

EXPERIENCES OF WELCOME



"Das Mahl" aus dem Misereor-Hungertuch "Hoffnung den Ausgegrenzten" von Sieger Köder
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Introduction

This discipleship resource is to help you think deeply about what welcome means in your church context. As a diocese we are seeking to become more and more intercultural, that our churches might reflect the communities we serve, and become more like the church in Revelation 7:9.

This resource has been produced in order to help us reflect on what cultural assumptions relating to welcome and hospitality might exist in our worshipping communities. It's hoped that the reflection that comes from this resource will make our communities places where those who enter might feel like equal and valued partners and participants in our worshipping communities.

It's designed to support individual or collective reflection, and be used over 6 sessions. We know that people learn and engage differently, so there are a variety of different things for each week, ranging from scripture to suggested worship videos.



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WEEK 1 PAULINE

1/. AS YOU BEGIN

Watch Pauline's video where she talks about her experiences of joining a church, available here: <https://youtu.be/AoOuwWCxk2M>

Rather than suggest a passage of scripture for Week 1, we'd like you come up with your own!



2/. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1/. Pauline uses the metaphor of going to the gym for the first time. When have you experienced positive welcome in a non-faith-based space? What might make people feel like they don't belong in your church?
- 2/. Pauline talks about getting to know people through the backdoor of getting involved in the church. What spaces to build these sorts of relationship exist within in the ministry of you church? have you thought about the importance of intercultural welcome in these spaces?
- 3/. Pauline talks about interculturalism being based in scripture. What scriptures come to mind when you think about being intercultural? Why? How might you use these bible passages in your church life?

3/. FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Multilingual Grace is a multilanguage worship song originally written as a Grace, to say 'thank you' to God before eating together. Proskuneo Ministries is a multicultural worship ministry in Atlanta, Georgia. Josh Davis, Creative Pastor of Proskuneo writes

"Here in our community, we eat together a lot... and that means Koreans, Latinos, Americans, Burmese, and Sudanese and more coming together around the table. We wanted something we could sing to thank God together. And, so... we wrote this."

Having read the above, Listen to the song, "Multilingual Grace" by Proskuneo, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PbWc4f8tLE>

Lyrics/translations: <https://songs2serve.eu/songs/multilingual-grace>

What stands out for you about this song?



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WEEK 2 **SUNNY**

1/. AS YOU BEGIN

Watch Sunny's reflections on experiences of welcome within church, available here: https://youtu.be/2hRe0GUf_6k

Read the following passage of scripture: **John 3:18**

2/. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1/. Sunny talks about the way his faith has a history and a story because of the impact on previous generations of his family. We believe in a God who acts in history and across cultures, both in the bible and in more recent generations. What part does history play in your faith?
- 2/. Sunny talks about the 5 marks of mission. (listed below, available [here](#) or [here](#)). Do these marks cross cultural boundaries? If so, how? If not, what needs to change?
- 4/. How can we welcome by participating?
- 5/. What ways can a church show Christ's love in actions, especially where there are language or cultural barriers?

THE 5 MARKS OF MISSION

EVANGELISM: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

DISCIPLESHIP: To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

COMPASSION: To respond to human need by loving service

JUSTICE: To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation

CREATION CARE: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation – sustain and renew the life of the earth



Revd Sunny George
Pioneer Minister of All Saints Belgrave

3/. FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

A New Commandment – by Roy Crabtree, available here:

https://youtu.be/2X8m9tVR0_Y

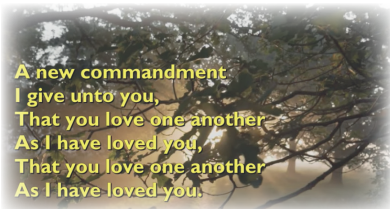
“By Our Love” by Christy Nockels, available here:

<https://youtu.be/mrzlHkPEre0>

“Build My Life” by Housefires, available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYMjO9mLOTw>

What stands out for you as you listen to these songs?



A new commandment
I give unto you,
That you love one another
As I have loved you,
That you love one another
As I have loved you.



