



# Brighter

## 3 good news habits to help you shine

### *Host Guide*



# Welcome to the host guide to Brighter.

Most people around us have yet to make any sense of the good news. They simply haven't got a clue about Jesus and whether he could be relevant for their lives or not, let alone what He has taught and done. Paul asked the church in Rome a question that rings true for our generation today, 'How can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?' (Romans 10:14.a) If people around us haven't heard the gospel how can they respond? If we haven't planted the seed of the gospel how can we expect a harvest?

Evangelist J. John jokes that most Christians are like arctic rivers; they are frozen at the mouth! While most followers of Jesus wouldn't argue that it was a rubbish or bad thing to follow Him, somehow they don't believe it could be good for others and the news bit about the good news gets forgotten.

Brighter is designed to give confidence to groups of Christians to regularly share their story, God's story and to invite people into the life of their church, so they can also become followers of Jesus and encounter 'Our Story.'

## How does it work?

- Brighter runs over 4 sessions, either once a week or once a fortnight.
- It takes around 90 - 100 minutes for each session, which includes time for prayer and discussion.
- Each session is a mixture of video input and practical exercises, followed up with some homework for the intervening period of time. Feedback from these challenges normally happens at the start of the next session. This accountability moment helps keep everyone engaged.

## What are the '3 habits'?

1. **My story.** *I regularly share my story with those I meet.*
2. **God's story.** *I know and share God's story often.*
3. **Our story.** *I invite my friends and family to my local church events throughout the year.*

## What does a session look like?

Each session lasts about 90 minutes. It can take place in a home, pub, café, church hall, or even online. It really is up to you. The sessions will be split roughly into the following format:

- **Before** the session formally starts make sure people are relaxed, supplied with any refreshments you want them to have, and that the venue is set up, comfortable and warm. You may want to add an extra 10 mins for this phase. Your job as host is to put people at ease, be confident in using the video input and keep things on track and to time.
- **Welcome.** This may include a fun activity and an opening prayer.
- **Re-cap.** What did God teach you from the previous session and how did the homework go?
- **Listen.** Teaching input (video content).
- **Talk.** Discuss questions together in small groups (or breakout groups if online, as for example on a zoom call).
- **Pray.** Time to meet afresh with the Lord and ask for his power to help us shine.
- **Grow.** Homework is set each week with creative challenges.

## What is your role?

First things first. The pressure is off. We are not expecting that you are the expert, extrovert or even an evangelist! But you will need to be...

1. **Willing** to put people at ease, be encouraging, and keep everything moving.
- 2) **Happy** to personally have a go at the training as you go through it with the group, so you can be an example.
- 3) **Able to facilitate** the group to grow and learn from each other. Remember you are the guide, not the expert! You will give instructions for some of the tasks and be responsible for writing up their responses when needed.
- 4) **Willing to give time to source and prepare** any materials that are needed for each session (you will need to think ahead to get hold of 4 Points materials for week 3)
- 5) **Familiarise yourself with the technology** required, if done online. Make sure everyone doing the course also knows how to access and use the technology.

## Who has put this course together?

Brighter is written by Chris Duffett and Nic Harding.

Nic is the Director of Together for the Harvest and Kairos Connexion, a network of church leaders who seek to live integrated mission, discipleship and community life.



Chris is the founder of The Light Project, a growing network of teams who reveal Jesus and train others in evangelism. He is an author, poet and artist.

We believe that every person on this planet deserves an opportunity to respond to the most outrageous gift this world has been graced with and this course is one way among many that will help the Bride of Christ shine and grow for the glory of God.

We believe that everyone deserves to say yes or no to the invitation that Jesus gives: a life in all its fullness and an eternity with him. We believe that it is a tragedy that today most people haven't heard or seen the gospel demonstrated to them in such a way that makes sense to them.

We ask you to imagine what your town or city could look like in 10 years' time if every man woman and child had experienced a vibrant expression of the gospel – something they saw demonstrated in our lives and relationships; but had also heard and understood a message of hope for their lives. Imagine our neighbourhoods, our families, our workplaces transformed with changed lives. Imagine tens of thousands of people coming to faith, affecting those around them, and infecting the culture of our society.

