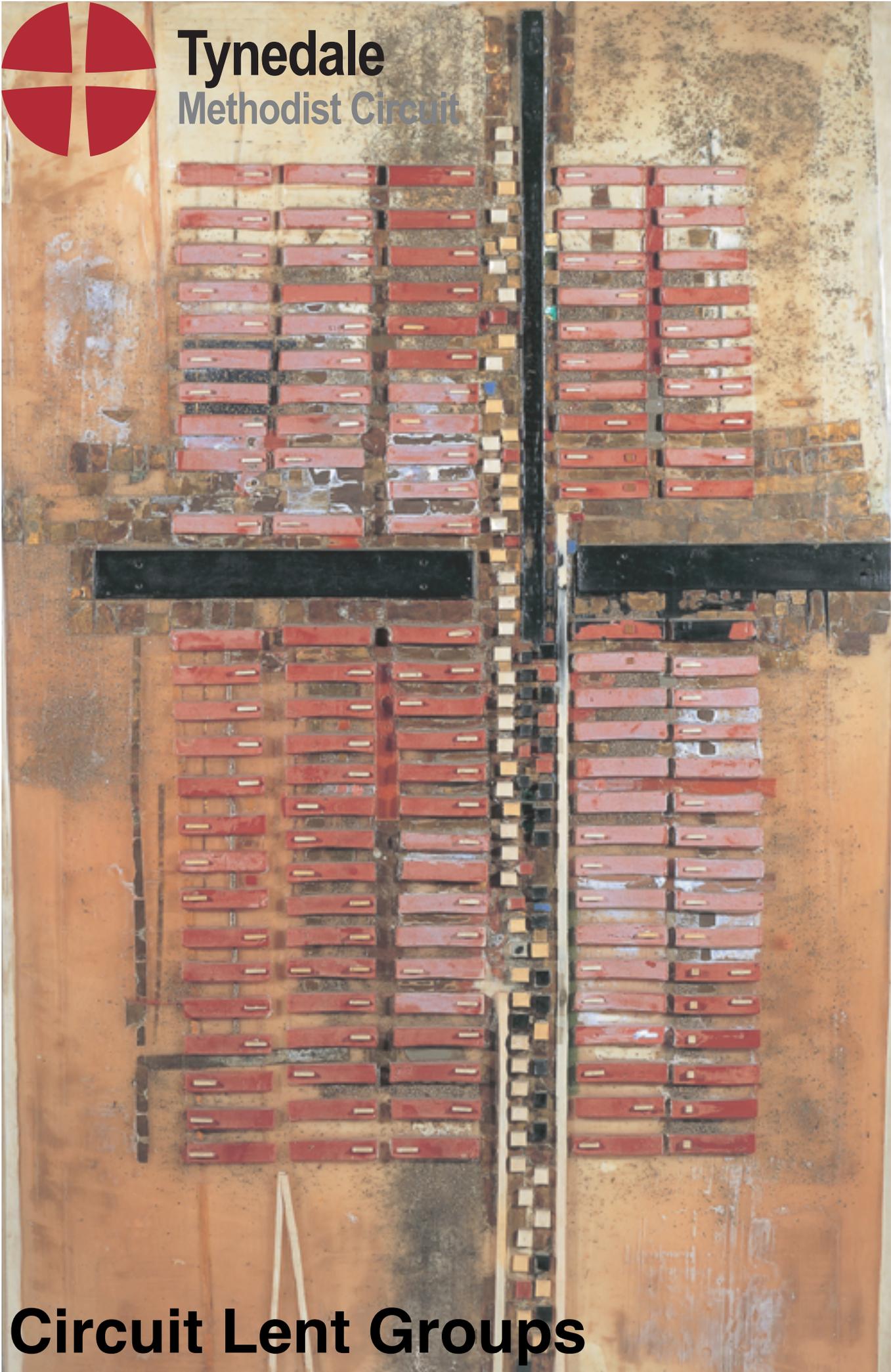




Tynedale
Methodist Circuit



Circuit Lent Groups

Moving into the Neighbourhood - LEADER NOTES

Welcome and Thank You

Firstly, a huge thank you to each of you for being a host and/or leader for a Lent Group in the Tynedale Circuit in 2018. We hope that these leader notes along with the group member booklet will provide you with everything that you need to lead the group.

Preparing material for a wide group of people is always a challenge and we hope that as we have prepared this material we have kept the diversity of the Circuit in mind. However, nothing is set in stone, if you feel the ideas suggested for a particular week aren't quite right for your group or a question would be more helpfully asked a different way please change it so that your group gets the best out of their time together. We also hope each week will give people an experience of different styles of small groups, so that if people feel one week isn't for them hopefully they will find another week is.

