

Why Share Your Faith in Small Groups?

In St Luke's account of the Early Church we hear that three thousand were baptised following Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Guided by the Holy Spirit, the newly baptised 'devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:42). In a similar fashion thousands of people have found spiritual nourishment in faith-sharing, in reflecting on Scripture and prayer as part of a small group.

This resource feeds such small groups drawing on the Scriptures with each session clearly rooted in a passage from the Bible. As the Second Vatican Council Fathers emphasised 'in the sacred books the Father comes lovingly to meet his children and talks with them' (Dei Verbum, 21).

Fellowship is a vital part of small group participation. In these small groups you are able to get to know your fellow Christians better and to form strong, mutually supportive bonds. The living community is essentially Christian as Jesus 'did not come to save individuals without any bond between them' (Lumen Gentium, 9).

Members of small groups are encouraged to share and gain confidence in talking about their faith. It is this confidence building in a trusting environment that helps participants to 'love in all the circumstances of ordinary life' (Gaudium et Spes, 38). Our prayers together help us to become the dwelling places of the Holy Spirit that we are called to be (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 2).

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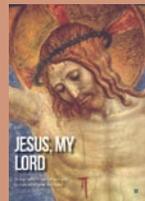
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Why not check out our other resources?



Twice each year we produce a resource for groups, containing six sessions for faith-sharing, and other material for prayer and reflection.



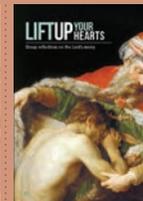
On personal encounter with Jesus Christ



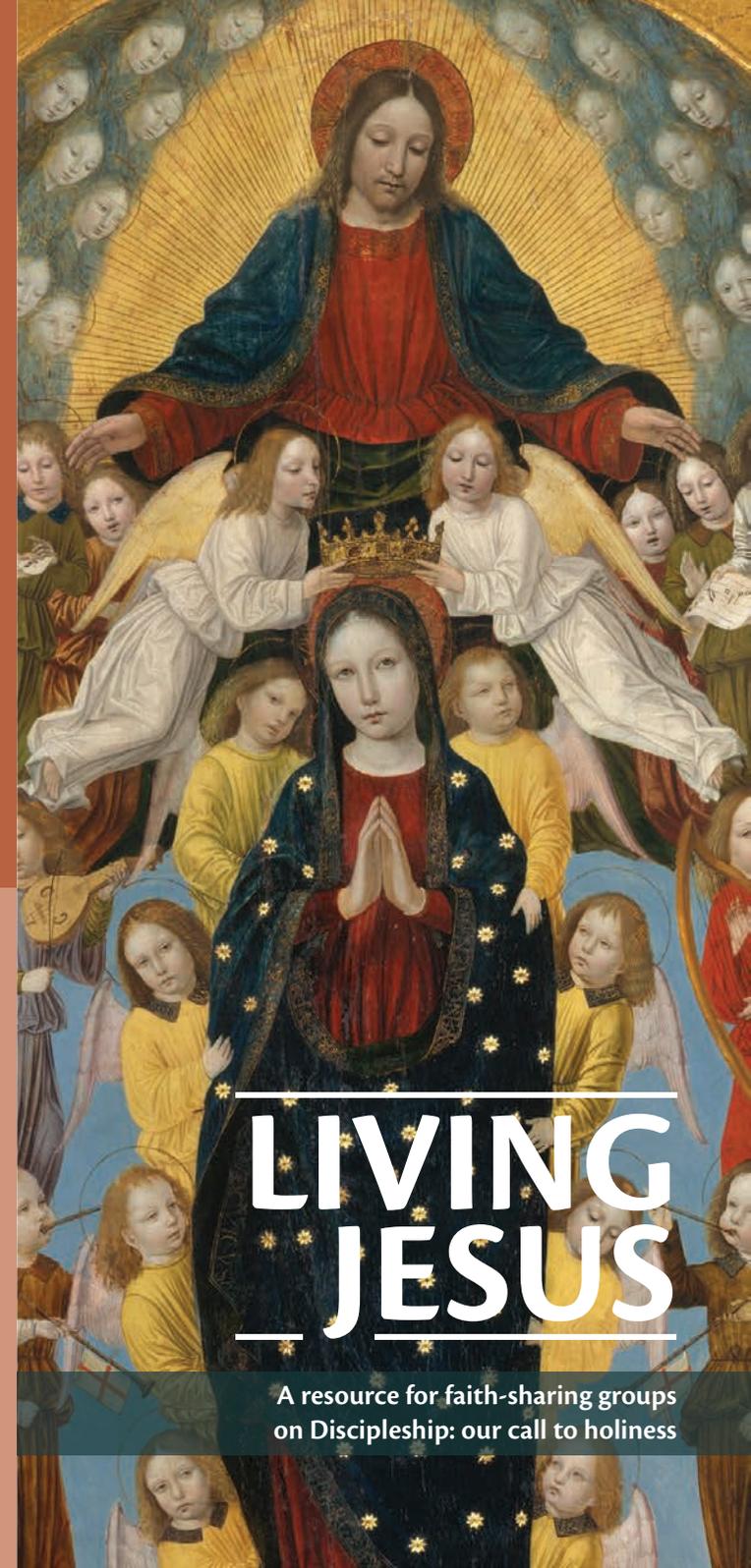
On our baptismal vocation - priest, prophet, king



