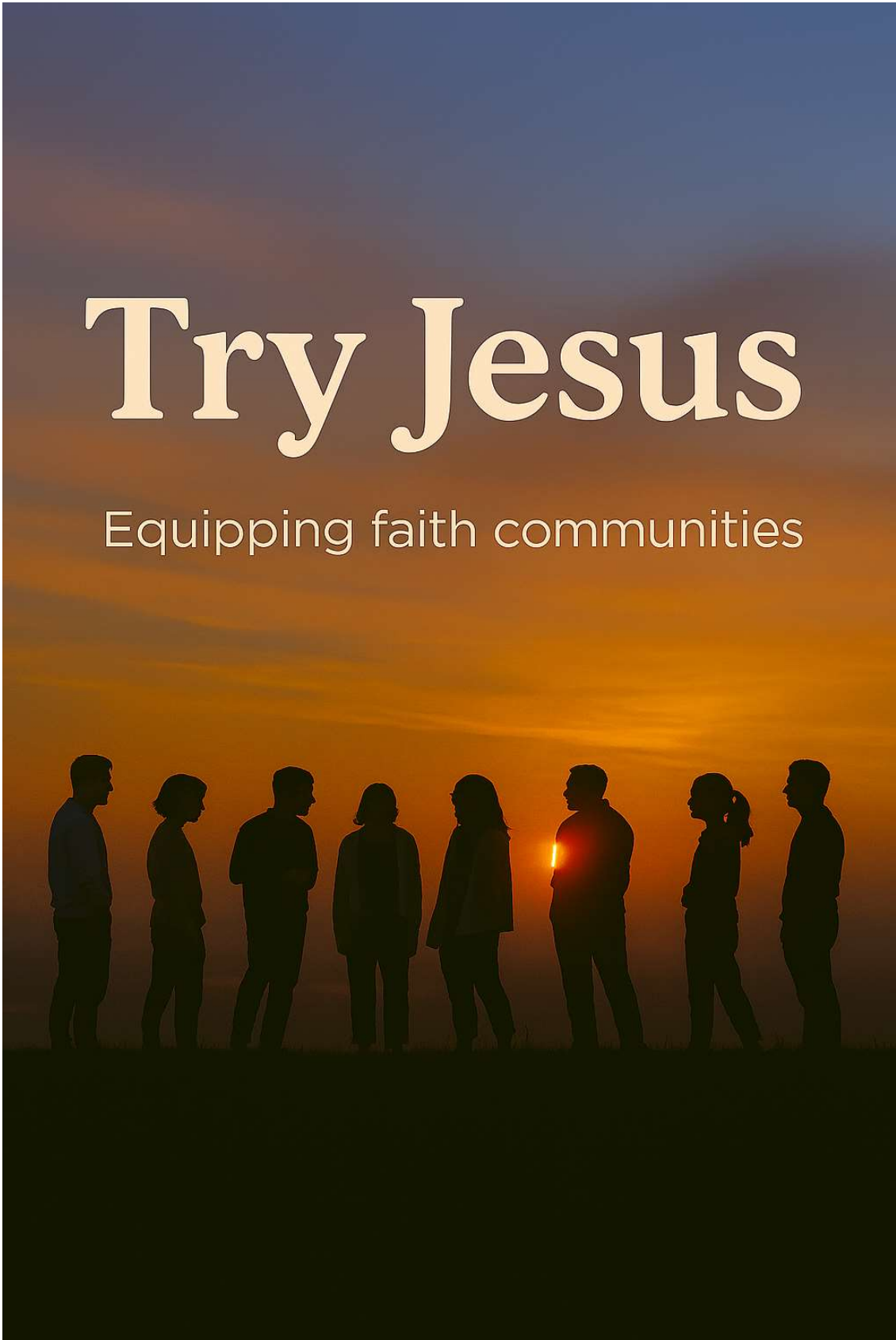


Try Jesus

Equipping faith communities



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TRY JESUS – Preamble

Key Scripture

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Matthew 9:37-38

Try Jesus is a set of tools for equipping disciples to make disciples who in turn bring hope to a broken world where war, famine, family breakdown, loneliness are all common place.



These are not just social problems to be managed; they are signs of a deeper fracture, the outcome of a world that decided to turn their backs on God. The world thought a life without God would bring freedom, but instead it has produced exhaustion, hopelessness, and isolation.

People are spiritually lost, searching for meaning while carrying invisible wounds deep within their hearts. Beneath many smiles is a silent cry for hope, peace, forgiveness, and purpose.

Jesus did not come merely to improve our lives. He came to rescue, restore, and reconcile humanity back to God. The world does not simply need better systems or programs. It needs the presence of Christ.

This is why God has never abandoned his world. He’s a good Father and invites all of us back to live how he created us to live according to his original design, a way of life that is full, abundant, relational, and whole. From the beginning, God’s desire has been that life on earth would reflect life in heaven. That is why Jesus came. ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son’.

Try Jesus exists to help ordinary people who have discovered and tasted that God is good, to share this good news with others who can then create more places, ‘faith communities’ where God’s goodness is experienced and shared by disciples mutually encouraging one another, loving each other and learning to follow Jesus together.

What Faith Communities Look Like

God’s response to a broken world has never been abstract.

It has always been people learning to live **the ‘one another way’**.

Faith communities are not defined by size or charisma, but by the quality of life they embody. They are ordinary groups of people whose shared life has been reshaped by 'the way' of Jesus.

In Scripture, these communities consistently look like places where people are known, burdens are shared. They are not perfect or polished. They are formed, slowly and honestly, through shared rhythms of trust, hospitality, prayer, and obedience.

Where this kind of life takes root, people encounter something they may never have experienced before: the full and abundant life we were created for.

When faith communities create and hold these spaces, the gospel becomes visible.