***Lord, may your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.***



## Recommended resources

Brighter is a stand-alone course and won't require any books. However, if you would like to read around the subject of faith sharing and evangelism then we recommend these books:

‘Creating a culture of faith sharing in the local church’ by Andy Frost



Chris Duffett has written some books on faith sharing that may be a useful additional resource. *Smack Heads and Fat Cats* is a useful introduction to evangelism.

We also recommend *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* by Laurence Singlehurst; *Reimagining Evangelism* by Rick Richardson, *Creating a Culture of invitation in your Church* by Michael Harvey, and *Fruitfulness on the Frontline* by Mark Greene.



*The Four Points* are a wonderful tool to help us remember something of ‘God’s story.’ There are plenty of resources available and we recommend that you order some materials to help your group in their week 3 homework.

[www.the4points.com/uk](http://www.the4points.com/uk)

For those wanting to use the Zoom platform for online courses, the following is a link to tutorials for those unfamiliar with the technology, <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

### Week 1 Prepare to Share

## Aims

In this session we help the group to:

1. Get to know one another.
2. Look at some scripture about shining brighter.
3. Think about who the group will pray for so that others may see them shine brighter.
4. Challenge one another to share something about their faith.

## Preparation

**Host** - You will need:

- 5 luggage tags or 5 pieces of paper cut into leaf shapes for each participant of the course. These will be used for writing the names of 5 people who are not yet Christians that each of the participants will be praying for over the coming weeks. These will need to be stuck on a tree shape on a large piece of card or alternatively tied onto an old branch. This will give a visual aid to help us imagine what our church may look like if all these people belonged and journeyed with us as we follow Jesus. Make sure you bring this out each week as a visual reminder of the challenge to pray for 5.
- 2 large pieces of paper or a flip chart and a large marker to write up ideas from the group.
- A piece of paper for each participant and a pen for the opening welcome activity.



## Welcome activity- 15 mins

**Host** - Ask a couple of people to open in prayer, praying for the course over the next 4 sessions, for courage and confidence to 'have a go'! Then spend some time getting to know one another by asking each person to write down an unusual thing about themselves that others may not know on a small piece of paper and put it into a hat or bowl. Ask them to pull a few out and ask people to guess who it is from the clue!

(Tip - If there are a lot of people who don't know each other, you may want to do this in smaller groups.)

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## Hopes- 5 mins

**Host** - In pairs ask the group to write down (space in course book) and then be ready to share what they hope to get out of Brighter. Simply ask 'What do you want to get out of it?' Go round the group, or if it's a large group select a dozen or so 'hopes' and write them up on the flip chart as a reminder of the hopes for the course.

## Setting the scene of the course- 10 mins

**Host** - Ask the group what is so good about being a Christian. Ask them to come up with their own top 3 (space in course book). Write them up on a flip chart or paper. Reflect on the good things as a group, perhaps asking out of them all which one stands out as the best. Remember the gospel is meant to be good news!

Immediately after ask the group what is the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the phrase 'sharing my faith.' The responses may range from 'fearful and dread' to 'what if I get it wrong and don't know what to say.'

Explain that Brighter is all about bridging the gap between what we know and what we do. Most of us think being a Christian is very good. However, the vast majority of Christians struggle to tell that good news to those we meet as strangers as well as our friends and family.

## Video Pt 1 - Growing Brighter 10 mins

- Introduction to the overview of the course and the 3 habits:
- Habit 1: My story. ***I regularly share my story with those I meet.***
- Habit 2: God's story. ***I know and share God's story often.***
- Habit 3: Our story. ***I invite my friends and family to my local church events throughout the year.***
- We share a simple story or two of how we have been able to put the habits into practice.

- We read Matthew 5.14-16, and explain that to shine Brighter in our lives we need to:
  1. **Believe** that we are called ‘the light of the world.’ Think about what it means that Jesus lives in us by His Spirit. It is His life that we want to shine out. Read 2 Corinthians 4 vs 6&7. We are the vessels of this awesome light!
  2. This light is **Big**. Jesus likens it to a city on a hill. Who has seen a city at night from the distance? There is no mistaking the ‘hugeness’ of a city at night. It’s the same with what each one of us carries. The light of Christ.
  3. We shine for the **Benefit** of others. The result is that light is given to the whole house (our family) and people see what we do and glorify God (friends, neighbours and work colleagues.)
  4. Many of us put our ‘light’ under a **Bowl**. ‘What is your bowl?’ How do you tend to hide the light of Christ in you from others?’