On the healing and sanctifying power of grace



On the Loving Father's gifts of love and mercy



LIVING JESUS

A resource for faith-sharing groups on Discipleship: our call to holiness

Session One

The promise of Eternal Life

*He loved me and delivered himself for me
(Philippians 2:7-8)*

On the Cross, Jesus Christ 'drew all things to himself' (Colossians 1:20) so that humankind might once again share in the joy of God's own happiness for all eternity.

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Session Two

Our vocation to holiness

*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me
(Galatians 19-20)*

Through baptism, we are united in Christ and invited to develop an intimate friendship: to grow to know him and to love him in return. This is our mission.

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Session Three

A conscious decision

*My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep
to my ways (Proverbs 23:26)*

Faith is a matter of choice. Christ redeemed humanity by drawing us to himself. As Christians we are called to continually and intentionally choose to be a part of him – to be a disciple.

Session Four

Finding the Word in the word

*I can do nothing on my own... I seek to do not my
own will but the will of him who sent me
(John 5:30)*

Holy Scripture is the irreplaceable resource that enables us to find and contemplate Christ – showing us how to think, feel and act like Him so as to enable God to work through each of us.

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Session Five

An ever deeper relationship

*Then you will call on me and come and pray to me,
and I will listen to you (Jeremiah 29:12)*

Prayer is lifting our minds and hearts to God. It is a conversation that takes place within the depths of our hearts. By growing closer, seeking to do his will, we find him at work in our every action.

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Session Six

Signs of the Kingdom

*And remember, I am with you each and every day
until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20)*

In a supreme act of love, Christ suffered and died in our name. Special channels of grace, the sacraments unite us with Christ's perfect sacrifice and call us to sacrifice – to love as he loves.

What does each session look like?

The sessions in **LIVING JESUS** are intended to last between 1 and 1 ½ hours. Those guiding the session often add periods of silence, hymns and different readings of interest - these sessions are a guide but can be used as they are written.

The atmosphere should be prayerful with the aim of helping each to feel welcome and conscious of God's loving presence. Soft music, candlelight, a religious image or crucifix to focus attention can all be used to help in this aim.

Each person should be given the opportunity to share how God is present in their daily lives. Small group faith-sharing is not a place for argument.

LIVING JESUS includes artwork to stir the mind and the soul. Also within **LIVING JESUS** you will find prayers drawn from the prayer of the Church and pages for children.



Cover: *The Assumption of the Virgin* by Bergognone (The Met Museum, New York); above: *Communion of Saints* by John Nava (The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles)