



TEAM TRAINING MATERIAL

TEAM TRAINING - VERSION 1

One simple way to use Starting out in Children's Ministry as a training tool is to give a copy of the book to each member of your team. Ask them to read a chapter at a time; then meet together to discuss what you've read. Each chapter (except chapter 1*) has a prayer pause and some questions for reflection. You could use these as the basis for your discussions.

This approach will work particularly well with any new team members. You could decide to meet weekly or fortnightly, so that you work through the whole book together over the course of two or three months, helping to build their confidence as they settle in to the team.

*Chapter 1 simply explains how discipline is handled throughout the book, so I suggest reading chapters 1 and 2 together.

TEAM TRAINING - VERSION 2

You know your team, and what their training needs are at this time. So an alternative approach would be to choose a chapter from the book that addresses a current issue in your group. If everyone has a copy of Starting out in Children's Ministry, you could ask them to read the relevant chapter before you meet. Your team meeting would then be an opportunity to take the ideas from the chapter and discuss how they apply to your individual group, children and circumstances.

Alternatively, you could start the meeting by reading out sections from the chapter and/or summarising what it says. Then follow this with talking about how these principles apply in your own situation.

TEAM TRAINING - VERSION 3

Starting out in Children's Ministry can be used as the basis for a seven-session training course, either for new team members or as a refresher for your whole team. The outlines on the following page would work in a series of one-hour training slots.

SESSION 1: WHY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY?

- Page 9 of Starting out in Children's Ministry gives some possible reasons for running a children's group. Discuss whether these are good reasons for children's ministry. What other reasons might there be?
- Give out copies of handout 1. (All the handouts can be found at the end of this document.) Encourage your group to circle, draw round and underline words in Psalm 78 v 1-8 as explained in the handout. Discuss what you have learned about children from this passage. The notes on pages 12-13 may help you lead this discussion.
- Use the prayer pauses on pages 14 and 15 to pray for some of the children in your group, and their parents.
- Decide how you are going to use the discipline tips during your training sessions. If you are going to build them in as you go along, read the tips on pages 15, 16 and 17, and choose when within the session to read each one to the group. (Alternatively, you may prefer to do a separate session on discipline, in which case use the structure given in chapter 1 as the basis for this.)
- Use the questions for reflection on page 17 to end your session.

SESSION 2: WHY YOU?

- Page 19 of Starting out in Children's Ministry introduces three people who want to join a children's team. Discuss which, if any of them, you would want on your team, and why.
- Read 1 Timothy 4 v 12-16. What characteristics does Paul want Timothy to be developing? Which of these are relevant for someone doing children's ministry?
- Use the prayer pause on page 21 to respond to this Bible passage.
- Discuss the two questions on page 23. Every member of the team will have gifts they can use in the children's ministry, so this is an opportunity to encourage each other about the unique way God has gifted each of us to serve him.
- If you are building in discipline tips as you go along, read the tips on pages 20, 22 and 23, and decide when within the session to read each one to the group.
- Use the questions for reflection on page 24 to end your session.

SESSION 3: TEAM TALK

- Read out the story on page 25 of Starting out in Children's Ministry. Why did Ali lose the children's attention? How could the rest of the team help her at this point?
- Introduce the idea from page 26 that whenever we are part of a team, but not doing the teaching at the front, we POP! Explain that this means:
 - **Participate:** Be looking for ways you can join in
 - **Observe:** Observe what's happening around you and respond to it where appropriate
 - **Pray:** Pray during a session, and before and after
- Ask the group for suggestions of activities during a children's session in which they can **participate** (rather than watching from the sidelines), and how they can do so. There are examples on page 27 of the kinds of answer you may get.
- Give out copies of handout 2 (at the end of this document). Encourage the group to **observe** what's going on and suggest things they might do to address them. When everyone has made some observations, give out handout 3 to see if there are further issues in this pictures that someone could have observed and done something about.
- Use the prayer pause on page 31 to help you pray together for the children in your group.
- Use the questions for reflection on page 34 to end your session.

