

# the GIFT

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## a life in the Spirit course LEADER'S TRAINING

Ideally you will need to organise two training sessions for your leadership team although you might be able to squeeze this into one depending on the experience of your leaders – whatever you do don't leave out the need to pray.

### TRAINING SESSION 1.

The team should watch the **Leaders film clip** online section by section and discuss and go through these **Top Tips for Leaders** covering all the different areas to ensure everyone is confident and clear about what is needed to run The Gift.

### TRAINING SESSION 2.

In this session you will need to watch the relevant section in the **Leaders film clip** and then the cover the **Prayer Ministry Guidelines** to be prepared for the prayer time following the **Encountering God's Spirit** talk. The guidelines can be downloaded and printed from the website.

## TOP TIPS FOR LEADERS

Do cover these tips **EVEN IF YOU HAVE RUN THE COURSE BEFORE, we all need reminders!**

### THREE KEY P's

**PRAY** as a team and intercede for the success of the course. Remember to pray for the venue, publicity, guests, your team, the small groups, equipment - anything and everything that will affect the success of the course! Ask God to cover all with his protection. You may want to develop an intercession plan and get the team to pray and fast for a different aspect each day leading up to the start of the course. Pray for the expectation that the Holy Spirit will touch and change lives.

**PUBLICITY** - Personal invitation is always the best. Get talking about it! Word of mouth is a great way to get people interested. Use the trailer film at the end of mass or send around as an email link to potential guests. Back this up with newsletters, posters, flyers and ask your priest to recommend it from the pulpit.

### An idea for a short presentation at the end of Mass

Hold up a wrapped present and use this as a visual aid to explain that as Catholics most of us have been given our faith as children, like a gift, but sometimes in the busyness of life we set it to one side waiting to unwrap it until we have more time! However the Church challenges us to unwrap this gift, our faith, as an adult. The Gift course has been produced to help us to do just that. It has been developed as a response to Pope Francis's exhortation 'The Joy of the Gospel'. Briefly outline details of the course - where, when, six/seven sessions, titles, show promo if possible. Finally present the challenge 'Have you unwrapped your gift?' Then make sure you have signup sheets and info available to hand out as people leave.

**PREPARATION** – where ever this course is being held, home or parish it is important to create an inviting atmosphere. Check out your sound and visual equipment before people arrive. Make sure all is working well and that all chairs have a good view.

If you are in a parish hall run this course café style with tables /candles/flowers, have a team of welcomers to chat to people and help newcomers feel at ease, ensure the room is warm, quiet music on arrival, this really helps with atmosphere. Having refreshments coffee/tea or a glass of wine/nibbles add to the hospitality. Remember to set up the small group areas ahead of time if possible.

If you are running it in a home you may want to offer a simple meal which is a great way to break down barriers, however if this is not possible then a cuppa or wine and biscuits/nibbles are a nice thing to offer especially if people are arriving direct from work.

Although the course has MC's on film at the beginning of each talk, someone will need to welcome everyone, say a short prayer, share a sign of peace before each talk begins.

## HOW CAN IT BE RUN?

The course can be used either over 6/7 weeks (see below), it can also be run it as a retreat over a week-end.

## THE OPTIONAL EXTRA SESSION

We have been offered the opportunity of using a powerful movie presentation produced by Billy Graham in America which specifically looks at what Jesus did for us on the Cross and the difference it can make to our life. It is a great opportunity to really help us understand the truth of the Cross. We would highly recommend making the course 7 sessions by using this **in between Session 2. The Joy of the Gospel and Session 3. Living the New Life.**

## A TYPICAL EVENING... OBVIOUSLY THIS CAN BE DONE DURING THE DAY!

**Before arrival set up equipment, check sound and vision. Set up café style tables/tablecloths/flowers/candles. Make sure room is warm! Background music.**