These communities quietly answer the question **many people are already asking:**

"Is there another way to live?"

This is why Jesus did not begin with institutions or programmes. He began with people and households.

God's desire has always been the same: that life on earth would begin to reflect life in heaven.

Faith communities are local, relational, and reproducible expressions of God's Kingdom.

The Bible gives us a picture of communities and relational networks where God's peace takes root in homes and relationships. Where faith is explored together, and daily life is shaped by 'the way' of Jesus. They become what we might call **households of peace, spaces where people can breathe** again, heal, and learn to live differently as they learn to live

together.

In these households' people are transformed as faith is discovered, questions are welcomed and obedience is practiced in ordinary life. Meals, conversations, and shared rhythms form disciples and communities grow naturally.

Jesus recognised that deep transformation requires time. That is why he told his disciples:

“Do not move from house to house. Stay there.” (More of this in Tool 6)

Formation happens when people remain long enough for love to take shape.

Jesus taught his followers to look for people of peace, those already open, receptive, and responsive to God’s work. People who like, listen and are happy to serve you.

They welcome relationship, open their world, and often become the doorway through which an entire household or community encounters the way of Jesus.

Repeatedly in Scripture we see this pattern: one person opens their life, a household forms and a new community emerges, the Kingdom becomes visible. These people are not the destination. They are the entry point.

How Try Jesus Helps This Happen

Try Jesus provides 10 tools designed to equip faith communities with simple, biblical practices that help the process of disciple making unfold naturally and faithfully. They are easily modelled and are repeatable.

The tools are designed to help believers: recognise where God is already at work, identify people of peace, stay where this peace is, allow community to form through relationships.

Rather than asking people to expand faster or do more, Try Jesus invites them to slow down and go deeper.

The goal to restore households of peace or faith communities in homes, friendships, neighbourhoods, and communities, places where God’s Kingdom is not just spoken about, but experienced.

What follows are tools that help ordinary people to...participate in God’s restoring work, form households of peace and live the prayer “on earth as it is in heaven” in everyday life so that others can find Jesus.

Mission begins where your feet already stand. The Gospel travels best through relationships. You do not need a platform to reveal Jesus. Often, ordinary acts of love become holy moments where people begin to encounter the presence of God.

Who is the training for?

Ordinary disciples who are interested in learning about disciple making in simple, biblical and reproducible ways.

House Churches who are interested to learn about multiplication

Traditional Churches and leaders that want to reach people that will not generally come to a traditional model but have a heart to equip and release some members to create faith communities in homes and everyday places or spaces beyond the church walls

Tool 1 - Your Mission Field

Key Scripture

“Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.”
, Mark 5:19

Preamble

Grow where you are planted

Many Christians assume that mission is something that is done overseas or by professional, clergy. But in the way of Jesus, mission is everyone’s responsibility, and it usually begins at home and by simply paying attention.

Before we learn what to say or what to do, we learn to see.

This first tool in Try Jesus is about recognising the mission field that we are already standing in. It is made up of the people and places that you regularly encounter: your household, workplace, neighbourhood, social spaces, and online environments. These are not interruptions to your discipleship; they are the primary context of it.

Apart from the Apostles, Jesus did not send his other disciples far away. He sent them into everyday life, meals, workplaces, roads, homes, and friendships. In the same way, God has already placed you among particular people that you can reach out to.

Tool 1 helps you:

Remember that we need to go together with a co-worker.

It finding about finding a co-worker who will join you to work in your mission field. Jesus sent them out two by two so we could encourage each other on the way.

Notice and name your mission field

Move from vague ideas of “reaching people” to developing relationships with people you already know

It is about noticing more and praying about what and who you notice. It’s about finding People of Peace and also projects that we can do to serve the community

God often changes communities through ordinary believers who simply become attentive to the people already around them.

Everything that follows in Try Jesus builds on this simple but profound insight:

Once we can clearly see where our mission field is, we can explore how Christ is made visible there.

Why This Matters

Many disciples feel paralysed with the challenge of the great commission. The world is vast, the needs are many, and without focus it is easy to feel overwhelmed or ineffective.

Defining your mission field brings clarity. Clarity leads to focus. Focus leads to fruit

This is achievable. When you recognise who God has already placed around you, your time, energy, and prayer become intentional. You notice people differently: not as interruptions, but as neighbours God deeply loves.

Naming your mission field grounds prayer. Rather than praying generally, we begin praying specifically, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide us, prepare hearts, and open doors at the right time.

Scripture reminds us that this is God's work first. Like Lydia in Acts 16, it is the Lord who opens hearts. Our role is to be present, loving, and attentive.

Group Exercise

Discuss who you think might be a good coworker. Explain why and discuss how and when you could approach them to see if they have the same calling. What might that relationship look like? What projects might you engage in to serve the people in your mission field. Pray.

Create a prayer map. This is simply a list of people by name that you can regularly and intentionally pray for. Pray for the needs in your community. It could be paper or digital.

GROW WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED



Begin praying for these people by name. Ask God to: prepare their hearts, show you how to love them, show you where He is already at work. Then, be faithful. Trust that God has heard your prayers and be intentional about having spiritual conversations with them as the holy spirit leads you.

Discuss how you can deepen the relationships you already have.

Tool 2 - The Aroma of Christ

Key Scripture

“For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life.”

, 2 Corinthians 2:15,16

Preamble

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Once we have become aware of our mission field, the next step is not to say more, but to be present differently.

An aroma works by presence, not explanation. It does not argue or persuade, it simply is! In the same way, people often encounter God before they understand Him or choose to follow Him.

Just as the smell of good food awakens hunger and desire, when we “smell like Jesus” in a broken world, something stirs in people. Curiosity grows. Thirst awakens. Hearts open.