SESSION 4: DIGGING INTO THE BIBLE

- Read out the story on page 35 of Starting out in Children's Ministry. What could Angela do so that she's not in this situation again? Angela's story is one reason why digging into the Bible passage is for everyone. Can the group think of other reasons why it matters that everyone thinks about the Bible passage, rather than just the person doing the upfront teaching?
- Give out handout 4 and talk through the three steps (A, B, C) to get to know a Bible passage. Step A is explained in more detail on the handout as it is the foundation for the other steps.
- Dig into a Bible passage together as a team. There are two worked examples in the book that you could use as the basis for this: either Mark 4 v 35-41 (pages 37-43) or John 6 v 1-15 (pages 71-76).
- If you are building in discipline tips as you go along, read the tip on page 38, and decide when within the session to read it to the group.
- Use the prayer pause and questions for reflection on page 44 to close your session.

SESSION 5: FOCUS THE FUN

- Read out the story on page 45 of Starting out in Children's Ministry. How could the children's team help Jamie's mum know what he has been learning (and help Jamie remember it too)? If people are struggling for ideas, page 52 may help.
- Give the group a copy of the top half of handout 5. What are the problems with this session? Now give them the bottom half of handout 5. How does this revised session address some of those problems?
- Explain the concept behind "focus the fun" (page 47) and how this helps cater for different learning styles (page 48).
- Use handout 6 to help you think about some of the different activities you might use in a session.
- If you are building in discipline tips as you go along, read the tips on pages 46, 49 and 51, and decide when within the session to read each one to the group.
- Use the prayer pause on page 51 and questions for reflection on page 53 to close your session.

SESSION 6: STAYING SAFE

- Read out the story on page 55 of Starting out in Children's Ministry. What could Mark and Sue have done differently?
- Discuss the general child protection principles on page 56.
- If your church or organisation has its own child protection policy, give out copies to members of the group and talk it through together.
- Staying safe is about more than just child protection. Use pages 61-62 to discuss the importance of leader protection, and the need to stay safe spiritually.
- Give out copies of handout 7. Depending on your team, it may be appropriate to give people some time to fill in their answers quietly first, before discussing them. You may also want to suggest that a team member can talk to you in confidence at another time, if this session has raised any issues for them.
- If you are building in discipline tips as you go along, read the tips on pages 59 and 61, and decide when within the session to read each one to the group.
- Use the prayer pause and questions for reflection on page 63 to close your session.

SESSION 7: THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD

- Read out the story on pages 65-66 of Starting out in Children's Ministry. Do you agree with Mitch that children's ministry is the best job in the world?
- Ask the group to think back over the previous six sessions. What did they find particularly helpful? Have they been able to put some of these things into practice? Are there aspects of children's ministry they are worried about? (If so, plan how you will address these in the future.)
- While it is right that we work hard at being the best children's leaders we can be, we need to remember that this ministry is ultimately God's. Read out "Our job and God's job" on page 67.
- Use the prayer pause on page 68 to pray for some of the children in your group.
- If you are building in discipline tips as you go along, read the tips on pages 67, 68 and 70, and decide when within the session to read each one to the group.
- Use the questions for reflection on page 70 to close your session.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CHILDREN?

A lot! There are clear commands in both the Old and New Testaments about the importance of teaching children the truth about our wonderful God. Here's an example from Psalm 78:

¹My people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.
²I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—
³things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.
⁴We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the *LORD*,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
⁵He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach their children,
⁶so that the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.
⁷Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.
⁸They would not be like their ancestors—
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
whose hearts were not loyal to God,
whose spirits were not faithful to him. (Psalm 78 v 1-8)

- **Circle** any words and phrases that refer to **children** (e.g. "descendants").
- **Draw a rectangle** around the words that tell us **what we are to do** for the children.
- **Underline** the things we are to **tell** children.

TEAM TALK



Discipline tips

This picture shows many potential discipline problems, and suggests ways to handle them.

"Lively weather"—especially strong winds, heavy rain or snow—often leads to "lively" children as well! Be prepared to change your session to allow for their need to let off steam.

Loud noise coming through open windows or doors can distract children and make it harder for them to sit quietly.

By chatting to each other, these leaders are showing the children that the talk isn't worth listening to. They are also being a distraction.

