

Shapes for Living

Week 5 Growing. Group leaders notes

Before the meeting

Please look at the course booklet and online resources and decide where you want your group to focus. Decide how you want to structure the time - discussion, praying, activity ...

Confidentiality and sensitivity: Please ask that the time be a 'safe space' for people to share as they wish. Some might share quite personally. It is important to agree that no one's personal story is shared outside the room.

It is a safe space for questions; no questions are stupid or unimportant and everyone should feel they have - and be enabled to by both you as the leader and all participants – an equal opportunity to contribute if they wish.

And where the group does not know the answer let us say so – and perhaps go exploring.

The theme this week is 'Growing'

So far as is possible it may help to anticipate the range of people who are likely to be there – age, background etc. What might they bring to this topic?

Beginning the meeting

If you have the equipment, you might like to show Bishop Rachel's weekly video at the start of each session (perhaps over tea/coffee). The booklet itself is available online in PDF form.

Please begin with words of welcome – and give time to share names if folk don't know each other.

An opening prayer.

Introduce the theme

As well as notes in the course booklet there are further suggested reflections online.

Gathering up at the end

Allow time for people to gather and say what they feel has been important, something they are taking away a question to go on exploring etc. A flip chart can help.

Challenge

It is always helpful to include an element of challenge in the discussion, but this needs to be realistic and practical.

We all want our faith or understanding to grow. But in practice – what helps us make this possible?

Draw the group's attention to the Diocesan training brochure and the Mission and Ministry Department.

Encourage and express interest in what comes out.

Prayer

It may help to agree what we might want to include by way of closing prayer.

Simple structures are a help:

We thank you for ...

We ask for ...

Examen

We would encourage you use this ancient form of prayer. It helps us gather and be more attentive to ways God has been speaking through the meeting, day or week. It can be found at the end of the course booklet.

Allow a few moments between each section.

Pray the Shapes for Living course prayer.

The Shapes for Living course has been designed to develop a nurturing and sustainable shape for living as faithful disciples of Christ in the midst of the challenges and dilemmas of daily living. You might like to ask your group how they might support one another in sustaining their 'Rule of Life'. Look out also for Shapes for Living workshops in the deaneries.