- 7.30** Welcomers in place. Guests arrive. Tea/coffee/Biscuits/nibbles on tables. Introduce people to one another to help break the ice. Encourage people to sit and chat around tables.
- 7.50** Brief intro/welcome to the evening. Short prayer and share a sign of peace.
- 8.00** Start film.
- 8.30** Break into small groups.
- 9.15** Come together for distribution of Daily Prayer Reflections and final prayer
- 9.30** Home

## **RETREAT WEEKEND TIMETABLE**

### **DAY ONE**

**10.15** Praise and worship

**10.45** Welcome, opening prayer and intro

**11.15** Session 1 The Father's Loving Plan followed by small group discussion

**12.30** Lunch

**13.30** Session 2 The Joy of the Gospel followed by small group

**14.50** Session 3 Intro to the Cross (short clip) and then The Cross followed by small group and Holy hour preparation.

**17.00** Holy hour - Mass or Adoration

**18.00** Supper

**19.00** Session 4 The Gift of The Spirit followed by small group

**20.00** Finish

### **DAY TWO**

**10.00** Praise and worship

**10.30** Welcome, Comments about Sessions 1-4

**11.00** Session 5 Unwrapping God's Gift followed by small group. Reconciliation available

**12.30** Lunch

**13.30** Session 6 Encountering God's Spirit Part A

**14.00** Prayer ministry, quiet time then Part B - Break

**15.15** Session 7 Living in The Spirit followed by small group

**16.45** Mass

## **DAILY PRAYER REFLECTIONS**

These are downloadable weekly sheets from the website. We recommend printing these and giving these out at the end of the session even though guests can download them from the website themselves. Encourage people to be faithful to reading this each day to start a routine. Explain that what we begin at home is all part of the journey and helps to unwrap the gift of the Holy Spirit.

## **REGISTRATION AND ORGANISING SMALL GROUPS**

The first session is always the most difficult as you will need to get small groups in place if you are running it in parish or school. The smoothest way of doing this is on arrival to give each guest a card with a number on, 1, 2, 3, 4 etc, depending on how many people you are expecting, and how many small groups you are running. At the end of the talk you can ask the leader of each numbered group to stand and then invite people to move into their numbered groups. In the small groups start by asking people to write their own name label and introduce themselves and to fill out a sheet with contact telephone and email – assure them this is not to hassle them but to have a point of contact if something unexpected happened and the meeting needed to change.

## **SMALL GROUP LEADERS... DON'T FORGET**

**SMALL GROUPS** need to be no bigger than 10 people and will need the space to ensure people can have confidentiality to share what is on their minds and hearts. Ideally each group needs 2 leaders to help facilitate the faith sharing.

**PRAY** for your group daily.

**REMEMBER THE AIM** of the sessions is to help people encounter God the Father through a deeper relationship with Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep this at the forefront of your mind before and during the groups so that all you do will help lead people in this direction.

**PROVOKE QUESTIONS** - don't teach or talk too much. This is the hardest thing to do and very few people do this well. Guests learn better if they hear themselves trying to work out the answers rather than be given another talk – resist it!

**ENCOURAGE** people to ask anything and don't be worried if you haven't got answers, be honest and say you will find out. The purpose of the group is faith sharing not having a full blown answer to each point.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** - it is essential, people need to feel secure to express themselves and not worrying that what they say will be discussed elsewhere.

**THE UNDER TALKATIVE PERSON** - Encourage all to participate but don't insist! Allow guests the space to listen and not contribute if they don't want to. Don't be afraid of silence some people find they need time to process information.

**THE OVER TALKATIVE PERSON** - If someone in the group is too dominant you may have to gently take them to one side after a session and perhaps ask them to help you encourage others to speak, explain others may find it more difficult to express themselves and so we need to allow room to coax them forward.

## **SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS**

Here are the suggested questions to help in the small groups, don't be bound by these but they may help to keep people on track if need be. Try to encourage people to speak about what they think and feel to help them explore their own faith journey and how it affects their everyday life.