For child protection reasons, a leader should not have a child sitting in their lap (see page 56). Gently move the child so that they are sitting beside you instead.

A child will take your lead if an insect comes into the room. If you stay calm, they are much more likely to do the same. Ideally, one (brave!) leader needs to quietly catch the insect and take it out of the room. (Don't kill it—that will also distract the children!)

This leader isn't looking at the children. If you make eye contact as much as possible, it will help them to concentrate on what you are saying, whether you are giving the talk or explaining how to play a game.

This ball is just asking to be kicked! Keep balls, balloons etc. out of the way (and, ideally, out of sight as well).

Phones are a huge distraction for both children and leaders. If you have a "no phones" rule for the children (which I recommend), then the adults in the room shouldn't use them either.

Some girls love to plait or braid each other's hair rather than listen to the talk! Encourage them to sit next to each other instead—maybe with you sitting between them if necessary.

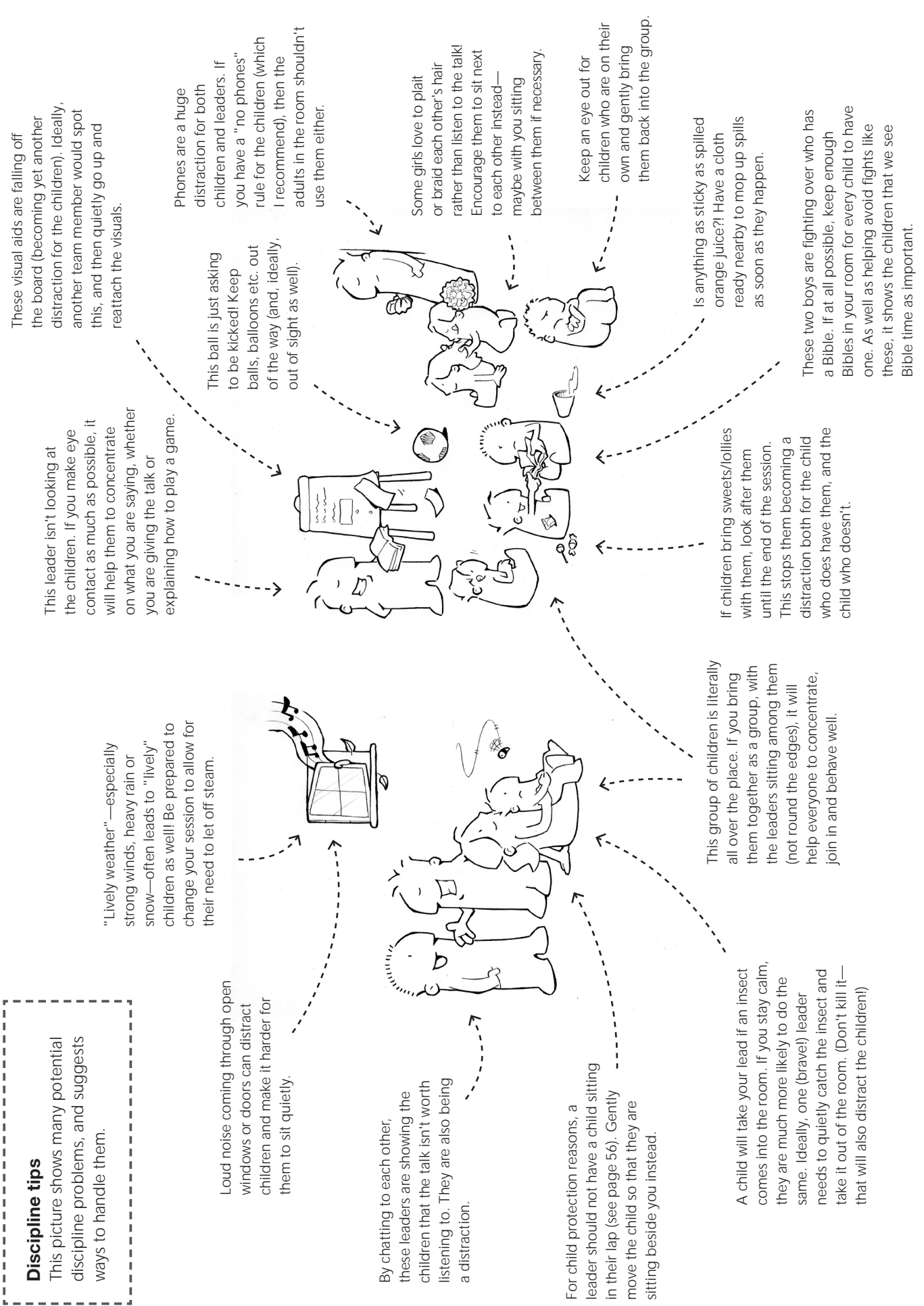
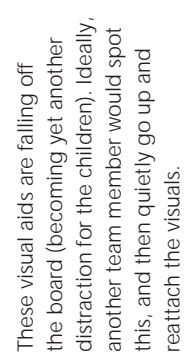
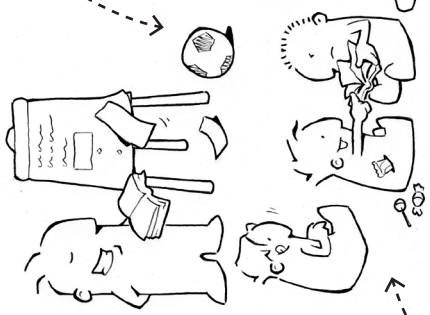
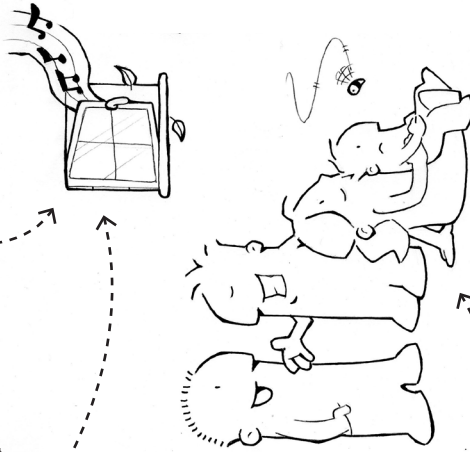
Keep an eye out for children who are on their own and gently bring them back into the group.

