

Overview

Through our discipleship in daily life we find ourselves caught up in God's transfiguring and transforming work. We are being changed and renewed, as is the world around us. How do we perceive the world around us now? How might we look at the world differently, through the eyes of Christ? In this session, we explore habits of discipleship and reflection, which enable us to attend to the world and engage in God's transfiguring and transforming love.

This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions

Facilitator

Welcome everyone to the session. Remind people that the worksheet is for their use and notes only. Ensure introductions if there are new group members. Offer a quick overview of this session, which is the fourth in a series of 5.

Facilitator

Introduce the images. Invite the group to say what they see. In the first, some may see a woman's face, others will see a man playing the saxophone. In the second, some will say a 'glass half full' or a 'glass half empty'. Open the idea that things are not always what they seem, and its possible to see things in a new way or a new light.

Question

What do you see in these pictures?



Facilitator

Introduce the activity. Ask the group to share their different viewpoints about what is going on in the picture.

Activity

How We Perceive

Take a look at these images. What do you see? What do others see? What assumptions are you making?



Facilitator *Reflecting on the different views of the images, encourage the group to think about how their assumptions have been shaped. Help the group to recognise the limitations of our experience and so think about how we work out what is the truth.*

Question **What shapes our assumptions and perceptions about what is ‘true’?**

Facilitator *Up to this point, we have focussed on people’s own thinking and how important it is to look at different viewpoints and to acknowledge the values that have shaped and influenced these viewpoints. As disciples we need to be aware of how we are looking at the world. Introduce the perspective ‘Transforming Theology’ which highlights the importance of this as we seek to discern and follow God’s purposes.*

Perspective **Transforming Theology**
“Theology has as its essential aim the transformation of the present so that it may conform to God’s hopes and yearnings for us as expressed in the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. Thus, theology helps us discern the presence of God, to learn wonderful things about that encounter, and to work with God in the transformation of ourselves and of society, as is God’s desire.”

*From ‘Let’s Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology’ by Laurie Green
(Mowbray, 2009)*

Facilitator *Introduce the next question. Encourage group members to share experiences from their daily work and life, of transformational moments.*

Question **When you have experienced transformations and what might suggest that God was involved?**

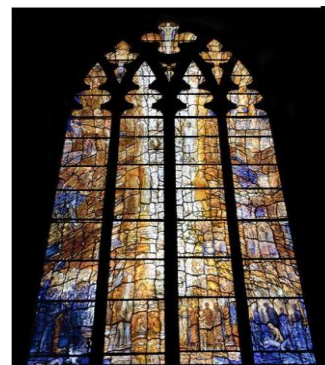
Facilitator *Ask the group to identify the characteristics that God was involved (e.g. an element of surprise, beyond normal power, a sense of grace, a sense of reconciliation or healing, something entirely new happening)*

Facilitator *Introduce the bible reading and discussion. Invite someone in the group to read it aloud.*

Bible Reading

The Transfiguration (Luke 9:27-36, NRSV)

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah' —not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.



*The Transfiguration Window
Durham Cathedral*

Facilitator

Encourage the group to talk about what changed for the disciples and how did they respond. See the background reading note for themes to explore in the discussion. Make the connection between the change for the disciples, and how this story might change our approach to our discipleship.

Discussion

What is significant about this story for you?

Facilitator

Group members may pick out different elements of this story as being significant. Some important parts might be that the disciples see Jesus' ministry in a wider context, of the resurrection. The holding of the past and future together, which can transfigure the present.

Facilitator

Introduce 'If only we knew how to look at life' as the commentary on The Transfiguration. Ask someone to read it aloud.

Perspective

If only we knew how to look at life by Michael Quoist

If only we knew how to look at life as God sees it,
we would realise that nothing is secular in the world,
but that everything contributes to the building of the kingdom of God.
To have faith is only to raise one's eyes to God to contemplate him;
it is also to look at this world – but with Christ's eyes.
If we had allowed Christ to penetrate our whole being,
if we had purified ourselves, the world would no longer
be an obstacle, it would be a perpetual incentive
to work for the Father in order that, in Christ,
his kingdom might come on earth as it is in heaven.
We must pray to have sufficient faith to know how to look at life.