If you have any questions either before or during the running of the group please speak to your minister who will be able to help you or point you in the right direction.

Before Your First Meeting

Early in week commencing 12th February you will receive a list of those people who have signed up to come to the group that you are hosting and/or leading. The hope is that each group will come from a mix of Churches and be a mix of people who have and haven't been to home groups before.

When you receive the list of those who are coming to your group, please make contact with each of them to introduce yourself, make sure they know who you are and where your group is meeting. Please encourage them to come to an Ash Wednesday Service marking the beginning of Lent and to meet others who will be attending '*Moving into the Neighbourhood*' Groups.

Before your first group, where possible, give each person in your group their booklet and encourage them to read the Welcome & Introduction and to think about the '*Before the session have a think ...*' questions on page 4.

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www.tynedalemethcircuit.org

Week 1 - Meet - Week Commencing 19th February

In this first week together we hope that your new group will meet one another, begin to get to know each other and start to think about what it means to be involved with God's mission by being ambassadors for Christ in our everyday lives. The session is split into three parts:

1. Getting to know each other.
2. Bible Study on 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2, with Ephesians 6:18-20 if time
3. Getting Ready for next week.

1. Getting to know each other

- **Introducing One Another** - Ask everyone to introduce themselves and if they go to a Church say which Church they go to.
- **Play People Bingo** - To get people finding out a little bit more about each other, give each group member a bingo sheet (see page 5). The aim is to find someone for each bingo square and the winner is the person who completes all their squares first.

***N. B.** Group members can use other group member's names more than once on their sheets. Also encourage group participants to ask follow up questions once they have found someone who completes a given square. E.g. If they find someone who has met someone famous, they can ask who that person was.*

- **Sharing Testimony** - ask people to share with the group part of their testimony of how they became a Christian and an experience they have of sharing their faith with someone else.

If you are leading a group where everyone knows each other well already, you could miss out the people bingo and spend more time on sharing testimony but asking people to share parts of their testimony the group don't already know.

2. Bible Study on 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

- Introduce this part of the evening explaining that the Lent Groups are focussed as a whole on mission and helping us to think about being involved with mission as followers of Jesus.
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2, either by asking one person to read the passage or inviting a few people to read a number of verses each.
- Split your group into three smaller groups. Ask each group to look at a specific section of the passage, using the questions in the group member booklet.

Group members may want to jot down any ideas they have, so they can share their ideas with the other groups at the end of the study.

- After the groups have looked at their section, ask each group in turn to share what they have learnt with the whole group.

N. B. In the resources this passage has been divided into 3 groups, however, if you do not have that number of groups these divisions can be amalgamated or shared to fit your own group number. Groups do not need to finish all the questions for their specific part of the passage. They can choose to focus on one or two of the questions if they prefer.

Further Bible Study (Ephesians 6:18-20)

If you have time groups may also want to read and study Ephesians 6:18-20 and reflect on the following questions, as a whole or in small groups:

1. How is the life of an ambassador for Christ depicted here?
2. Does this passage relate to your own experiences of being an ambassador for Christ/ when you have shared your testimony with others?
3. Before Paul talks about his imprisonment and how he is an 'ambassador in chains' he talks about prayer. How might prayer and being an ambassador for Christ be connected?
4. How does Paul say the Good News should be spoken? What challenges might that present us with?

3. Getting Ready for next week

Each week there is a section in the group member booklet called 'Getting ready for next week'. This week this section invites you to think about the neighbourhood(s) that you are ambassadors for Christ in.

Spend some time as a group thinking about your neighbourhood and community, what is it like, who do you know there, what organisations are part of it, what makes it tick?

4. Close in Prayer

It is important to close your time together in prayer. This may be by sharing in a time of open prayer, by sharing prayer needs and committing to pray for them over the coming week, by saying the grace together or sharing the prayer in the group member booklet on page 3.

People Bingo

Find someone who...

... has been involved in Alpha.	... has won a competition.	... owns a King James edition of the Bible.
... prefers cats to dogs.	... has met someone famous.	... has a birthday in the same month as yours.
... has travelled to America.	... is left handed.	... can recite Psalm 23 from memory.
... can remember at least 4 of the 10 Commandments.	... plays a sporting activity regularly.	... does not like tea or coffee.
... speaks more than one language.	... owns more than 3 Bibles.	... has attended a house/ study group before.

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... speaks more than one language.	... owns more than 3 Bibles.	... has attended a house/ study group before.

Week 2 - Study - Week Commencing 26th February

This week's session will help the group think about the concept that mission is not something the Church does on its own but that mission is joining in with what God is already doing. This is known as the theological concept *Missio Dei*. David Bosch says in his book *Transforming Mission* '*mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God*'.