Jesus’ holiness was attractive. People were drawn to His love and compassion long before they understood His teaching. His presence healed, comforted, challenged, and revealed what was hidden. Before He explained truth, people first experienced grace.

The clearest ways Jesus taught us to live this kind of life is found in His words to His disciples: This is twofold...

How we love one another

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples...”

How we love our neighbours

Love your neighbour as yourself, (The Good Samaritan Luke 10.25,27)

As we demonstrate genuine friendship and love for one another and others, it becomes irresistible to those who are weary and heavy, laden. People are drawn not to arguments, but to communities marked by care, joy, and faithfulness.

In the same way, when we love those in our faith communities and neighbours, practically, relationally, sacrificially, people begin to smell the aroma of Christ. A light shines in the darkness.

The aroma of Christ is often revealed in simple moments: sitting beside someone in grief, helping a struggling neighbour, listening without rushing, praying quietly for someone in pain, sharing meals with lonely people, practicing hospitality.

Most people will experience Jesus through kindness long before they understand theology.

Why This Matters

When we live authentically and model the life of Jesus, the world around us is quietly transformed into a better place. This is what it means to pray and live, “On earth as it is in heaven.” Light draws people in.

Movements begin when people see love in action. And our world desperately needs people willing to embody that love in everyday places.

People don’t usually reject Jesus. They reject Christians who don’t look like Him!

Acts of love do three powerful things:

1. Open doors
2. Build trust
3. Prepare hearts for the gospel

We become the aroma of Christ when we love as He loves, not just within our own circles, but alongside those who need us to stand with them.

Scripture to Reflect On

Deuteronomy 15:11; Open wide your hand... to the needy and the poor.

Isaiah 58:6,11; Isn’t this the fast I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice... to set the oppressed free?

Jeremiah 22:16; “He defended the cause of the poor and needy... Is that not what it means to know Me?” declares the Lord.

Acts 20:35; We must help the weak... It is more blessed to give than to receive.

John 13:35; They will know you are Christians by your love, one for another

Group Exercise

Discuss the scriptures above.

Consider your personal mission field.

What acts of service can you think of doing for different people on your map? How can you love your neighbours through acts of service this week?

What difference do you think this may make?

Keep it small and achievable.

Remember: even the largest tree grows from a tiny seed.

Tool 3 - Try Jesus

Key Scripture

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:31,32

Preamble

In the previous tools, we learned two important things.

First, our mission field is already around us, among ordinary people in the everyday rhythms of life. God has placed us within networks of relationship where faith can be explored naturally.

Second, we are the aroma of Christ. People encounter Jesus long before they understand Him.

Love, presence, kindness, and compassion all prepare the soil of the heart.

Tool 3 brings these together in a simple, relational step.

Asking the “Try Jesus” question is not about persuasion or pressure.

It is a gentle invitation, and a useful way of discovering a potential person of peace.

We live in a broken world, and life is often heavy. People regularly carry relational strain, anxiety, grief, illness, financial pressure, or deep uncertainty. When they share these struggles, they are often already searching for rest, whether they realise it or not.

Jesus speaks directly to this hunger:

“Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Jesus doesn’t promise a life without difficulty. He promises presence, truth, and freedom as we walk with Him.

The Try Jesus question simply creates space for someone to consider whether Jesus might be part of that journey.

You are not responsible for changing hearts. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Your role is simply to love people well, listen carefully, and respond with courage when God opens a door.

Sometimes one honest question becomes the beginning of someone’s journey toward Jesus.

Why This Matters

In our culture, it often feels inappropriate, even rude, to assume someone wants to talk about faith, particularly when they are vulnerable or suffering. This tool respects both freedom and dignity.

Instead of making assumptions, we lead with curiosity. Instead of pushing, we offer permission.

Asking “Have you ever tried Jesus?” allows a person to decide whether they want to explore further. Their response helps us discern whether peace is present.

If someone welcomes the conversation, listens openly, or asks questions, we may be encountering a person of peace. If not, we simply continue to love them and pray for them. There is no offence or pressure, we ‘keep walking’ maybe shaking dust. Just know that the Holy Spirit is still working on softening their hearts for another time and maybe a person other than yourself

How to Use This Tool

The tool itself is simple. It is just one question. What matters most is that we ask it after we have earned the trust or rapport with the person because of our ‘Aroma’.

As we have walked alongside and prayed for people in our Mission Field, we have listened deeply and loved unconditionally. Because of this we experience everyday conversations with friends, neighbours, or colleagues, people often share the pain points of their lives, relational tension, health struggles, financial pressure, loneliness, or fatigue.

After listening fully, when trust and care are present, you may gently ask, with humility and curiosity:

“Have you ever tried Jesus?”

Often this leads to a response like, “What do you mean?”

That question is not resistance, it is permission.

You are now invited to share your story, not a sermon. Why did you decide to follow Jesus? How has walking with Him changed you? How has obedience to His way brought freedom, hope, or healing?

Remember: your mess is your message. (more of this later)

A Gentle Reminder

This tool is not about convincing everyone. It is about discovering who has an open heart. If someone is not interested, honour them and move on with grace.

If someone leans in, listens, and wants to keep the conversation going, you may have found a person God is already drawing.

That is where the journey slows down, deepens, and becomes shared.

Group Exercise

Think about the people in your mission field.

Who regularly shares life with you? Who shares about their struggles? Who might be ready for a gentle invitation, not a debate, but a conversation?

Pray for courage, sensitivity, and love.

Sometimes all it takes is one honest question:

“Have you ever tried Jesus?”

Tool 4 - Your Personal Testimony

Key Scripture

“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

Preamble

When someone responds openly to the “Try Jesus” question, a door has gently opened.

At this point, many well-meaning Christians either say too much, explain too much, or feel pressure to get it right. Tool 4 exists to remove that pressure.