**Host – 5 mins** Get some feedback on this last question. Ask what people think or feel about the rest of the points made.

### **Video Pt 2 - Making Connections 14 mins**

Three important key steps on this journey of shining Brighter. They are:

- a) Making connections (Week 1).
- b) Having spiritual conversations (Weeks 2 & 3).
- c) Giving invitations (Week 4).

We will look at how these three connect and develop over the coming weeks.

Making new connections:

We explain that for some people they won’t have many not-yet-Christian friends, and they will need to find new ways of connecting with people. We may have to connect with as many as 100 people before we find 10 who are open to spiritual conversations, and one who actually commits their lives to follow Christ.

We teach people about the art of friendliness – just saying hello to people in the park, at the bus stop, over the fence or water-cooler. Encourage them to start some normal conversations with new people just by being friendly.



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**Talk together- 20 mins.**

**Host** – Open up discussion in small groups about any new ways or places where they may be able to connect with people, creating new opportunities.

**Host** - In small groups read **Colossians 4:2-6**. Ask the delegates to re-write Paul's prayer into their own words.

Get them to talk about the people they hope the Lord will open a door to, for them to share their story and God's story. Ask them to write the names of 5 people, first of all in their course book, and then, one on each leaf or tag and then stick or hang them up on the tree.

**Pray- 10 mins.**

**Host** – get the group to spend time praying for those whose names they see on the tree. What would church look like with all these people part of it? Suggest spending time asking the Lord to open a door for each one to shine brighter, and praying for new opportunities for connections to emerge over the coming weeks.

**Host - Grow. 5 mins**

This week pray for 'your five' and make a note of any changes that happen ready to report back next week. Choose two of the following dares:

- 1) Next time you are in a queue for a coffee, buy one for the person next to you and see what happens!
- 2) Ask the Lord to show you one person out of all the strangers you see this week who you need to tell that He loves them, and then simply do so!
- 3) Send a card with a verse of encouragement to a friend saying that you are thinking of them.
- 4) Text a friend who isn't a Christian asking if they have anything that they want you to pray for them.

**Host** – Thank people for coming. Encourage them to rise to the challenge of the dare. Remind them of the next time and place of meeting. Close in prayer.

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## Week 2

### Habit 1: My story.

*I regularly share my story with those I meet.*

#### Aims

In this session we lead the group to:

1. Be confident in their story.
2. Be prepared to share with people their story.
3. Be inspired by other Christian's stories and how they communicate them.

#### Host - Preparation

- You will need to be able to show a short testimony of your choosing on line, so have a computer or TV available connected to the Internet.
- You will need to provide some paper and pens for people who don't bring any.
- Think about your own 6-word story before coming, so you can encourage others in the process.
- Have a small prize / prizes for anyone who gives great feedback from last week eg a packet of sweets.

#### Host - Welcome. 10 mins.

After an opening prayer, play an ice-breaker game: **Two truths. One lie.** If your group is large put people in groups of 5. Each person has to tell 2 things about themselves that are true and one that isn't! The rest of the group has to guess which one is the lie!

#### Host - Re-cap. 10 mins.

- Ask questions like 'What did God teach you from the previous session? How did the homework go? Who did any of the dares?' Did anyone have any conversations with new people? Be prepared to have a small or silly prize for the person who seems to have taken the dares most seriously. Do the same each week.
- Share how your own week went (host) and what you learnt from praying for your 5. It's important that you are personally engaging with the training and have your own stories to tell.

- Ask if anyone has any stories to share about the 5 people they are praying for.

Stories are powerful. There is no such thing as a boring story from a Christian! Take a moment to consider with the group what the Lord has done for each one of us: brought us out of the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light, he has saved us from death to life, from despair to joy. We are truly a rags to riches bunch!

### Host – 5 mins

Show a testimony from one of the following web sites:

- <https://greatcommission.co.uk> Is ram packed full of good news stories!
- [www.iamsecond.com](http://www.iamsecond.com) – lots of testimony from people well known in the USA.
- ‘Yes he is’ have short powerful testimony films on this YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCSZdNKrGGL-M8R3YJuKhtQ>



### Video – Being prepared to tell my story 9+19 mins

#### 1 Pet 3:15

1. Revere Christ as Lord in our hearts.
2. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have.
3. Respond with gentleness and respect.