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WEEK 3 MAREK

1/. AS YOU BEGIN

Watch Marek's video where he talks about his experiences joining his local church, available here: <https://youtu.be/7vk8032xerk>

Read the following passage of scripture:
Ephesians 2:14-22

2/. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1/. Marek's says that the church is like one big family. What are the characteristics of family?
- 2/. Marek talks about how he was made to feel welcome because he was asked to actively participate in church life. What are the intergenerational and/or intercultural gifts and talents of those within your congregation that you could value in a new way?
- 3/. Different churches have different ways of expressing belonging. What does belonging look like in your church?
- 4/. How do we build meaningful relationships with people from other cultural backgrounds? What unseen friendship networks unconsciously exclude people?



3/. FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Listen to the song "They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love", available on youtube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-W5HEVPJT8>

Thinking about Marek's experiences, what stands out for you most as you engage with this media?



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WEEK 4 MOHAMMAD

1/. AS YOU BEGIN

Watch Mohammad's video where he shares his testimony of coming to faith, available here:
<https://youtu.be/qgm6qtjksA>

Read the following passages of scripture:

Matthew 13: 1-23 Lev 19:34



2/. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1/. Mohammad experiences love through the radical welcome that he receives by the family that gave him a bedroom. How could you express radical love in this way to others?
- 2/. Does the way you express or receive love to others differ depending on whether they are different to you?
- 3/. When is a time you learnt something about God from somebody's difference?
- 4/. Multiple people loved Mohammad during his faith journey. How can you plant the seeds of the gospel in people's lives through loving them?

3/. FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Listen to the hymn
"When I Needed A Neighbour" by Sydney Bertram Carter.

When you think about Mohammad's testimony, what stands out for you as you listen to this song?

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WEEK 5 ANDREW

1/. AS YOU BEGIN

Watch Andrew's video where he shares his reflections on the importance of welcome, available here:

<https://youtu.be/oC5Pj16HVL4>

Read the following passage of scripture:

1 Cor 12:12-end

2/. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1/. Fr Andrew talks about the importance of welcome, and how a warm and generous welcome can put people's heart at ease. Where have you experienced welcome like this? What might it look like to offer this welcome in your church?
- 2/. There is a tension expressed in this video between our individuality and our shared humanity, particularly in Christ Jesus. How can we guard against colour-blind-ness when focusing on our shared humanity?
- 3/. Fr Andrew talks at length about the importance of recognising the humanity of others. Be that through friendship, evangelism or welcome.

Where in your life this week might you recognise the humanity of another, and in recognising that humanity see the face of God?



3/. FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Somlandela (Love Calling):

Greg and NJ are South Africans. One is white, one is black. Before meeting one another, they hated each other's race. But when they took the time to listen to each other's stories and really be present, and love one another, a song came from that. They paired the song they wrote with a traditional Zulu hymn, 'Somlandela' which means 'we will follow'. This is a song of reconciliation and commissioning.

Watch **Somlandela (Love Calling)** here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riwkSJXEaUA>

Having listened to the song and read the story above, what stands out for you?



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WEEK 6 MANUELA

1/. AS YOU BEGIN

Watch Manuela's video where she shares about her experiences of welcome within churches in the UK, available here: <https://youtu.be/uM2nUlc25Gw>

Read the following passage of scripture:

Genesis 1: 26-28



2/. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1/. Manuela talks about the damage of well-meaning conversations narrowing her down to not being from England, and therefore othering her. How can you build relationship with people without fixating on difference? Have you ever experienced being othered in this way?
- 2/. Manuela speaks about how meaningful it was to lead the Lord's Prayer in Swiss German, because it helped her understand that her culture shouldn't be hidden but offered as a gift. In what way can your church help people to understand this and value other people's heritage?

3/. How can a space be created to share all of their story and for that to help shape the community and inform practice?

4/. Manuela emphasises that the diversity of human beings reflects the image of God. How would seeing God in those you dislike/other change your perceptions of them?

3/. FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

How is the image of God represented here? What you could do in your life to authentically reflect the diversity in this image?

What could you do to make your life more like this diverse expression of welcome and hospitality?



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