Sharing your personal testimony is not about impressing people or convincing them to believe what you believe. It is simply about telling your story. The truth about what Jesus has done in your life.

Your story is not an argument.

It is an invitation.

In Tool 3, the question “Have you ever tried Jesus?” created permission.

Tool 4 helps you respond to that permission with clarity, humility, and grace.

Why This Matters

Most people are not helped by theological explanations in the early stages of faith exploration. What they are looking for is authenticity.

People are rarely moved by polished perfection. They are moved by honesty.

Your testimony does not need to sound impressive. It simply needs to reveal how Jesus met you in your weakness, confusion, pain, fear, or brokenness.

The power is not in your performance. The power is in Christ.

They want to know:

Is faith real? Does it actually change anything? Is Jesus relevant to ordinary life?

A personal story answers those questions without pressure.

Your testimony does three important things:

1. It humanises faith

2. It builds trust
3. It keeps the focus on Jesus, not you

Remember: most people are not rejecting Jesus, they are listening closely to whether following Him produces life.

A testimony is: honest, centred on Jesus' work, not your goodness and shared with humility

A testimony is not: a sermon, a debate, a complete life story or a platform to fix someone

It lets someone look in and decide whether they want to explore further.

How to Share Your Testimony

Before & After meeting Jesus

1. What life was like **before**? (briefly); Share just enough context to be honest. What was missing? What were you carrying? Where did you feel tired, stuck, or restless?

2. What it is like **after** following Jesus;

This doesn't mean life is perfect, just better. Where have you experienced freedom? Where have you found peace or hope? How does following Jesus help you walk through difficulty?

Honesty builds credibility. Ongoing struggle does not disqualify your story, it often strengthens it.

Keep It Relational

Always keep the other person in view. Share naturally. Leave room for questions.

Often your testimony will conclude with a gentle response like:

"That's why I asked if you'd ever tried Jesus."

"That's been my experience"

Then pause.

Silence often does more work than explanation.

A Key Reminder

Your story is not meant to close the conversation, it is meant to open space.

If someone is curious, listens attentively, or wants to keep talking, that is a strong indicator of peace. If not, you have still shared faithfully, and lovingly. Trust God with the outcome.

Group Exercise

Take a moment to reflect:

How would you describe life before following Jesus in one or two sentences?

What is the most honest way to describe life after Jesus? What difference does following Him make in your life today?

Write it down simply. Say it out loud. Let it sound like you.

Remember: your mess is part of your message, and Jesus still writes the story.

Tool 5. The Nutshell

Restoring a Broken World

Key Scripture

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

, Romans 1:16

Preamble

When someone responds positively to your story and wants to explore a little further, the next step is clarity, not pressure.

Up to this point, the journey has been relational: You lived as the aroma of Christ. You loved people in your mission field. You asked a gentle question. You shared your personal story

If a person remains open, curious, and willing to continue the conversation, Tool 5 helps explain God’s love and purpose in a simple, visual way.

The nutshell is not about a debate or a sales pitch. They are a way of telling the gospel story in a nutshell in your words.



Come, to me all you who are weary
and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Why This Matters

Most people need more than a personal story , they also need a framework.

Telling the gospel in a ‘Nutshell’ explains Gods original design, why brokenness exists, why our efforts to escape it often fail and how Jesus restores what was lost

This tool clarifies the good news without overwhelming, prepares the ground for deeper conversation and sets expectations for what you’ll explore together next

It also gently introduces the idea of discipleship, not just believing something but stepping into a different way of life.

The Nutshell helps you:

- Expose brokenness
- Show why Jesus came
- Invite people into a restored way of living

How to share the gospel in a 'nutshell'

Keep it simple and put it into your own words but in a nutshell the story has three parts;

Nut 1. God created an awesome world

Nut 2. People broke it. We live in a broken world, and it causes pain. Peoples remedy for coping is not sustainable. They thirst again.

Nut 3. God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus so we could find our way home and live the full life he created us for

Jesus willingly entered our broken world. At the cross He carried sin, shame, suffering, and death so humanity could be reconciled back to God.

The resurrection of Jesus declares that darkness does not win, death does not have the final word, and hope is alive.

Remember that the Holy Spirit is what makes the difference. It is not about how well you tell the story so just give it a go

Close Gently with an invitation

Finish by saying something like:

"I've been looking to read the bible with someone. I don't suppose you would be interested, would you?"

Leave it there. No pressure. No rush. Just an invitation to continue the journey together.

Group Exercise

Pair up with someone and practice:

One person explains the gospel in a 'nutshell' switch roles.

Practice drawing them quickly

Practice telling the story without drawing

Let your words be natural, simple and from the heart

This is not about perfection , it's about faithful presence and clear love.

Tool 6. Recognising a Person of Peace

Preamble

We have defined our mission field. We are praying for people and serving in our community. We are the aroma of Christ; we have asked the Try Jesus question with friends conversationally and respectfully. We have shared our personal testimony; we have shared the gospel in a nutshell.

They are still curious.

What This Tool Is For

This tool **helps you take a step of faith** as you learn to recognise people's openness and curiosity. It allows you to confidently and humbly invite them to join you to go on a journey of discovery with you where you study the Good News.

This tool assumes: God is already at work before we arrive. **Our task is discernment**, not persuasion.

When Jesus sent out his disciples, the 12 and then the 72, see Luke 10:5,7, he told his disciples to look for a person of peace, someone who welcomes them, listens openly, and opens their relational world. They were already open, receptive, and responsive to God's work.

Initially they welcome relationship with you, open their homes and hospitality, and often become the doorway through which an entire household or community encounters the way of Jesus.

Repeatedly in Scripture we see this pattern:

These people are not the destination. They are the entry point.

Through them, God forms households of peace, small but powerful centres of transformation where heaven begins to be practised on earth.