Connect to last week's discussion on Col 4:6 NLT 'Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.'

- Gracious = not putting up unnecessary barriers
- Attractive = drawing people into the conversation by what you say

We explain that today we are going to 'be prepared' to give the reason for the hope we have by writing our story and practicing it. This is an exercise that some

of the group may have done before. We reassure them that they can still participate and practice their story telling.

We remind people of the three important steps on this journey as we introduce the Disciple-Makers Journey (see week 4 notes)

- a) Making connections (Week 1).
- b) Having spiritual conversations (Weeks 2 & 3).
- c) Giving invitations (Week 4).

This week we will start to look at having spiritual conversations.

**Having spiritual conversations:** Their story is one of the best ways of turning a normal conversation into a spiritual one, and by doing so they will discover quickly, by the way the person responds, and if they are open to spiritual things (what we sometimes call a person of peace, from Luke 10:1-10). We want to tell our story in the most natural way possible, not to try and artificially 'crow-bar' it into the conversation. One of the simplest ways of provoking such an opportunity is by showing genuine loving interest in the other person. Most people like talking about themselves. If you ask them enough questions about themselves, they will often reciprocate by asking you something about yourself. Often this precipitates an opportunity to talk about something spiritual (like the fact you are part of a church, value prayer, or similar). When this occurs it's very easy to pause and just say something like, 'Tell you what, can I just tell you my story'. Most people are happy to hear your story and will just say 'Sure'. You've asked permission and can just go right into the story you have become proficient and natural in sharing.

Instructions for the 6 words: In 5 minutes come up with your story in 6 words. The most famous six-word story from the bible, which is 'was blind but now I see.' Get everyone to think about their key six words. This is usually one sentence of 6 words, 3 couplets, or 6 individual words. These 6 words become the hangers on which the story rests. The 6 words keep the story on track, and help you not forget where you were going.

Chris Duffett's six-word story is: 'Didn't care, believed Jesus, now love.' He used to live life as if he was the most important person in the world, however when

he believed Jesus after his sister told him the gospel he couldn't help but love people and share his new found faith as well as his possessions!

Nic Harding's six-word story is: 'Buried alive, answered prayer, on fire'. At the age of 15 he was buried alive under hundredweights of sand on the beach, but before he went unconscious realised he was not afraid to die. This confirmed the reality of the decision he had made as a 12 year old, to welcome Christ into his life. As an 8 year old he had experienced a remarkable answer to prayer, when he asked God to help him come top of the class. It happened that week and never before or after and it left a deep impression on him. It meant that when he heard the good news about Jesus as a 12 year old, he was ready to commit his life to follow Jesus. By the time he was 19 he had seen God do so many amazing things that he could never doubt God again, and was set on fire for the rest of his life, pursuing the great adventure of following God's plan for his life.

Building your story: 10 mins. Work on developing your story around those 6 words. Make some bullet points of the most important things you want to say. If you feel your story is very ordinary, don't worry so are most peoples. Other people will relate to the 'ordinariness' of it. Put another way, anyone's ordinary story becomes extraordinary when Jesus enters it.

It's helpful if your story encompasses what life was like before you came to Christ (if there was a before); how you found Christ, or he found you, and how life has changed. If you feel like you have always been a Christian because you were raised in a Christian home, then you can still refer to the time when he became real to you, or things that he has done that have proved him to be real. It's important to give concrete examples of how Christ is real to you – answered prayer, unexpected provision, help in relationships or at work etc.

**Host - Talk together.** Developing my story. **30 mins.**

(5 mins) Get everyone to work on their 6 words, writing them down on a piece of paper.



(10 mins) Then ask them to spend a few minutes working on those stories by writing down a number of bullet points or key events that fill out their story.

(15 mins) Then organise the participants in groups of 3 to take it in turns to 'unpack' their 6-word stories by using it as a starter point to talk for no longer than 3 minutes each. Allow time for a couple of minutes of feedback and gentle criticism as to areas it could improve on! E.g. are there any words that were used that someone who isn't a Christian may need help in interpreting? Does the story flow or make sense? Was Jesus mentioned? Did you feel drawn into the story?