## **SESSION 1 THE FATHER'S LOVING PLAN**

1. What are you hoping to receive from this course?
2. How could knowing more of God's love help you in your everyday life?

## **SESSION 2 THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL**

1. Who is Jesus for you?
2. What difference does he make in your life?

## **OPTIONAL SESSION THE CROSS - BILLY GRAHAM (ADD IN BETWEEN 2 AND 3)**

1. How have you grown in your understanding of what Jesus did for us on the Cross?
2. What affect will this have in your life?

## **SESSION 3 THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT**

1. What is your experience of the Holy Spirit?
2. How would an increase of the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit help you in your life?

## **SESSION 4 UNWRAPPING GOD'S GIFT**

1. How easy do you find owning up to the things you do wrong?
2. What preparation do you need to receive more of the Holy Spirit in your life.

## **SESSION 5 ENCOUNTERING GOD'S SPIRIT**

No questions – Prayer ministry

## **SESSION 6 LIVING IN THE SPIRIT**

1. What difference has doing this course made to you?
2. What is God leading you to do next? How will you continue to live life in the Spirit?

## **DON'T OVER RUN!**

People may be getting on really well and conversation could be flowing and then next thing you know you are 10/15 mins over. This may put someone off coming to the next session or it may mean paying extra to a babysitter so keep an eye on the clock. It's always best to leave wanting more!

## **DAILY PRAYER REFLECTIONS**

Ask how people are getting on and encourage them to share how God has been speaking to them through these short reflections. Encourage them to expect to hear God in this prayer time.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

Throughout the sessions a number of books have been recommended, in particular 'Towards a fuller life in the Holy Spirit' by Charles Whitehead. This is an excellent explanation of who the Holy Spirit is, what He does, and the gifts He gives us. We would recommend this book especially to those who are leading groups and doing prayer ministry as it will really help to explain some of the areas that people may not have heard about before.

The CaFE book 'Strength to Strength' is recommended to help people develop their prayer life and 'Pass It On' by Michelle Moran will give valuable assistance to start evangelising. Also written and produced by David Payne are 'Alive' and 'Dare to Believe'.

All these resources are available via [goodnewsbooks.co.uk](http://goodnewsbooks.co.uk). We would suggest having copies on display to encourage people to begin spiritual reading.

## **FOLLOW UP**

### **THINK OF THE END AT THE BEGINNING!**

It is important to plan follow up. In the final session the talk gives essential points to living a life in the Spirit. It explains how key it is to journey in faith with a community of people and suggests either running another course together or starting a prayer/bible group. There are many options to help with this. We would recommend the CaFE bible series 'The Big Picture' which is a 10 session bible study course which helps people develop small groups and study scripture together or 'Strength to Strength' the CaFE course specifically about daily prayer. Encourage people to discuss the possibilities and make a plan, even get them to sign up on the final night.

Remember Pope Francis's challenge to be 'spirit filled evangelisers' and the easiest way to do this could be to re run The Gift or the Alpha course and to invite new people to come along and find out about living life in the Spirit.

## **BEFORE THE SESSION ENCOUNTERING GOD'S SPIRIT**

**TRAINING FOR PRAYER MINISTRY** - All group leaders should meet on a separate occasion to pray and minister to each other in preparation for the session **ENCOUNTERING GOD'S SPIRIT**. Together go through short section on the Leaders film clip and the downloadable **PRAYER MINISTRY GUIDELINES**. Don't miss the prayer time out it is **ESSENTIAL TO THE COURSE**.

**Make sure each leader has received prayer themselves to give them the courage to pray for others.**

### **PART A AND B \*PLEASE NOTE\***

There is two parts to the Encountering God's Spirit talk, Part A to be shown before the prayer time and then Part B which is to be shown when everyone is gathered together at the end. It is very important to make sure everyone sees both sections.

**We hope and pray that this course,  
The Gift, will bless you and all those  
who attend.**