

Shapes for Living

Week 4 Playing. 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 ...

An opening prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to be in the room as you gather as God's people. Pray for God's love to be ever present in patience, kindness and mutual respect.

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.

Beginning the meeting

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

The word 'Playing' here is used in its widest context – what we do for fun, relaxation and to create personal space. It would be interesting to draw out of people what gives them most pleasure, refreshes them, relaxes them. What they choose says a lot about how they might spiritually grow too.

One way is to complete the suggested sentences in the course booklet. i.e.

How do I 're-charge my batteries'?

How easy do you find it to 'switch off'?

What helps me to relax?

What activities nurture my creative side, or help me learn new skills?

What helps me express myself?

What excites me?

Do I like to be on my own, with others, or both?

Do I like to make things?

Would I describe myself as 'adventurous'?

Would I describe myself as creative?

Do I have a secret wish to...(be a rock guitarist, a painter, a sportsperson, actor, writer, cook, walk the Santiago de Compostella route, etc)?

Where do I go on holiday?

One way to explore these questions and any others you might think of, is to produce a set of cue cards with one of these questions on each of them – ask people to take a card and discuss it (if they feel they can). Do encourage contributions and express interest in what comes out.

Notice the sentence in the course booklet; 'God is playful. Fun to be with. Likes being with us.' ~ Does that provoke discussion?

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.

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

You might use the prayer of examen at the end of the course booklet.

Allow a few moments between each section.

Pray the Shapes of Living course prayer.