**Pray. 10 mins.**

Think about the 5 people that each delegate is praying for. How will they hear and understand your story? Pray for them for God to give an opportunity for you to share your story.

Think about strangers that you meet. How could you tell your 6-word story to them?

**Host – Grow. 5 mins to share the dare!**



Explain that the homework will be either:

- Writing out your story. No more than 2 pages of A4 or if typed up 1000 words.
- For those who would prefer to they can record their story on their phones or even film them and load them up onto their YouTube channel (if they have one.)
- Remind the group that next week everyone gets to share their written or recorded story!
- Extra homework for those up for the challenge: Find someone who would be willing to accompany you and together write your 6-word story out on a piece of cardboard each. Find a busy street to sit or stand showing your cardboard testimony and wait for people to ask you questions.

**Week 3**

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## Habit 2: God's story.

*I know and share God's story often.*

### Aims

In this session we lead the group to:

1. Be familiar with ways of telling God's story.
2. Be aware that the good news is shared differently depending who we are sharing it with.
3. Learn the 4 Points as a way of sharing God's story.

### Host - Preparation

- Familiarise yourself with the 4 Points at [www.the4points.com](http://www.the4points.com). Watch the videos to see how each point is explained.
- You will need to have ordered in some 4 Points materials like the wrist bands, booklets or even a fetching sweat shirt! Use the website to order.
- You may want some tea lights and matches if you want to include them as part of your final prayer time at the end of this session (see notes).
- Have a flip chart available for capturing some tweet feedback.

### Host - Welcome. 15 mins.

After an opening prayer ask each person to pair up with someone they don't know and share their story with them (based on last week). If they weren't present last week, ask them to listen in to another couple sharing their stories with each other. Having written it out or recorded it as part of the homework, they can either read it or if possible share it from memory.

Once one person has told their story, the other has to try and repeat what they have heard. Each gives feedback on the other's story. It's an exercise in both telling, listening, and getting feedback on what has been heard from what has been spoken.

### Host - Re-cap. 15 mins.

- In a similar way to the previous session ask questions like 'What has God taught you since we met last?' 'How did the homework go?' 'Who did the cardboard 6-word story?' 'Did anyone have any new connections / opportunities?'
- Ask people to share about their 5 whom they are praying for.

- Ask for one or two volunteers (that you have pre-selected) to share their stories with the whole group. Be aware that some stories could be used for the church website, parish news or could be shared at a Sunday morning for the whole church to enjoy. Think how you could utilise the stories that the group has prepared?

**Host – 5 min** If you have the resources from the 4 Points like a wristband or leaflet please give them out to the group and allow them to follow the symbols as we go through them on the video. You could also point them to the [www.the4points.com](http://www.the4points.com) website where they can see the 4 Points explained on video by founder Dave Sharples.

**Video Pt 1 - God's story. 9 mins.**

Remember our three steps on the journey:

- a) Making connections (Week 1).
- b) Having spiritual conversations (Weeks 2 & 3).
- c) Giving invitations (Week 4).

This week we continue to develop our second step on the journey - having spiritual conversations.

Prepare people for the 'telling God's story' section by reminding them that they get to:

- Create connections – just by being friendly and saying 'Hi, how are you?'
- Grow confident in steering conversations from natural to spiritual topics, their story being one of the best ways to do this.
- Use their story as a starting point for sharing God's story. For example, if the person is asking questions about their story, it's easy enough to say, 'Can I just tell you what I discovered about knowing God?'

What does the group understand as 'God's story' or 'Good news?' Ask them to come up with a tweet (under 140 characters) outlining what they think is God's story.

Here are a couple of examples:

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- Forgiveness we could never earn, Freedom we could never attain, Fulfilment we could never imagine
  - God reached down to us through Jesus to bring us life in all its fullness, now and for eternity.

### **Host – 10 mins**

Get individuals to have a go at a 140 character tweet (5 min), then ask them feedback on the tweet exercise, and write up some of their ideas for the whole group to see. (5 min)

### **Video Pt 2 – The 4 Points. 9+14 mins**

Even though you will teach the group a powerful and simple way of remembering the gospel through using the 4 Points, it's essential to remember that each person we meet will be unique and the way we share the gospel will be different depending on what is their need, whether they are aware of being 'lost' or whether they carry a load of shame or if they're addicted, need healing or hope.