From 'Prayers of Life' by Michael Quoist (Gill And Macmillan, 1965)

Facilitator *Introduce this question. Give the group a moment to think about the question, and then note any responses.*

Facilitator *Introduce the question. Encourage the group to think about times where their perceptions or assumptions were radically shifted. Continue with a discussion as to what the group member feels caused this shift. Group members may wish to just share with a neighbour, rather than the whole group - sensitivity needed.*

Question **What might be different for us if we looked at life in this way?**

Facilitator *Ask the group to share their responses. Responses from other groups have included God can be discovered in the darkness, Stop thinking in separate boxes – see Christ in everything, More conscious of working out faith, more joy in the tough side of life, being non-judgemental, dealing with issues and making a stand, Seeing fresh hope when things look desperate.*

Facilitator *Introduce perspective 'Nurturing Reflective Habits'. Here are 4 ideas that Roger Walton suggests to encourage us to be more reflective and to raise our eyes to God to contemplate him. Ask the group to comment on each of the four suggestions. Then invite the group to consider how they might apply these habits in their own lives.*

Perspective **Nurturing Reflective Habits**

Practice Attentiveness

Practising attentiveness is vital if we are to penetrate beyond surface meanings. Attentiveness can be nurtured through simple observation of what goes on. Like pressing pause on a DVD and looking at the still picture. What you had not noticed before is now more obvious, the emotion of the character is more amplified or the absence of music gives a different feel to the story.

Practice Making Connections

The juxtaposing of one thing with another is part of reflection. In faithful reflection it is to do with setting the scriptures and tradition alongside one's life events and allowing them to speak to each other.

Practice Partnered Conversations

Partnered (or group) conversations are an opportunity to rehearse connections you have made and develop attentiveness to others. The rule is to take time to talk about God.

Practice prayerful expression and practical enactment

Reflection without some kind of outcome is not really faithful reflection. It may however, not always be an observable behaviour change. Through reflection you have seen a gospel truth and recognised it in your own life. This is a precious discovery and something to celebrate. Prayerful expressions of thanksgiving can be a regular part of reflective discipleship. Prayerful expression is no substitute for taking action however. When you have a new insight you should ask yourself: What small change would begin to express this in my home or work or church?

*From 'The Reflective Disciple' by Roger Walton
(Epworth, 2009)*

Question

How might you practice these 4 habits in your own daily life ?

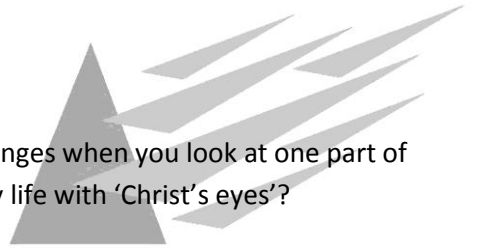
Facilitator

Draw the session to a conclusion by encouraging the group to see the importance of working together to explore real issues, share different viewpoints, understand how scripture and tradition might allow God to speak into a situation, and most importantly to enable people to work as partners in God's transforming action. This is a key discipline of discipleship in everyday life, and needs to be practiced in Christian communities.

Facilitator

Introduce the final reflection

During the week you might like to reflect on:



What changes when you look at one part of your daily life with 'Christ's eyes'?

Facilitator

Encourage people to spend few minutes pondering on what they feel they have learned from the session.

Ponder

What did you learn from this session and what difference might it make to your discipleship?



Closing Prayer

Follow Me on Monday

FM4 Raising Our Eyes

Lord,
Whatever we build,
Give us a glimpse of glory.
Whatever we make,
Give us a sense of wonder.
Wherever we travel,
Give us a sense of reverence.
Whoever we meet,
Give us a sense of awe.
Whatever we do,
Give us a sense of achievement.
Whatever our situation,
Give us knowledge of you.
Help us to see that everything is in your care
And that you allow us to share in your glory

From 'Powerlines: Celtic Prayers About Work' by David Adam (Triangle, 1992)

SESSION OUTLINE

Think about refreshments – beginning, middle or end? We would work on the assumption that refreshments will take around 15 mins in addition to the following time framework.

The suggested timings below are based on a group of between 6 and 8 people – timings should therefore be adjusted if there are more or less in the group.

The timings given for discussion are flexible and can be reduced / extended as time allows. It is always better to ensure that there is adequate time at the end for final reflections and planning the next session, even if this means cutting discussion short.

Time for each element of the session is given, in addition to a ‘counter’ for the time taken up to that point, ending at 1 hour 30 mins.

5-10 mins (10 min)	Introductions – ensure all group members know each other Distribute worksheets to all group members Introduce the topic using the topic overview
15 mins (25 mins)	Question – what do you see in this picture? Activity – what do you see in these pictures? Question – What shapes our assumptions and perceptions about what is ‘true’?
5 mins (30 mins)	Discussion based on ‘Transforming Theology’
10 mins (40 mins)	Question – when you have experience transformations, what might suggest that God was involved?
15 mins (55 mins)	The Transfiguration – bible reading and questions
10 mins (1 hour 5 mins)	‘If only we knew how to look at life’ poem, and question – what might be different if we looked at life in this way?
10 mins (1 hour 15 mins)	‘Nurturing Reflective Habits’ perspective and question – how might you practice these habits in your daily life?
5 mins (1 hour 20 min)	Introduce reflection for the week, and final ponder
5 mins (1 hour 25 min)	Practicalities for next session (venue, who will lead etc.)
5 mins (1 hour 30 min)	Closing Worship