When you gather as a group, make sure you each introduce yourselves to anyone who is attending the group for the first time. If there are a number of new people and you feel you need an icebreaker you could ask people to share if they have noticed anything different about the neighbourhood over the last week.

This week's session has three parts:

1. Fresh Expressions Video Story, which gives an example of *Missio Dei* where people joined in with what God was doing.
2. Bible Study based on stories where God was already at work and people joined in.
3. Time to think about next week's prayer walk.

1. Fresh Expressions Video Story

The following videos are good examples of where Churches have reached out in mission in different ways, joining in with where God was already at work. Before the session watch the videos and decide which will be best for your group to watch.

- Somewhere Else - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVqkLGE5HxA>
- Deeper Network Church - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdNKX4XuKpA&t=1s>
- Walsall Food Bank - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-tLmsjXwfg>
- The Welcome - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50mCLMR_6Q4&t=4s

In the session watch the video and use the questions in the member booklet to reflect together on what the group have seen in the video.

2. Bible Study

For this week's Bible Study you have a choice of two stories to choose from. Both are examples from the Bible where God is at work and then invites people to join in.

The two passages to choose from are:

- Acts 8:26-40 - Story of Philip & the Ethiopian Eunuch
- Jonah 1-4 - Story of Jonah

Choose the passage which you feel is best for your group to study.

Invite a member (or members) of the group to read the passage aloud. Invite the rest of the group to listen to the passage without following it in their Bibles.

After the passage has been read hold a few moments of silence then ask for the passage to be read again, slowly, ideally by a different person.

After the passage has been read for the second time again hold a few moments of silence.

Ask members of the group, who wish, to share what stood out for them as they heard the passage read.

After members have shared reflect on these questions together, either as a whole group or as smaller groups:

- In the passage how was God at work before Philip/Jonah came along?
- How did God ask Philip/Jonah to get involved with what God was already doing?
- How did Philip/Jonah respond?
- What happened to the Ethiopian Eunuch/The People of Ninevah after Philip/Jonah joined in with what God was doing?
- How can we see more clearly what God is already doing in our neighbourhood(s)?
- What stops us from seeing mission as joining in with what God is already doing?

3. Thinking about next week's prayer walk

Share with your group that next week's session will be a prayer walk around the neighbourhood in which you are meeting. Ask the group to share about the neighbourhood in which you are meeting/live. Are there particular places they would like to stop and pray for on the prayer walk next week, would they like to prayer walk as one large group or would they like to split up and do a number of prayer walks? Are there any members of the group who won't be able to join in the prayer walk physically but would like to pray at the meeting place.

Agree who will plan the prayer walk route and stopping points before next week's meeting. See next week's leader notes for more information.

4. Close in Prayer

It is important to close your time together in prayer. This may be by sharing in a time of open prayer, by sharing prayer needs and committing to pray for them over the coming week, by saying the grace together or sharing the prayer in the group member booklet on page 3.

Week 3 - Pray - Week Commencing 5th March

This week's session is a prayer walk in your neighbourhood, an opportunity for you as a group to pray for the neighbourhood in which you are meeting/live/worship.

Following the conversation at the end of week 2 the following pointers will hopefully help you to plan your prayer walk route:

- A street map of the area may be useful.
- Think of places to pray for in your neighbourhood, make a list of prayer points around the village/town/neighbourhood that you could stop on your prayer walk to pray for.
 - e.g. churches, schools, shops, businesses, charities, transport, hospital, doctors, other caring professions, places of need, concern, unemployment, isolation.
- Make a route or routes for your prayer walk that will last 30-45 minutes and includes between 8 and 10 stopping points for prayer.
 - You may need to split the area up into sections if it is a bigger place.
 - Some people may want to concentrate on a particular area e.g the main street, their street, an estate or just do a short walk.
- For those who would like to stay and pray at your meeting place remember to give them a copy of the route and map of the area so they can also pray for the same places as those who are prayer walking.

Before the prayer walk please complete the Prayer Walk Risk Assessment. This was given out at the leader training but will need adapting for your particular prayer walk and needs sending to your Church Safeguarding Officer, Minister and Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Anne Lambert) before your prayer walk.

Tips for During the Prayer Walk

- The group member booklet offers some tips for prayer walking. The following tips and hints may help you to structure the prayer walk.
- Begin by asking a member of the group to pray for the prayer walking, asking God to hear the prayers of the group and speak through the Holy Spirit.
- Invite the group to walk prayerfully, to offer to God the places that they pass either in conversation with one another or in silent prayer, to be open to and respond to the promptings of the Spirit and to listen for where God is at work.