Most strangers we meet will not have heard God's story before, so we will need to be aware of explaining what we believe in simple ways that others can understand and not be bamboozled by!

Remember, while the good news does not change, the way in which we connect with those around us will do.

The gospel is presented very differently to different people at different times. Encourage the group that there isn't a one size fits all way of telling the gospel.

The gospel is proclaimed many times through the book of Acts, it is different depending on context, hearers, preacher etc.

Encourage them to check out the passages in their own time

Reference	Speakers and hearers
Acts 5:29-32	Peter and the apostles to the Jews and Rulers
Acts 7:2-53	Stephen to the Rulers and council
Acts 8:26-39	Philip to an Ethiopian Eunuch
Acts 10:24-48	Peter to the Gentiles: Cornelius and his entire household.
Acts 13:16-43	Paul to the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles
Acts 17:16-34	Paul to the Greeks at the Areopagus
Acts 26:1-29	Paul to King Agrippa

Hopefully the group will be aware of the context and the uniqueness of those they meet when they share God's story. With that in mind we now teach a simple way of remembering and telling God's story through the 4 Points.



1. Heart shape. **God loves me.** He has an amazing plan and purpose for our lives. He created each one of us uniquely and knows how we think and feel. By connecting with God, we access that awesome plan and purpose for our lives. We connect with his love, wisdom and help to live the life he prepared for our greatest fulfilment. He wants to help us find the best for our family, our jobs, our friendships, our finances, in fact every area of our lives. His love is unconditional and there is nothing we can do to make him love us more or less.
2. The X shape. **I have sinned.** When God first made the world it was perfect, without suffering or pain. But here is the problem, ever since God made humankind we have turned away from Him and tried to live our lives without His help or reference to the plan He had for us. This independence and rebellion the Bible calls sin – we've missed the mark, we've rejected



his invitation to follow him and his lead. This sin is serious because God is pure and holy. It is not possible for sin to be in His presence. We have therefore become separated from our loving heavenly Father. For us to have a relationship with Him we have to deal with this problem.

For under 35's, there may be little awareness of sin or shortcomings. They may only see good and bad in relation to whether something is good or bad for them. They may not have an external frame of reference for right and wrong. If you suspect this is the case, then consider using the X shape to talk about 'life's not working' or 'something is wrong with our world' or 'deep down we know we are missing something – there must be more'. Then you can go on to talk about the problem of being separated from God and of us falling short of his standards of holiness and our need for God's forgiveness.

3. The cross shape. **Jesus died for me.** Jesus, God's son, who had been with God from the beginning of everything, came to earth as a man and lived a perfect life, showing us what God was like. He was eventually crucified, and the bible says that in doing so he took the punishment we deserved for our rebellion and independence. By believing in him, in His death and resurrection, and trusting in what happened to Him on the cross, we can ask for and receive forgiveness. Believing in what Jesus has done means that we become clean, as if we had never sinned. Because of this we can come into God's presence, and know God like the best dad we could have ever dreamed of.
4. The ? shape. **I need to decide to live for God.** We have to decide what to do. We have to open the door and invite Him in. We have to acknowledge our sin and ask for forgiveness. We have to recognise that he knows best for our happiness and to surrender our previous desires to run our own lives. We trust Him to be in charge of our lives. The Bible calls this making Jesus Lord (in charge) of our lives. In making this decision we are becoming his friend, his follower. His promise to us is not only a rich, full life of significance now, but eternal life in heaven when we die.

We tell the group that in sharing the 4 Points we can remind those we meet that we weren't meant to live this life alone. God brings us into his family, so it's important that we find a community of friends of Jesus who will help us grow in our faith and become like family to us.

We encourage people to carry one of the 4 Points leaflets with them in their wallet or purse so that if they get the opportunity to talk about the 4 Points they can leave one with the person.

For more help in sharing the 4 points, watch the video presentation on the4points website

**Host - Talk together: 10 mins.**

Encourage the groups to get into 3s or 4s to take it in turns to go through the 4 Points practicing how to share God's story through the symbols. Remember this isn't meant to be pitch or patter but a simple way to communicate something of God's story.

**Host - Pray. 10 mins.**

Ask the group to pray for their 5 people and for God to give an opportunity for each of the group to have an opportunity to share their story and God's story. You may want the group to respond by lighting a tea-light each as a sign of shining brighter this week.

