have been changed.



Empowerment, not dependency

Helping people meet Jesus for themselves

BY ANDY FROST, DIRECTOR, SHARE JESUS INTERNATIONAL

Many people's first experience of faith is not in a church service but through a person who remembers their name, listens to their story, and shows up when life is difficult. This is the beautiful gift of social action ministry. People encounter something of God's love through ordinary acts of compassion and kindness.

But when someone begins to ask questions about faith, a significant question is: *what is our role?*

Do we become the person they need to come to for prayer, wisdom and connection with God? Or do we help them discover that God is not only found through us, but that He longs to meet them directly?

In the Old Testament, priests had a unique role in representing God's people and offering worship on their behalf. Through Jesus, God's people are now "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9) – it's not about a select few with special access to God, but all those who belong to Christ.

This means our role is not to become a spiritual middle person. We don't hold the connection between someone and God. Instead, we have the privilege of helping people discover the relationship with God that is already open to them through Jesus. It's actually a wonderfully freeing thought!

It means success isn't measured by how many people come back to us with every spiritual question. Instead, success looks like people growing in confidence that they can open the Bible, pray honestly and begin noticing God at work in their own lives.

We're not looking to build people's dependence on us. Instead, we're cultivating their dependence on Jesus. So how might we do this?

1. Discover the Bible together

'Bible study' can sound academic, intimidating or as though there are right answers that only experts know. Instead, invite people to discover the Bible.

Choose a short passage from one of the gospels and simply read it together. Then ask a handful of open questions:

- What stands out to you?
- What does this teach us about God?
- What does this teach us about people?
- What could we do differently based on this?
- Who could we share this with?

I love doing this with my neighbours. None of these questions require theological qualifications and sometimes my unchurched friends see something in the text I've never seen before.



It might raise questions we find tricky, but we don't need to explain everything and sometimes it's enough to say, "I'm not sure. What do you think?"

When people discover that they can read Scripture for themselves, they begin to realise that God can speak through His Word without needing someone else to interpret every sentence.

2. Help people begin talking to God

Prayer can feel just as intimidating as opening the Bible. Many people imagine there is a correct formula or special language that God expects. Perhaps they remember formulaic prayers from school assemblies and assume theirs won't quite measure up.

Encourage them to begin simply with, "God..." Then invite them to talk naturally. Thank Him for one thing. Share one worry. Ask one question.

Sometimes I'll suggest a prayer as simple as, "God, if you're there, would you help me know you? Please reveal more of yourself to me. Amen."

Prayer isn't about polished words. It's about an honest conversation with a God who already knows us and delights in hearing our voice. When people agree to give prayer a go, ask them what they notice. Has anything changed? Do they feel able to bring their worries to God? Could this become a regular rhythm in their week?

The aim isn't that people become dependent on us to pray for them, but that they grow in confidence to pray for themselves.

3. Create space to notice His presence

Many people are looking for somewhere safe to bring the things they carry – their worries, their family situations, their health, their hopes and dreams. Helping someone notice God's presence is not about escaping everyday life but about discovering that God is present within it.

But how do we do that? It may be different for each person, but encourage them to pause and open themselves to God.

For example, you might suggest listening quietly to a worship song. Afterwards, simply ask, "What stood out to you?" Or you could print off a copy of Psalm 13 for them to read at different points in the week. You might read it with them in person, first of all explaining that this is an ancient prayer from David when he felt forgotten and overwhelmed. Many people resonate with his honesty. It might be helpful to point out that David begins with questions and frustration but chooses to keep bringing them to God and that people have been reflecting on these words for thousands of years!

Another simple practice is centering prayer, encouraging those you are serving to find a quiet place, taking a few slow breaths, and using a simple phrase such as "Jesus, I am here" or "Be still and know that I am God" or "Come, Holy Spirit." When things get tough or there is a feeling of overwhelm, gently return to that phrase and remind yourself that God is closer than you realise.

These aren't complicated. None requires a theology degree, a discipleship course or years of church experience. They are simply gentle ways of helping people take their own next step with Jesus.

But discovering God was never meant to be a solo journey. Throughout Scripture, faith is lived out in community. We need one another! The church is not a place people come because they cannot access God themselves, it is a family where people learn what it means to follow Jesus together.

As churches, we rightly invest time in serving our communities, praying for people and creating opportunities for faith conversations. Alongside all of that, let's help people discover that God is not distant: they do not need us to stand between them and Him.



Revival and renewal

A history of “good news to the poor”

BY ANDY ROBINSON, CEO, WAYMAKER

The word ‘revival’ can cause a stir among followers of Jesus, and not always in a good way. But tracking back through revivals across the UK¹ over the past 500 years, there is one very clear, consistent theme – Christian revivals always have a tangible impact on people in poverty.

It’s not just that they mobilise believers into works of compassion and mercy – though it’s noticeable that they do tend to do that. It is also that churches can typically expect to see a significant influx of new believers from among those who are facing poverty of various kinds.



