



An introduction to B.L.E.S.S.

27TH APRIL - 20TH JULY 2022

Between Easter and the summer holidays is our BLESS season. It's time for our whole church to step out in faith and make a collective effort to bless the world around us.

Every Christian desires to share the good news of Jesus in word and deed, but sometimes it can be a challenge to know how. BLESS is a very helpful model to guide our attempts and to make it a lot more practical, bite-size and enjoyable.

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

John decided to devote every day of the week to pray for an opportunity to mention Jesus at his film college. The day after he began praying, the teacher set an interview exercise for the class and John's question to answer was 'tell us why you believe in God'!

LISTEN WITH CARE

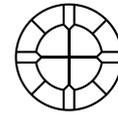
Annie had a friend coming round for fish n' chips. She decided, rather than limiting their conversation to merely small talk, she would ask her friend a new question; 'tell me about where you grew up'. That evening, they went deeper in their friendship than ever before.

EAT TOGETHER

Rather than grabbing lunch at his desk with his headphones in, Darren asked a colleague if he fancied a walk to the park for their lunch break. It became a weekly habit for them both and the basis for some amazing conversations.

SERVE WITH LOVE

Janice had a lonely neighbour who often sat outside his front door with Rex, the dog, and a bottle of lucozade. She would walk past him on the way to the shops most days. One day she decided to buy him a pack of lucozade as a small act of kindness. They're no longer strangers who say 'hi' occasionally. Now they are good friends who regularly run errands for one another and share presents at Christmas.



SHARE YOUR STORY

Mark was a new Christian and lacked a bit of confidence. But after encouragement and prayer from his Life Group, he felt a bit more courageous. He texted a friend to meet up for a drink. Part way through, Mark's friend asked 'so, what's new?' and Mark said, 'well, funnily enough I've had a kind of life-changing moment - I've become a Christian'. Rather than dismissing this, like Mark thought he would, the friend asked, 'oh really? What does that mean?'. The chat carried on for a few hours.

What Life Groups will be doing

Doing BLESS on your own is fantastic, but we think it's even better done in community. That's why our Life Groups are going to be focusing on it for this season. Early in the term, each group will decide which of the two options below they want to proceed with.

Option 1

MEET REGULARLY

Meeting weekly either in-person or on Zoom, to work through the sermon-related notes that our preachers will produce. These discussions will have a strong 'BLESS feel' to them.

BLESS PROJECT

We would like every group to come up with at least one joint activity that reaches out to non-Christians in some way. We have a list of ideas below that might interest you, but we'd really encourage groups to chat, pray and decide together on something that everyone can get excited about and give their support to.

We would strongly advise that you look first to use the gifts, skills, and opportunities that you already have in your group. Maybe someone lives in a neighbourhood where they could run an event with your group's support. Or someone might have a particular interest or project that you could give your support to. Utilise whatever connections God has given you already.

Option 2

REGULAR PROJECT

This is perhaps a more radical break from the normal Life Group structure. If your group wants to devote their time to a more regular outreach activity then you can treat this as your regular meet up, instead of the weekly discussion sessions.

CATCH UP

It's likely that your regular meetings will not allow much time for deeper conversations about spiritual health. So we would like the leaders of groups that have chosen Option 2 to ensure that they find ways to catch up with all members semi-regularly (at least twice per term).

Next steps for Life Groups

BLESS LAUNCH EVENING: 27TH APRIL, 7PM AT WESTMINSTER CHAPEL

We'd like everyone in Life Groups to attend this event, where we will hear what's coming up, get inspired by real life stories and commission one another, by prayer, to go out in boldness.

FIRST LIFE GROUP SESSIONS: 3RD, 4TH, 8TH MAY

This will be the first session back together for a while. So there will be time to catch up, but we'd also love all the groups to start chatting about the BLESS season ahead and beginning conversations about which Option to choose and what kind of a project to do together.

Ideas: what you could be doing this term

These are just ideas to get you started in your thoughts and prayers. It's most important that your project is something the whole group has chosen and feels ownership for.

Option 1 ideas

- 5-a-side + feast - organise a football competition with friends (or another sport/game of choice) and plan to eat together afterwards.
- Walk & talk - organise a nice walk with friends somewhere easily accessible for everyone and plan to eat together during or afterwards.
- Help out at 'Make Waves' summer camp - This is a three-day activity camp at Chapel for local families. It would require being available during the week (Tuesday 16th - Thursday 18th August).
- Street prayer & healing - find a public space somewhere with a sign that says something like 'try prayer' or 'would you like to pray about anything?' and in a friendly, no-pressure way, offer to pray for anyone who shows interest.



- Foodbank supermarket collection day - this usually involves standing outside a large supermarket with shopping lists and money collection tins, for people to donate either products or money. If you'd like to explore this idea then email Heather Neufville via foodbank@westminsterchapel.org.uk.
- Film night and discussion - the group could choose a movie to watch in a suitably big venue and plan to have some food and discuss some of the film's big ideas afterwards. For more ideas about this contact howard@westminsterchapel.org.uk.
- Coffee shop surprise - raise some money and put it onto a few cafe gift cards. Then go and sit in the cafes as small groups. Tell the barista in charge that you'd like to pay for everyone's orders until your card runs out. Allow the barista to tell customers that their drink is free and sit somewhere that they can point to you, so that the customer can come over and say thank you (and hopefully chat more) if they want to.

Option 2 ideas

- Volunteer somewhere - maybe someone in your group already has a connection with a charity or community activity that would benefit from some extra hands every week. You could try contacting them and asking how a mixed group of people could be of service for the term. You might need to explore a few options here as it's often more effort than it's worth for a charity to
- Regular community outreach - perhaps there's a neighbourhood that you're passionate about reaching and would like to spend some time knocking on doors, speaking to people or offering a practical service regularly. You could commit to doing this weekly for a season, pray together beforehand, go out in small groups and reconvene at the end to share stories. For more ideas or some help with this contact craig.webb@westminsterchapel.org.uk.
- Run Alpha - if your group believes that you have enough contacts who would like to try Alpha together then you could host run it together. This could be in-person or on Zoom, depending on what works best for your guests. If you need more information about this then contact andy.mehigan@westminsterchapel.org.uk.

Key dates: what we're doing this term

These are all things that we'd love you and your groups to attend and join in with.

Launch evening (27th April, 7pm at Westminster Chapel) - this will be an evening to hear inspiring stories, spark ideas and be commissioned to start the season with extra boldness.

Lights course (1st May - 19th June, Sundays 1:30-3pm from Westminster Chapel) - if you'd like to become more confident and better at speaking to people about your faith, this is a perfect course, run by Craig and Phil. It will end with a session lead by guest-preacher and regular street evangelist, Chris Kilby.

Life Group cluster evenings (24th or 25th May) - all the Life Groups will meet together on Zoom for training around the topic of personal and realistic evangelism.

Street Party (5th June, 12 - 3pm) - a wonderful event for anyone to come to. You could even invite them to church beforehand.

Last Life Group session (5th, 6th, 10th July) - these will be the last official sessions, but if your group has planned to do something that extends beyond it then of course feel free to carry on.

Church Family Meeting (13th July, 8pm on Zoom) - an important meeting for all members of the church.

Andy Kind comedy evening (20th July, 7pm) - a very easy and fun invite for anyone.

Make Waves kids summer camp (16-18th August) - you could attend this if you've got kids, or you could sign up to volunteer during the week.