**Host - Grow. 5 mins to share the dare!**

Like last week, encourage your groups to pray for 'your five' and to make a note of any changes that happen ready to report back next week!

Then ask them to choose one of the following dares:

- 1) If you usually drive into work and it's possible, take public transport instead for one day this week and pray that you can share the 4 Points with someone you meet.
- 2) Walk instead of drive to the shops or the school run (if it's under 2 miles or so) and pray as you go that you may have an opportunity to share God's story with someone.

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- 3) Write a card to a member of your family or friend who does not know Jesus with a copy of a 4 Points leaflet or bracelet.
  - 4) Post on social media your 'Good News' tweet and see what comments you receive!

By way of preparation for next week, you could encourage a few people (brave people who do not have a gambling problem!) to try going into a betting shop, just to see how an unchurched person might feel being invited to an alien environment like church for the first time!

## Week 4

### Habit 3: Our story.

*I invite my friends and family to my local church events throughout the year.*

#### Aims

In this session we lead the group to:

1. Work out what it is they could invite people to, both socially and spiritually.
2. Identify the hurdles that stop the group from inviting people to church and church events.
3. Be commissioned to be people who grow in the 3 habits to shine Brighter!

#### Host - Preparation

- Familiarise yourself with the annual programme of events at your local church. Like guest services, social events, Alpha or similar courses etc.
- Think about how the church could be more prepared to create invitational opportunities and be more welcoming to new people.

Get some extra ideas by checking out the rhythm of mission calendar advocated by

Hope Together: [https://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/369046/Outreach\\_calendar.aspx](https://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/369046/Outreach_calendar.aspx)

If necessary, talk to the senior pastor about this before the session.

- You will need some paper and pens for the feedback on hurdles, and the plan of action later on in the session.
- You will also need something to write feedback on like flip chart paper.



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### Host - Re-cap. 10 mins.

- In a similar way to the previous sessions ask questions like 'What has God taught you since we met last?' 'How did the homework go?' 'What did you do and how?'
- If any went into a betting shop, explain that the purpose of the exercise was to help us experience what someone who has never been to church before may feel if we invite them to something completely new. How did it feel?
- Spend time hearing from those who managed to share the 4 Points with someone? What happened?

### Video Pt 1 - Our story. 11 mins

Remember our three steps on the journey:

- a) Making connections.
- b) Having spiritual conversations.
- c) Giving invitations.

This week we will look at our final step on our journey, giving invitations.

**Giving invitations:** We are inviting people to be part of 'our story.' The church family is an attractive one. For those who lack community and belonging we are beautiful! Remind the group that 'Brighter' is all about helping us shine and one way we can do that is to develop a habit of inviting people to our local church and the events we put on, as well as inviting friends to 'journey with us' as we seek to teach them about becoming followers of Jesus.

In his book *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* Lawrence Singlehurst identifies that the first step for someone who is not a Christian to start a spiritual journey to faith is to recognise two things: GIG- CAOK! (God is good. Christians are OK.) Inviting a friend or colleague to a social gathering with your church is a wonderful opportunity to show that Christians are 'normal' people. (Most of the time!)

Jesus invited people to follow him and to spend time with him. He was also invited to parties and meals. Being with people was the norm for him. However, too often we hide away and don't engage with people as we could.



The original Talking Jesus research (<https://talkingjesus.org/research-from-the-course/>) showed that 61% of all English non-Christians have never had a conversation with a Christian about Jesus (and 43% of those who know a Christian haven't had such a conversation about Jesus with them!)

We know the need is so great for people to hear and experience good news, however, why is it that we all can find talking to and inviting people to church events very difficult?

### **Host – 20 mins**

Ask the group what are some of the hurdles they face in inviting people to events or to spending time with them in social contexts. Get them to write them down in their course books. You may want to write up a summary on a large bit of paper. Answers you could expect may include things like:

- Not having anything to invite people to
- Being embarrassed about what we could invite them to as it may be too cringey
- Not having any not-yet Christian friends
- Fear of embarrassment or rejection
- Fear of breaking rules in the workplace

Once they have written all the hurdles down ask small groups to pray over the things that stop them having a habit of inviting people to share 'our story.' If the group has identified particular hurdles they battle with, they may want to write them down on a separate piece of paper, and then throw it away as a symbol of not living under fear any more.