Is anything as sticky as spilled orange juice?! Have a cloth ready nearby to mop up spills as soon as they happen.

These two boys are fighting over who has a Bible. If at all possible, keep enough Bibles in your room for every child to have one. As well as helping avoid fights like these, it shows the children that we see Bible time as important.

If children bring sweets/lollies with them, look after them until the end of the session. This stops them becoming a distraction both for the child who does have them, and the child who doesn't.

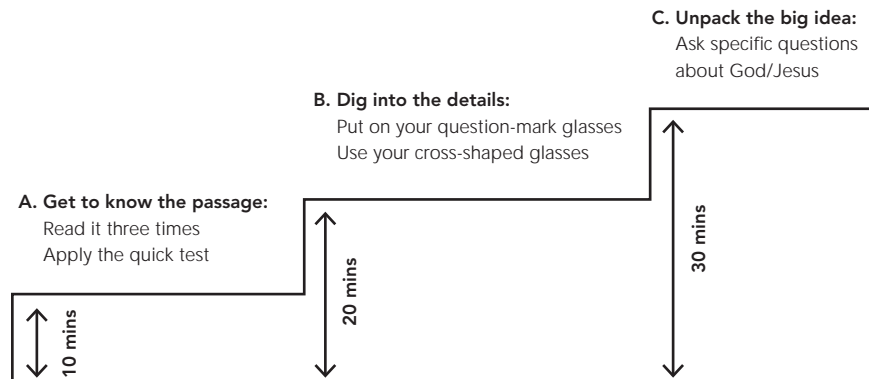
This group of children is literally all over the place. If you bring them together as a group, with the leaders sitting among them (not round the edges), it will help everyone to concentrate, join in and behave well.



GETTING TO KNOW A BIBLE PASSAGE IN 10, 20 OR 30 MINUTES

These **three steps** will help you unpack a Bible passage. Each step takes ten minutes—do as many as you have time for.