This tool is all about raising your awareness of where God is already at work!

A person of peace may:

...welcome conversation naturally, ask spiritual questions, introduce you to family or friends, show unusual openness, invite ongoing relationship, respond warmly to prayer or Scripture

Not every open conversation becomes a person of peace. Discernment grows through prayer, patience, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Group Exercise

Read Luke 9. 1,5 and Luke 10. 1,12

Discuss what a worthy person or a person of peace looks like.

What are the instructions if a person is not interested?

Discuss people of peace that you have possibly encountered and how you knew.

How can you apply that to the people in your Mission Field

Tool 7. Teaching

Now, the question shifts gently from:

“Who is Jesus?”

to

“What does it look like to follow Him?” The Good News is where that question is explored together, directly from Scripture.

How to Teach the Basics of Following Jesus

In the Good News series there are 6 studies. Each study has just 5 verses with each verse informing the lesson title.

Start with the first lesson ‘Jesus’ and move methodically through them in order. This will allow understanding to build naturally. This will explain some of the benefits and costs to following Jesus so they can make an informed decision.

Use the Discovery Bible Reading (DBR) method as you move through the Good News lessons.

How DBR Works

If you can do this as a triad so your POP can see early church life forming naturally.

Read one passage at a time out loud.

Someone else read it again , slowly and clearly.

Ask open, simple questions

Invite the other person to explain what they see in the passage.

Your role is not to teach, but to facilitate discovery. Tool 7. The Good News

Learning the Way of Jesus Together

Key Scripture

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost...?”

, Luke 14:28

Preamble

By this point in the journey, something important has already happened.

You have: built trust through presence, asked an honest question, shared your story, explained God's love and the story of restoration.

If someone chooses to keep walking with you, the natural next step is an invitation to go deeper...You have asked them if they may be interested to read the bible with you!

'I am looking to read the bible with someone. You wouldn't be interested would you'?

Just like a couple considering marriage, it's wise to understand what is being committed to before deciding. Jesus never hid this. He invited people to follow Him, and then He was very honest about what following Him would involve.

The Good News is where we slow down and let Scripture explain that clearly.

This is not about rushing someone into belief and following Jesus is not merely agreeing with ideas. It is learning a new way to live.

Discipleship happens slowly, relationally, prayerfully, and honestly as people walk together in Scripture and obedience.

It is about helping them count the cost, understand the invitation, and discover the life Jesus is calling them into.

Why This Matters

Many churches unintentionally disciple people into:

- traditions
- preferences
- personalities
- opinions

Jesus discipled people into obedience to His word.

The Good News studies are designed to do one simple but powerful thing: place God's Word back at the centre and let it do the work.

Scripture is living and active. It convicts, comforts, challenges, and guides people into real relationship with Jesus. When we read the Bible together authority shifts from people to Scripture and we help people to listen directly to God.

This removes unhealthy dependency on "leaders" or you and equips ordinary disciples to make disciples who make disciples.

Movements grow when obedience is simple, discipleship is relational, and the process is reproducible

Let Scripture speak for itself

If the conversation drifts, gently ask:

“Where do you see that in the passage?”

Establish God’s Word as the authority

Avoid correcting or preaching. Let truth rise naturally from the text.

Give space for the Holy Spirit

Be patient. Allow pauses. Trust God to reveal what is needed.

You may complete several lessons (5 verses) in one sitting , or just one. Always give the option to stop at the end of each lesson. Depth is more important than speed and it is important to only go at the pace your ‘POP’ feels ready for.

Close in prayer and set another time to continue reading together.

The Baptism Conversation

One of the Good News studies is baptism.

Baptism or baptízō (Greek) consistently means immersion and this fits with the idea of burial in Romans 6.3,4 & Colossians 2.12

Jesus came up out of the water as did the Ethiopian eunuch (Matt 3.16 & Acts 8.38,39)

Baptism was always immediate and was the normal response in all biblical conversions.

the 3,000 at Pentecost (Acts 2.41 , same day)

the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8.36 immediately)

Saul (Acts 16.33 , Upon instruction. Before eating or drinking after 3 days fasting)

Philippian jailer (Acts 16.33 , at midnight)

Because you will be studying with people, you need to know what to do:

A Simple Way to Baptise

Ask:

“Have you decided to follow Jesus?” (Yes)

“What is your confession?”

(“Jesus is Lord”)

Say:

“Because of your good confession, I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19), for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38,39).”

Then baptise them under the water in a pool, a river, a creek, anywhere there is enough water.

One Baptism (Ephesians 4:5)

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

The New Testament speaks of one baptism, a simple, obedient response to Jesus. It is not complex or layered with conditions; it is a faithful step of trust that follows faith in Christ.

Over time, various traditions have been added that do not clearly align with Scripture. In many cases, these traditions drift from the New Testament pattern and may have unintentionally obscured the original biblical pattern of baptism.

Some examples include:

***Delaying** baptism for months or even years. In Scripture, baptism follows faith immediately. This may mean that they don't hold it in the same high regard as Jesus and the Apostles did.

Replacing baptism with the “sinner's prayer”. Prayers like this are terrific but it has led to the separation of faith and baptism. Confession was always accompanied with baptism. This is consistent with every recorded conversion in the Bible.

Using **symbolic substitutes** rather than baptism itself, for example, waving a flag or performing a ritual in its place.

Baptising infants who are unable to personally respond in faith, repent or choose to follow Jesus.

***Delaying Baptism** If they have been baptised but it was delayed, there may have been good reason for it! **If, having read the scriptures together, they are comfortable that their baptism aligned with scripture, then we accept them fully. It is in the hands of God at this stage. It is not ours to judge!** It matters not what church or person performed it. What matters is why they did it! A delay could simply mean it took them some time to make a commitment. Remember you were not there at the time.