### **Video Pt 2 – The power of invitation. 7 mins**

We reassure the group that friends and family may come to a church event because of the invitation, but they will stay because of the community. This has been a pattern over the past 20 years where there has been a shift from people having a clear understanding of faith to then believing in Jesus which in turn affects their behaviour; to people belonging to the community of the church, coming to faith to then following a process of sanctification and changed behaviour.

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In other words people are less likely to **believe, behave, belong**, but rather **belong, believe, behave**.

John 4.27-42. Identify some of the different interactions of 'invitation' in the story. Who invited whom? What was the result of the different invitations?

Ask the group if they think that there is anything they, their small group, or the whole church could be doing to improve the number and quality of invitational opportunities, the warmth of welcome at them, and the likelihood that an unchurched guest would feel at home there.

### **Host – Feedback 10 mins**

Get open discussion feedback from the group on these last questions.

### **Video Pt 3 - Top 10 tips for inviting. 9+11 mins**

Write down in your course book which you find most helpful.

1. Be friendly and natural, as though you invite people every day of the week! (Which you will be soon I am sure!)
2. Explain what they are coming to and reassure what they could expect at the event.
3. Invite in person not by printed flyer. Use a flyer just to support an invitation if it's available.
4. See a refusal as a success because you actually asked! Don't take it personally. Be prepared to ask again another time.
5. Ask God whom he might want you to invite, see who comes to mind, and then be obedient with whom he shows you.
6. Pray for them daily to have an open heart to your invitation.
7. Practice the question you are going to ask.
8. When you have asked them, offer to go with them, either to pick them up or walk with them, whatever is more convenient. Turning up at a church-type event on your own if you aren't used to it can be very scary. (As you may have found going to the betting shop.)
9. When you get there, introduce them to your church friends.
10. Afterwards invite them to meet your church friends in another context,

perhaps at someone's home where they can start to build other friendships.

Recommend Michael Harvey's book 'Creating a Culture of Invitation in Church'

Explain the difference between inviting those we meet to events that are social and events that are geared to help someone on their spiritual journey.

1. Social - Going out for a coffee or pint with a group from the church, going to the cinema, for a meal, to the park with kids, to a community social like a BBQ or walk.
2. Spiritual - To a church service, to a community gathering, to an Alpha course or similar.

Explain how these stages of connecting, chatting, and now inviting relate to the Disciple-maker's journey (in course notes)



Talk through with them the challenge with the habit of inviting people to 'our story' is to move from social contact to spiritual journey over time. When someone commits to the spiritual journey, they are exploring the possibility of becoming a Christian. It may be they have started to come to your Sunday services or small group on a regular basis, or have begun an Alpha or Christianity explored course.

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### Host - 5 mins

Ask the group to work in pairs and to think about their own church and contexts and draw up a list of social and spiritual events and activities over the year that they could invite people to, both in small and larger contexts. Make some notes in the course book.

Conclusion -

### 10 mins

Discuss in groups of 3 or 4 -

What have been your light bulb moments in this training? What habits are you going to put in place to develop your life as a confident witness so that you can shine more brightly?

### 5 mins

Encourage each person to commit to a plan of action; 2 or 3 action points that they will write down (in the course book) and be accountable to a friend for putting into practice over the coming months. Get them to also write down to whom they will be accountable.

Get them to use the plan as a basis of accountability. Perhaps meet up every month to review how they are doing with what they felt God was asking them to do. Get them to use it as an opportunity to encourage one another and pray together for their not-yet-Christian friends. Accountability is the magic sauce of personal growth and spiritual formation.

### 5 mins

In the same groups get them to pray for each other and their 5 not-yet-Christian friends.

Thank people for coming, for staying till the end of the course, and encourage them to work on their action plans with mutual accountability

The end!

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For more ideas and inspiration to shine brighter go to the EA's great commission website <https://greatcommission.co.uk>

Recommended additional reading - 'Creating a culture of faith sharing in the local church' by Andy Frost, from <https://www.sharejesusinternational.com/culture-of-mission/>

For more information about Together for the Harvest go to [www.tfh.org.uk](http://www.tfh.org.uk)

For more information about Kairos Connexion (Kx) go to [www.kairosconnexion.org](http://www.kairosconnexion.org)