- Invite a member of the group to pray in each place where the group stops on the prayer walk.
- To pause in each place and listen to what God has to say to the group.
- Your prayers may be your own or you may use a prayer or blessing from the booklet 'Keep Blessing your Community'. It would be good if someone had read through this beforehand and selected a prayer for each prayer point before the walk.
- At the end of your prayer walk invite a member of the group to offer all the prayers to God and to thank God for the prayer walk.
- You may wish to close with the Lord's Prayer.

After the Prayer Walk

After the prayer walk, share together about your experience of the prayer walk using the reflection questions on page 8 of the group member booklet.

As you share your experiences talk about what you will do as an act of blessing for your neighbourhood when you meet next week. Hopefully as you have prayer walked you will have seen what God is doing in your neighbourhood and God will have spoken to you about a way you can join in with him and bless the neighbourhood.

There may be a number of ideas that come to mind, these may be practical or spiritual, be individual or group task(s) or something for the whole church to get involved with. Share all ideas coming from the group including those who have been praying on their own or in the church and then agree together what you will do. Agree who will be responsible for making the arrangements and how you can pray in preparation for your act of blessing.

Close in Prayer

It is important to close your time together in prayer. This may be by sharing in a time of open prayer, by sharing prayer needs and committing to pray for them over the coming week, by saying the grace together or sharing the prayer in the group member booklet on page 3.

Week 4 - Bless - Week Commencing 12th March

This week's session is in your hands, the only guidance we give is that your session should take you out of your meeting place for you to share in an act of blessing within your community.

Hopefully last week you will have planned and organised this together. As leader it might be worth checking during the week beforehand that everything is ready.

If you need any help and support with this week please ask your Minister who will be more than happy to help.

Please ensure you complete the risk assessment form you were given at the leader training event and return it to your Church Safeguarding Officer, Minister and Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Anne Lambert) before your act of blessing.

Week 5 - Reflect - Week Commencing 19th March

This week's session is your final week together as a group. The session is planned as a more reflective session to give the group an opportunity to look back over Lent, to reflect on their journey together and to think about what they have learnt in light of the Easter story.

The session has three parts to it:

1. Time of sharing based on the prayer walk in week 3 & the act of blessing in week 4.
2. Time of listening to the Easter story.
3. Time of conversation about Next Steps

1. Time of Sharing

Begin by welcoming everyone and introducing them to the final session of the course.

Explain that during the first part of the session everyone is going to have the chance to share, if they wish, what they have experienced during the course and what they have learnt.

Give each person in the group an opportunity to share their experience of '*Moving into the neighbourhood*' and in particular to share how it has helped them to grow in their faith or their understanding of God.

The following bullet points are given in the group member booklet to help them think about what they might wish to share:

- Is there someone in the group who has helped you during the course you would like to thank?
- Had you been on a prayer walk before? How did you find the experience of the prayer walk in week 3?
- How did you feel during the act of blessing last week?
- Has anyone from the neighbourhood talked to you about the act of blessing this week? What did they say?
- Can you share something new you have learnt about God during Lent?
- Do you see or understand God any differently now than you did at the beginning of Lent?

Don't be afraid of silence during this time, people may need a few moments to prepare to share and a shared silence can be as powerful as sharing words.

After everyone has shared their experiences, hold a few moments of silence and then say a prayer of thanks to God for the group, for your journey together during Lent and for those you have blessed through your prayer walk and act of blessing.

2. Listening to the Easter Story

Introduce this part of the session by reminding the group that Lent is a season of preparation for Easter, for celebrating Jesus' death and resurrection.

Share with the group that through your time together you have been reflecting on mission; being ambassadors for Christ and joining in with God in his mission. The Church's mission comes out of Christ's death and resurrection.

Explain to the group that having shared their experiences of '*Moving into the neighbourhood*' you are now going to hear key parts of the Easter story, a reminder of God's story, the story that gives our mission its purpose.

Before you begin ask three members of the group to read the three passages and explain that between the readings there will be periods of silence for reflection and prayer.

1. Begin in silence.
2. Light a candle and place it in the centre of the group.
3. Read Matthew 21:1-11
4. Silence
5. Read Matthew 27:11-54
6. Extinguish the candle
7. Silence
8. Read Matthew 28:1-10
9. Re-light the candle
10. Silence

3. Time of Conversation about Next Steps

Invite the group to split into twos or threes and to talk together about the Next Steps questions on page 11 of the group member booklet. After the groups have had a chance to discuss invite them to share together and if appropriate agree what you might do together to share God's love with your neighbourhood.

4. Close in Prayer

It is important to close your time together in prayer. This may be by sharing in a time of open prayer, by sharing prayer needs and committing to pray for them over the coming week, by saying the grace together or sharing the prayer in the group member booklet on page 3.