There is no darkness God won’t come to. Do we still believe that Jesus can radically transform the lives of anyone, anywhere, no matter what odds are stacked against them?

Dispelling the myths

There is a persistent and damaging myth about revival that it is essentially inward, private, and ultimately disconnected from the real suffering of the world:

- That revivals fill churches without changing streets;
- That revivals move people emotionally without moving them practically;
- That during revivals, those in poverty stay trapped while the pews fill up.

The historical record of the British Isles refutes that myth entirely. Looking at the documented records of 32 movements of revival across the United Kingdom and Ireland, spanning more than four centuries – from the Scottish Reformation of 1559 to the Alpha movement of the 1990s – the evidence shows that revival is literally “good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

In each case, I explored not only what happened spiritually, but what happened socially: who attended, what changed, and – most critically – whether people in poverty were among those who demonstrably benefitted as an outcome.

The same story

What emerged was a consistent and often startling pattern.



During the Ulster Revival in Connor (1859), the proportion of ‘paupers’ in the Ballymena workhouse fell from one-sixth to one thirty-third in two years. Four publicans closed their doors, not by law but by conversion.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Salvation Army did not merely preach to those in poverty; they built the world’s first free labour exchange, opened night shelters and soup kitchens, and ran rescue homes for women in the most desperate circumstances. They also campaigned for improved working conditions and against sexual exploitation, playing a significant part in the age of consent being raised from 13 to 16 in 1885.

The Primitive Methodists drew their membership from miners, mill hands, and farm labourers – and then produced from those same communities the trade union leaders, Chartists, and Labour MPs who reshaped British working-class life in the early 1800s.

The Hebrides Revival of 1949 swept away social evils “as by a flood” across some of the most economically deprived island communities in Scotland, “and whole districts were completely changed”.²

Again and again, genuine revival did not leave people in poverty where it found them.

Jesus cares about poverty

This does not mean every revival led to exactly the same outcomes, or that every move of God produced equally strong evidence. Sometimes the historical record is thin or genuinely ambiguous – particularly for some of the 17th century movements, or for the renewal era of the 1970s–1990s.

But where the evidence is strong, it is striking. The God who has moved across the British Isles in revival after revival is not indifferent to poverty, addiction, exploitation, and despair. He moved into these situations. He changed the people most trapped by them. Whole communities were measurably different as a result.



Jesus changes lives. No one is beyond His reach. As one of the Jubilee+ Formed training participants, Ethan, says: “There is no darkness God won’t come to.” Do we still believe that Jesus can radically transform the lives of anyone, anywhere, no matter what odds are stacked against them?

The question for the Church today is not whether revival and social transformation are connected. History has answered that. The question is whether we are praying, living, and believing in a way that invites the same God to do the same again...

Find out more about WayMaker here



¹ This is true of revivals in other nations across the world too, but this study focused on revivals in the UK.

² https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/608089/The_Hebrides_Revival.aspx

Final thoughts

BY ANDY SMITH, HEAD OF DISCIPLESHIP, CAP

CAP



Salvation is not just about our future hope of eternal life with Jesus. It's about His Kingdom being established on earth as it is in heaven. Whether your compassion looks like friendship, hospitality and listening, or something more organised like food, toddler groups and debt help, putting compassion into the context of a compassionate King opens up the whole gospel for the whole person.

Listen first, always

Most of us feel loved when we're listened to. It's as simple as that. Genuinely taking an interest in someone – that is, listening well – helps everything to begin with the dignity and agency of the person we have the privilege of loving.

Prayer is care

Offer to pray – the majority of people will say yes. A simple, short prayer is an act of care and can lead to people encountering the peace and presence of God. If you can't offer in the moment, use prayer cards (see page 15) or think about how digital media can be another option for gently offering prayer.

Offer a Bible

The Evangelical Alliance's *Finding Jesus* research found that 47% of UK Christians who came to faith as adults in the past five years said that reading the Bible helped them explore Christianity.¹ And people are hungry for it. Between 2019 and 2024, Bible sales in the UK rose by 87% and they're still rising.²

Helping people to experience the Bible positively and relevantly is profoundly compassionate.

Invite and include

Not just to events or courses, but also to food and fun. In the pandemic of loneliness, helping someone to belong without condition is hugely healing. One of the most radical things about Jesus was who He ate with.

You are already brilliant at evangelism. You are kind, generous, compassionate, and welcoming. You're like a kingdom of God circuit board that has all the right components in place. The little switch, where you make Jesus the context for your compassion, can inspire the lightbulb moment for someone: "Ohhhh... this kindness... this is what God's like."



the justice and mercy book

what every book in the
Bible says about how to
act justly, love mercy
and walk humbly with
your God

natalie williams



¹ <https://www.eauk.org/resources/our-resources/reports/finding-jesus>

² <https://spckpublishing.co.uk/blog/bible-sales-surge-among-gen-z-spck-s-role-in-the-growing-demand.html>



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