



Introduction

Discovering God is a resource offering practical ideas for informal services and events where the focus is on creating community and a sense of belonging, demonstrating that the church is available to all. The ideas will work in face to face gatherings, and with minimal adaptation for online use.

Underpinning the materials is an intention to gather together and with God, to share experiences and stories, and learn together.

The resources provide an opportunity to develop:

- ♥ **empathy** – helping to understand others by listening to their stories
- ♥ **resilience** – learning to trust in God, to have a sense of being valued and protected
- ♥ **self-awareness** – developing a knowledge of ourselves, by asking questions, thinking and reflecting in order to grow
- ♥ **faithful living** – a conscious intention about how we act in our daily routines, with eyes open to see where we need to do God's work.

Guidance on using Discovering God resources



DISCOVER These resources are devised to help people discover themes, seasons, issues, celebrations and everyday events through a Christian perspective.



INTERACT We urge leaders to act as facilitators, limiting time spent leading from the front and encouraging people to participate and interact together to get to know each other. Consider setting up the activities and offering them simultaneously, with space and time for people to talk as they move around the space.



SPACE These materials can be used in a variety of settings and different groups, so we don't suggest any particular structure. *Somewhere to start*, and *Somewhere to finish* give ideas for opening and closing the gathering. We suggest that you try to create a space for your group to journey together, using the activities most suited to your situation, and allowing each individual to experience this in their own time.



COMMUNITY Underpinning the materials is an intention to gather together and with God, sharing experiences and stories, and learning together. The focus should be on creating community and a sense of belonging, demonstrating that the church is available to all rather than having any fixed sense of outcomes or specific learning.



OPENNESS These resources are designed to be ready to use, however they require a gentle approach. Prayers may be adapted for your context – and you may need to allow your group to use their own words, or no words at all. Questions should be left open-ended and unanswered. Fresh meanings may be discovered in the Bible passage and activities may provoke extended and helpful discussion, meaning that other activities aren't used. Be flexible – if some people really want to continue to talk, let others start another activity. We encourage you to allow this to unfold naturally.



VARIETY Timings and age-differentiation are not included in the resources. Use the spiritual styles indicated by the coloured letters to help you plan and cater for the different ways in which people connect with God. Find information about spiritual styles at www.rootsontheweb.com in the *Worship and learning support* area.



EVERYONE The materials are devised for the whole group to interact together and in smaller groups. Where you have a wide age range, mix generations together so that they can hear and learn from each other.



REGULARITY It's important to meet regularly as you form relationships and build up community together. These materials are ideal for a monthly gathering. The three *Follow-up ideas* could be sent out in the intervening weeks, to maintain contact and enable people to continue discovering.