Step A = 10 minutes
Steps A + B = 20 minutes
Steps A + B + C = 30 minutes



A: GETTING TO KNOW A BIBLE PASSAGE IN 10 MINUTES

Ten minutes isn't very long, but if you use those minutes well, you'll be much better prepared for your time with the children in your group.

Read the passage at least three times

This is especially important if you know the passage well (a particular danger for children's groups, where we often look at very familiar Bible stories). If you think you may be tempted to skim bits, try reading aloud, or from more than one Bible version—or try an audio version (there are several online for free).

Look out for details you may not have realised are in the passage, and check that the "facts" you think you know are correct. For example, in the account of Jesus calming the storm, how many boats are on the water? (Check it out in Mark 4 v 36.)

Apply the "quick test"

This simple test works for the majority of Bible passages.

QUICK TEST

- If the Bible passage or story is about **God**, the main point (the big idea) will be about **God**.
- If the Bible passage or story is about **Jesus**, the main point (the big idea) will be about **Jesus**.



This truly is as simple as it looks. There may be many different truths within a single Bible passage, but there will be one main one. This is the big idea that comes out of the passage, and that we want the children to grab hold of. And it will almost always be about **God** or about **Jesus**. And not, therefore, about us, or the environment, or morality, or what we have for supper.

FOCUS THE FUN

Spot the problems with this session:

- **Opening game:** Dodgeball
 - **Song:** Father Abraham
 - **Bible story:** Jesus feeding the 5000 (John 6 v 1-15)
 - **Quiz:** Recognising different kinds of fish
 - **Prayer:** For good weather for the church picnic
 - **Craft:** Making paper windmills
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How does this session address some of the previous problems?

- **Opening game:** Relay race collecting word cards, which the children then put together to discover a memory verse that supports the theme
- **Song:** Anything about Jesus (rather than Abraham!)
- **Bible story:** Feeding the 5000 (thinking about how to tell the story to focus on who Jesus is—not on how generous the boy was in sharing his packed lunch)
- **Quiz:** Based on the Bible story, and maybe other recent stories that point to who Jesus is
- **Prayer:** Thanking Jesus for who he is, and that no problem is too great for him
- **Craft:** A collage of the story that the children can then use to explain it to their parents

FOCUS THE FUN!

QUIZ TIME	GAME FOR A LAUGH
Know the purpose of your quiz e.g. to recap previous teaching, introduce a new theme, find out what children already know...	Choose a variety of games. Different children enjoy different kinds of game.
Set questions at the level of your group. With a wide mix of ages, set some just for younger children.	Be thoroughly prepared. This avoids children waiting around while you get ready.
Make sure that everyone can take part. If you have visitors, include some questions from today's session.	Explain clearly. With very young children, only give one instruction at a time and wait until they have done it.
Find creative ways to keep score.	Don't let a game run on too long.
	Be careful with elimination games. When a child is "out", can they join in again in a different way?
CRAFTY MOMENTS	Whenever possible and appropriate, leaders join in with the game.
Use crafts to reinforce Bible teaching and build relationships —not as time fillers!	Make the link between the game and the Bible teaching —spell it out (for younger children) or draw it out (with older children).
Encourage children to use their craft to retell the story —in their group and at home.	
For younger children, use crafts to reinforce the story. For older children, crafts can reinforce the teaching point.	REMEMBER REMEMBER
Be thoroughly prepared. All materials ready, and a sample to show.	Teach the meaning of a memory verse as well as the words.
Crafts always take longer than you expect...	Teach the Bible reference to children old enough to look it up.
... but you also need something extra planned for the child who finishes in three minutes!	Check that the verse does support the teaching theme.
	Repetition, with variety, helps children understand and remember.

STAYING SAFE SPIRITUALLY

It is worth asking yourself some questions every now and then—and maybe giving a trusted Christian friend the right to ask you them as well.

- What time have you set aside to regularly read God's word and pray?

- How are you ensuring that you are getting to church to hear God's word taught yourself?

- What has God been teaching you recently about himself?

- What have you been praying about recently, and how has God been answering your prayers?

- If you have struggled to answer any of these questions, what will you do to make time alone with God a priority? Is there someone you can talk to about this to help you make wise choices?
