

CAFE CHURCH EXERCISE

Based on Matthew 7:7

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LEADER

This activity was designed by the Rev Stephen Haward, the minister at Market Harborough Congregational Church. We had shared breakfast together, with around 30 of us sitting at five tables. The programme that followed was based on Matthew 7:7, “Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open unto you”. We remained at our tables and each table was presented with a shoe box that had been brightly covered. Boxes remained closed until we were all told to open them and follow the instructions they contained. Each box was almost but not quite identical to the others.

In each box were three envelopes. One envelope was marked “pieces”. The other two were numbered 1 and 2 respectively. Number 1 was also marked “Open this envelope first”.

Inside the numbered envelopes were sets of simple instructions designed to stimulate conversation and an activity to illustrate the theme by getting people to work together.

Below you will find the pages to be printed off (one per table) for each of the numbered envelopes. In addition there were five sheets of white paper on each of which a printed rough cut Y-shape had been stuck. Each of these had been cut from a picture (see below). There were also several ‘pritt sticks’ and some pens. The third envelope, marked “pieces” contained smaller pieces of printed paper also cut from the pictures. All the pieces would make up five pictures when the right pieces were put together and glued in place.

The five pictures that would be created were a set of five pictures that illustrated the story recorded in Luke 11:10-20. To make the puzzle challenging, each Y-shape, and all the small pieces varied slightly. The small pieces for all five pictures were mixed together in the envelope. The challenge was for each person to find their pieces, as some were missing from the envelope!

For the practical activity you need to download the five pictures that illustrate the story of the man who asked his neighbour for bread in the middle of the night. To do this go to <https://www.behance.net/gallery/32958385/Artwork-for-The-Friend-at-Night>

Print off the pictures, I suggest these should be around A5 size. You should have a set of 5 pictures for each table.

Cut out a rough two dimensional Y-shape from each picture so that the top of one part of the Y is at the top of the picture, and the bottom of the Y is at the bottom of the picture, so splitting the picture roughly into two halves. Each of these Y pieces should then be glued in the correct place on the white paper. Cut up the two remaining pieces of each picture into irregular sizes and shapes to make up the ‘jigsaw’ puzzle.

Repeat this process with each of the five pictures and place all the smaller pieces into an envelope marked 'pieces'. Do not seal the pieces' envelope.

Repeat this activity for each box. When completed, take a few of the smaller pieces from each box and exchange them for a similar number in another box. In this way, some people on each table will be unable to start or finish their picture and will have to go 'seeking' on other tables.

1) ASKING

Welcome to this study time.

Our first task is to find something out from one another. Who in the group has a middle name, or another 'given' name that is different from the one by which they are usually called? *Remember to include everyone.*

- Do we know why we were given that name?
- Is there a reason why we do not use it?

Finally, a question for the group. *This time, please use the pen provided to write down your answers.*

- We have learned something new about each other. Why didn't we know this already?

Imagine two people going on what they hope might be a first date as a couple. Afterwards, one realises they have not been asked a single question about themselves.

- Why does this matter?

So now we are ready to hear the first part of today's reading.

- Please read aloud Matthew 7, verses 7 and 8.

... and then turn over the page.

Here is a famous quote about this passage. ‘Whether we like it or not, asking is the rule of the Kingdom’ (Charles Spurgeon). *Say it again twice.*

- **What kind of ‘asking’ do you think Jesus had in mind?**

- **What part does ‘asking’ usually play in our worship on Sunday?**

- **How might this be done differently?**

It’s time to open Envelope 2! In it was a sheet of paper on which was written.....

2) SEEKING

As a church we have had an interesting experience in recent weeks. It was suggested that Warm Spaces were needed in town centres to help people struggling with the cost of keeping warm at home. Through the energy and commitment of two of our members, we were able to make a swift response and opened up on Thursdays.

We had plenty of interest, including from the religious press, and met some passers-by. But no one came seeking a Warm Space.

You could say that experience was a reminder of a much bigger issue for Christian faith. This is a deeply secular culture. Most British people are not 'seeking' anything from churches at all.

Nor is this anything new. Bill Vanstone was an Anglican priest. In the 1950's he was sent to a large housing development to do what we would now call pioneer ministry.



Walking the fresh new pavements and seeing the residents contentedly working in their gardens and joining in social activities,

'I was made to feel that the district had no need of a Church: it was getting on very well and very happily without one.'

(W.H. Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, London, 1977, DLT, p.12) .

He then dedicated the next forty years to building a fellowship in that place. We should know why that was.

- **What is the seeking and the finding that matters to us?**

That's enough talking. Now for some doing!

In our box we have some glue sticks, 5 picture cards and an envelope marked 'PIECES'. All these things need to come out of the box.

Once all the pieces are stuck on, the picture cards will help us to tell a Bible story. Each card will be different. But we may not have 5 different designs to begin with.

- **How are we going to solve this problem?**

It is time for some members of our group to become 'seekers', while others begin to sort the pieces and be ready to become 'stickers'.

Remember what Jesus said: 'the one who seeks finds'.

When the picture cards are complete, it will be time to open envelope 3.

3/ KNOCKING

Now we have completed the picture cards, can we say which Bible story this is (without looking it up) and get the pictures in the right order?

Let's use them as we tell the story from Luke 11: 5 to 8. *(Ask someone who has not read before to read the passage.)*

If seeking is more than just asking, then knocking is more than just seeking. It is in God's nature, Jesus teaches, to hold nothing back, but instead to 'open the door' to us when we pray. God does not mind being interrupted!

- **Is there anything else anyone in the group would like to say?**