In other cases there may be times where baptism took place within groups that are cults, for example, Mormon or Jehovah's Witness. These baptisms do not conform to the one baptism talked about in Ephesians and they should be re-baptised into Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Try Jesus encourages obedience to Scripture rather than tradition.

We recognise that questioning long-held traditions can be confronting, especially for sincere believers who love God deeply. Because of this, we must always be gentle, respectful, and humble. **Judgment is not our role; it belongs to Jesus alone.**

However, avoiding the conversation altogether is not loving either. Baptism is part of the gospel, and we talk about it because it matters. We do so with grace, trusting that the Holy Spirit brings clarity and understanding over time.

When someone's baptism does not align with Ephesians 'One Baptism' and they do not feel compelled to be baptised again, we don't argue or apply pressure. We simply acknowledge the gap and say,

"That's okay. We can always come back to this."

Baptism still matters. We don't lower the call, but we also don't rush transformation. We simply continue to love them, walk with them, and practice patience, trusting that understanding grows where needed as people are led by the Holy Spirit.

Our posture is prayerful, echoing Hezekiah's prayer:

"May the Lord, who is good, pardon everyone who sets their heart on seeking God, even if they have a different conviction on particular doctrines."

(See 2 Chronicles 30:18,19)

Group Exercise

Choose one study from The Good News series.

Practice using DBR with 2 , 3 verses on each other, ask open questions, let Scripture speak and resist the urge to explain. Ask questions to draw the point out

If the point of the verse is missed, gently nudge them towards finding the meaning in the verse

Tool 8 - Proximity

Growing Through Shared Life & discovering Leaders

Key Scripture

“Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”

Philippians 3:17

Preamble

As people engage with The Good News and begin learning what it means to follow Jesus, a shift naturally takes place.

Up to this point, the journey has focused on invitation, discovery and obedience to Jesus’ words.

Now the question becomes: How do we grow into this way of life? One way apart from reading and prayer is through proximity. This is where discipling happens, and where we can model and imitate those whose walk is like Jesus’. For this to happen proximity is required.

Some people call this discipleship.

Transformation happens most deeply not through information alone, but through shared life. Jesus did not simply teach ideas, He invited people to be with Him, observe Him, and practise His way alongside Him.

Imitation requires proximity.

Why Proximity Matters

The New Testament consistently teaches that discipleship is formed through example, not explanation alone.

Jesus’ core invitation was simple:

“Follow Me.”

By being in his proximity, his disciples learned how to pray, how to love, how to respond to opposition and how to serve by watching Him live.

The apostles carried this pattern forward. Paul said, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). The Thessalonian believers were commended because they became imitators “of us and of the Lord,” showing that imitation shapes both character and mission.

This is how disciples are made, and how disciples continue to grow.

We learn not only how to follow Jesus ourselves, but how to help others do the same.

Jesus' Model of Proximity

Jesus practised proximity in two simple but powerful ways:

1. Inviting people into His space
2. Entering other people's space

He shared meals, travelled together, and welcomed people into everyday life. At the same time, He consistently entered homes and familiar places, the Samaritan woman's well, Zacchaeus' house, Peter's home, Mary and Martha's table, even the homes of the marginalized and rejected.

The ultimate example of proximity is found in the fact that Jesus modelled proximity by leaving heaven and dwelling among us.

Practising Proximity Today

As followers of Jesus, we continue this same pattern.

Our Space

When we find people of peace, hospitality should become central.

Inviting people into our homes and personal lives allows discipleship to move from theory to reality. Some things are caught, not taught.

Marriage and parenting are often learned by watching in the intimacy of your home. Especially by those who have never had good parents, siblings or home life

Faith is caught as people observe how we respond, repent, forgive, pray, and rely on God in real time.

This requires intentional openness like inviting people to dinner, inviting people to everyday activities, including them in family rhythms, celebrations, and service

It also means vulnerability. Proximity means being seen, not only at our best, but also when we fall short. Grace and forgiveness become visible, not abstract.

Their Space

Jesus taught His disciples to stay in the homes of people of peace.

When the twelve and later the seventy, two were sent out, they were told:

"Stay there. Eat and drink whatever they give you. Do not move from house to house."

Being welcomed into someone's home creates trust and openness. In these spaces, hearts are shared, questions are voiced, and lives are shaped through conversation, Scripture, and prayer.

Discipleship deepens when learning takes place around tables, in living rooms, and within the ordinary rhythms of life.

The Art of Discipling Others (Up/In/Out)

Proximity is also where discipling happens too. This does not need to be complicated but for many of us, the idea of discipling someone else can feel out of reach.

We might think, *"How would I even do that?"* or *"I've never done this before."*

Sometimes we feel like we're not ready, not capable, or not good enough.

Up / In / Out is a simple way to walk alongside someone as they follow Jesus. Anyone can do it.

Up - How is your relationship with God?

Are you spending time with Him? Listening? Growing?

In - How is your relationship with other followers of Jesus?

Are you encouraging one another? Walking together in faith?

Out - How is your outreach going?

Are you sharing the good news of Jesus with others?

It's simple but powerful.

And it's something you can begin right where you are.

Practice Exercise

Break into pairs or triads and read the passages below.

Share about someone you are currently imitating or someone it would be good for you to imitate.

They could be alive or dead!

Discuss how you could grow in proximity with someone. Who might that be and what would it take to achieve it? What might you need to do differently

How might you open your own home or life to people of peace.

Scriptures on Imitation

1 Corinthians 4:16, "Be imitators of me."

Philippians 3:17, Watch those who live according to this example.

Philippians 4:9, Practise what you have seen and heard.

1 Thessalonians 1:6, Imitators of us and of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 2:14, Imitators of the churches of God.

2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9, An example to follow.

Hebrews 6:12, Imitate those who inherit the promises.

3 John 11, Do not imitate evil, but what is good.

1 Timothy 4:12, Set an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.

Titus 2:7, Show yourself to be a model of good works.

Disciples are formed not in isolation, but in shared life, walking the path together.

tion.

From the beginning, followers of Jesus gathered regularly in homes, around tables, and within ordinary life.

Meeting together allows people to belong, edify and encourage one another through daily life and model others as they follow Jesus in a shared journey

Group Exercise

Think about the people you are already walking with.

Who are you sharing life with regularly?

How can you arrange life to eat together more frequently?

What would it look like to make that space intentional around Jesus?

Meeting together doesn't need to be announced or branded.

Often it begins with a simple invitation:

"Why don't we eat together and keep exploring this?"

Tool 9. Faith Communities

Practising the Way of Jesus in Community

Key Scripture

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...everyday they continued to meet...they broke bread in their homes”
, Acts 2:42

Preamble

As disciples grow through proximity and shared life, something very natural begins to happen. A faith community begins to emerge.

A faith community (aka church) is found in everyday relationships, shared meals and conversations, and discovering scripture together. Much learning happens through watching and modelling others as they follow Christ.

The basics of a ‘Faith Community’



Who makes up the church?

Anyone who believes, confesses Jesus as Lord, has repented and been baptised is effectively a member of the Body of Christ, (aka Church, or Faith Community) These gatherings are described as, relational, participatory, anchored in Scripture and prayer, centred on shared meals or hospitality

Think less event and more family rhythm.

People often heal, grow, and rediscover hope when they are welcomed into genuine spiritual family.

Who leads , Elders

They are led by Elders. Elders are described in Titus 1. 5,9 and 1 Timothy 3. 1,7 and are entrusted to protect, teach, guard doctrine, care for people spiritually, oversee direction and discipline equip others and model character and pray. They should be married and know how to care for their own family. They are mature in age.

Note that it is not one person but a plurality of elders. An Elder is also described as an Overseer, a Shepherd, a Pastor.

Who Serves , Deacons

Although everyone is called to serve and love one another deacons work alongside Elders to support them to do anything practical. Help the poor, sick, widows distribute aid and implement initiatives of the Elders, especially among the believers. See Acts 6. 1,7 and 1 Timothy 3.8,13

It may be helpful to see Elders as spiritual parents and deacons as the older siblings or servants who get things done for their parents. They are servant leaders

What does a healthy church do?

The healthy church circle from Acts 2 shows what faith communities did in the rhythm of their lives. It's a good diagnostic tool.



Repentance / Baptisms / Prayer / Multiplication / Love and one another / Praise / Break Bread / Practice generosity (especially to the believers) / devoted to scripture and the apostles teaching (Listening to God*) / Elder leadership

Interesting in the New Testament, church was not something believers attended once a week. It was something they lived every day. The early church did ALL the elements but not all at once. The essential practices, Word, prayer, meals, generosity, encouragement, and mission, were not necessarily compressed into a single meeting but were expressed through a shared life.

Discovering Scripture Together

In 1 Corinthians 14 we see an example of a faith community. It shows that there was order and that gatherings were participatory. Although we don't exactly know how they structured their times of learning, below is a format that seems to model this participatory style of learning together where everybody can contribute. A leader typically facilitates rather than giving a monologue lesson.

This can keep communities healthy, focused, and reproducible.

A Good Way to Facilitate a Gathering

Look Back / Look Up / Look Forward

1. Look Back

Check in with one another > Share stories of where you saw God at work > Pray for one another

2. Look Up

Read Scripture together (DBS style) > Ask questions like: What stands out. What are we being invited into? > Pray in response

3. Look Forward

Ask what obedience looks like this week > Decide when and where you'll meet again

Simple. Repeatable. Lifegiving.

Where did they meet?

In homes, in public places, by the river, in short anywhere. They would also gather with other households for larger gatherings. The early church was a network of households living out the life of Christ daily, who gathered regularly. Not to do church, but because they already were the church.

When did they meet?

Every day they met together in their homes. It was recorded that they also met on a Sunday, but no day is prescribed in the New Testament as an 'official' day like the Sabbath had been for the Jews

Why 'Faith Communities' Matter

Discipleship cannot be sustained in isolation

Where This Fits in the Journey

Proximity forms shared life > Meeting Together gives that life rhythm > Faith Communities become a living expression of following Jesus

These environments allow disciples to continue to grow and where new people can belong, explore, and learn to follow Jesus together.

Tool 10 – Multiplication

Key Scripture

“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth...”

Genesis 1:28

Preamble

When we hear the words “go and make disciples,” many people instinctively translate that as “bring people to church.” Some people call this ‘extraction’ evangelism

While that has helped some, it often unintentionally pulls people out of their natural relationships, away from the very places where their witness is most powerful.

Jesus often did the opposite.

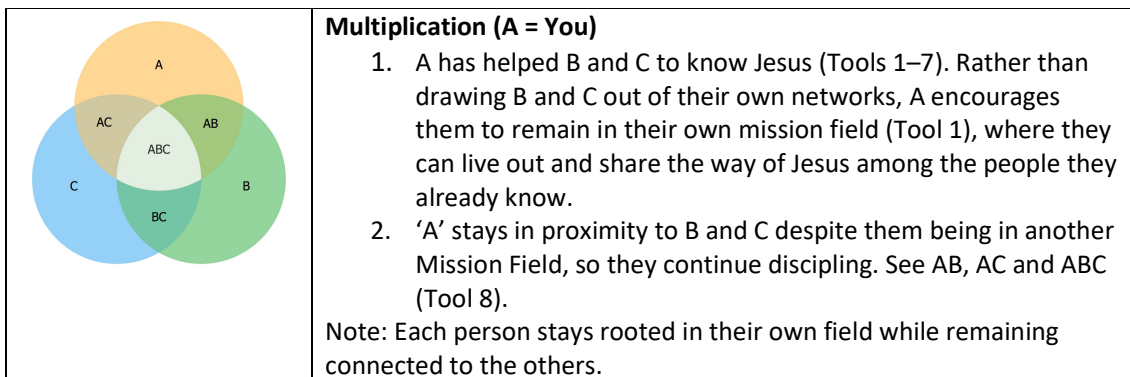
Think of the Samaritan woman at the well.

Think of the demon possessed man who was healed.

In both cases, Jesus sent them back home, back into their networks, so the good news could take root where they already belonged.

This final tool shows how communities formed through shared life can multiply naturally, allowing people to follow Jesus where they are planted in their own homes, with friendship groups, within their cultures, and neighbourhoods.

The good news is it’s simpler than you think, and anyone can do it.



Leadership is found and formed where the 'ABC' intersects. While the only 2 offices in a Faith Community are Elders and Deacons there are those who have a gift to teach or may have an APEST gifting.

Because Elders/Shepherds/Overseers/Pastors have a standard described in Titus and Timothy it may be that the APEST's hold the space until Shepherds are found

This is a great training ground where Shepherds can mentor upcoming Shepherds and direct deacons to care for the flock.

Note: Not everyone is going to have the gift to lead. There are different types of leadership as depicted in this diagram. AC AB and BC are all leader types and ABC another again.

Elder = Spiritual oversight, prayer and counsel

Deacon = Acts of service and practical help

Growing Where You're Planted.

In nature, plants grow strongest when they are allowed to take root where they first emerge. If they are transplanted their root systems is slowed down and it often weakens the plant. Roots need time in one place to sink deep, draw nutrients, and stabilise. While there are times when transplanting is necessary, healthy growth is usually the result of staying put long enough to mature.



The same principle applies to people and faith. Spiritual growth and multiplication are most effective when believers learn to follow Jesus within their existing relationships, context, and community. When someone comes to faith, the instinct can be to "transplant them", into programs, buildings, or unfamiliar environments. But this relocation often interrupts what God is already doing through them where they live, work, and belong.

Jesus consistently encouraged growth in place. New disciples were sent back to their homes, towns, and networks to tell what God had done for them (Mark 5:19). The early church spread not because people were extracted from their communities, but because they remained embedded in them. Faith multiplied naturally as people shared Jesus in the soil of everyday life, within families, friendships, workplaces, and neighbourhoods.

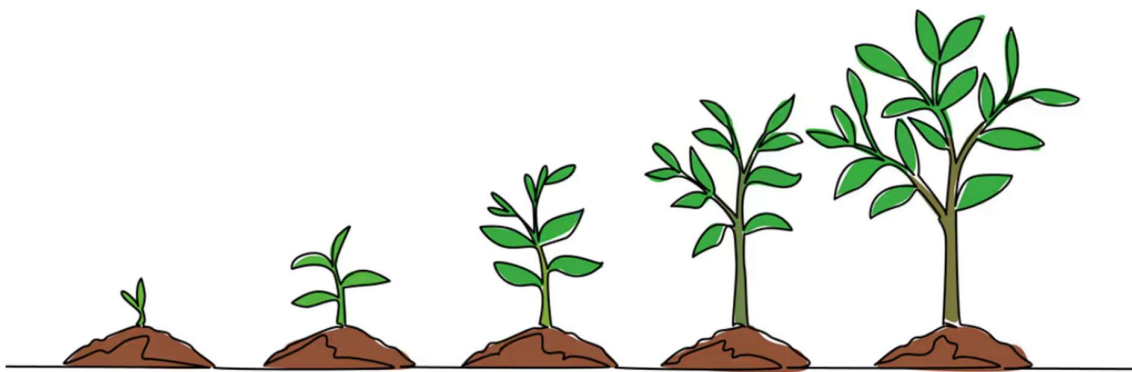
Growing where you're planted honours the reality that God has already placed each person in a mission field. Deep roots form as believers stay engaged long enough to love their neighbours well, practice obedience, and develop credibility. Over time, this depth produces

fruit, not just individual growth, but multiplication, as faith takes hold in familiar ground and spreads organically to others nearby.

In multiplication, depth precedes spread. When people are nurtured to grow where they already are, the gospel usually advances not by 'extraction' but by equipping and empowering ordinary disciples with the tools they need to make disciples and form faith communities.

You don't need a crowd. Just a few committed disciples.

Church of Two (C02) - 'Mustard Seeds'



In its simplest form, a new community begins when two people (a C02) commit to regularly meet, practise these rhythms, and invite others into the life they're discovering together.

Just like the mustard seed which a man took and planted in his field becomes a tree that the birds can come and perch in its branches. (Matt.13. 31-32) so too, a Church of Two has all the required DNA for a new faith community when it is planted in its field.

Allowing ordinary disciples to grow where they are planted means that we don't have to plan where to start the next faith community. As we find people of peace, we simply encourage them to reach people of peace in their mission field while we continue to stay in proximity so we can continue to disciple and encourage one another. It happens relationally and organically and usually starts as just a seed...

*"...though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the **birds of the air come and perch in its branches.**"*

As this process repeats itself, we see multiplication. But seeds planted in faith eventually become forests.

God has always changed the world through ordinary people filled with His Spirit.

You may never stand before thousands. But you may help one person encounter Jesus and that one life may impact generations.

Remember: You don't lose community by sending people. You extend it.

Group Exercise

Take time to reflect:

Where has God already planted you?

Is there a Person of Peace in an overlapping Mission Field who you can encourage by proximity and prayer who can start another faith community?

Consider praying:

"Lord, show us how to encourage each other to grow the kingdom as we learn to rely on the Holy Spirit"

Memory Pegs