

Easthampstead Baptist Church Spiritual Transformation



Tools for the journey of faith



**Easthampstead
Baptist Church**

Introduction

At Easthampstead Baptist Church (EBC) we have a mission statement. It is a simple sentence that sets out our vision and passion and what we believe God has called us to do. A mission statement is just a simple and concise way of saying “this is what we are about.” At EBC our mission statement goes like this:

“We exist to love God, love people and grow together to be more like Jesus.”

Everything we are about and all the different things that we do are encapsulated in that simple sentence. We want to love God above all things and help other people who don't know God's love to encounter it – maybe for the first time. We do lots of things from social activities to guest events to Sunday services to help us do that. We also want to be known for the way that we love people and we do lots of things that help us demonstrate that love. These include: letting

out our building to all kinds of community groups, running community fun days, our pastoral needs ministry that provides practical help to those in need, and our older persons ministry. Finally we want to grow together as a community of faith, hope and love and we want to grow together to be more like Jesus. That is where this booklet comes in.

Growing to be more like Jesus doesn't happen by accident. It takes intentional action and we want to help people who have a desire and passion to grow in their faith. It doesn't matter where you are starting from – whether you are just asking questions about God and Jesus and not quite sure whether you believe in them or not or whether you have been a Christian for a short while or for years, we are all on a journey of growth. The staff, leaders, preachers and members of EBC believe passionately that it is our job to help those who want to grow spiritually. To that

end we have developed a whole series of steps and resources that will help you grow. We call that growth ‘spiritual transformation’ which is just a posh way of saying – becoming more like Jesus. We hope that as you read this booklet you will begin to understand what your next steps might be in your journey of spiritual growth. We long to help and equip you as you travel on that journey and my door is always open to anyone who wants to come and have a chat about what their next steps might be. If on reading this booklet you want to talk or you are unsure quite how it will work for you, please do let me know and we can meet up over a coffee to see what might be the next steps for you.

Here's to the adventure of spiritual transformation and growth!

Chris Porter

Senior Minister

How To Use This Guide

You may have noticed that this guide is quite long and that there is a lot of reading material here! Please do not panic, you don't have to read it all! The Movements section describes four points on the journey of spiritual transformation and each of us is only at one of those points at any given time. Therefore we won't need to read all of them. Similarly the courses section describes all of the courses that we run to help with spiritual transformation and you only need to read the details of the courses appropriate to you (as explained in the movements section).

The way to use this guide is very simple. Start by reading the Background section on page 5. This section explains what spiritual transformation is and why it is important.

Then go on to read the Reveal Survey section on pages 6 and 7 (there are lots of diagrams!). This section explains how people grow spiritually and a tool we have been using called Reveal that helps us understand how we can help and equip people for spiritual transformation.

Now we start to get down to business! On Page 8 there is a flow chart that helps you to begin to understand where you might be in the Reveal process. Once you have located your starting point you can skip straight to the Movements section of the guide

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that will help you most. That section will in turn point to the courses that you will be most appropriate for you!

So please don't be put off by the length of this guide. It is designed to cover every

possible stage in the journey of spiritual transformation and only certain pieces of it will be appropriate for you at any given time. We encourage you to press on, there are some amazing things in store for you!

Background

What is Spiritual Transformation?

The very last thing Jesus (Christ) said to his first followers was: “go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

A disciple(Christian) is simply someone who is trying to follow Jesus and his will for their lives. Spiritual transformation is the process of growing as a follower of Jesus. It starts with getting to know who Jesus was and is and how he came to earth to set us free and to restore our relationship with God. As we discover these things we can begin a relationship with God. Spiritual transformation continues through the rest of our lives as that relationship deepens. Our goal is to become more and more like Jesus who lived a life of purpose, meaning and obedience to God. At EBC no one is perfect, no one has got it all worked out, no one should be claiming to be a better Jesus follower than anyone else. We all have doubts, questions, areas that we need to grow and develop and spiritual transformation is simply the process by which that happens.

We should all be seeking to grow so that our faith is living and active and we continue to encounter God and to experience the adventure of faith.

Why is it important?

2,000 years ago one of the first people to pick up the spiritual transformation challenge was a guy called Paul. He had a radical encounter with God and became one of the first followers of Jesus. He travelled all over Europe and the Middle East introducing people to God and starting up new churches. He said this in one of the letters he wrote to one of those churches he started:

“Their (church leaders) responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.”
Ephesians Chapter 4

This gives us a clue as to why spiritual transformation is important. Paul says that God’s people (followers of Jesus) should be equipped to grow in faith and knowledge, to do God’s work and therefore to build up the church community and to become more like Jesus (Christ). When that

happens not only does the church community flourish, we grow in our maturity and when life’s challenges and difficulties strike we will be able to cope with them and not be blown off course or tossed around on the storms of life.

Spiritual transformation equips us to live as God wants us to live, it helps us to journey through life’s challenges and difficulties, it helps us respond in mature and God-honouring ways to the situations and circumstances we encounter, it enables us to experience more of the power of God at work in our lives and it builds us and the church community up so that we can serve God and impact our local community and our world.

The Reveal Survey

At EBC we want to be continually growing and moving as a church so that we can be the kind of community God wants us to be. With God’s help we are trying to move from ‘here’ to ‘there.’

As part of this process in 2010 we decided that we should tackle this whole area of spiritual transformation at EBC. We wanted to find out how we were doing at helping people to grow spiritually and whether there was more that we could be doing to equip people for their spiritual journey. We discovered some global research that has been undertaken into spiritual transformation



Diagram 1 – moving from ‘here’ to ‘there’

and the tools that people say are most effective in helping them grow. This research is called ‘Reveal’ and its findings are very interesting.

The ‘Reveal’ research shows that there are typically 4 stages in people’s spiritual journey.

When someone first starts to investigate God and Christianity they are at the ‘Exploring Christ’ stage. Then as they make a decision to follow Jesus they move to the ‘Growing in Christ’ stage. As their faith grows and deepens they move to becoming ‘Close to Christ.’ Finally as they commit their whole lives to Jesus and surrender completely to him they become ‘Christ Centred.’ Remember right at the beginning of this booklet,

we said that the goal of spiritual transformation is to become more like Jesus. As we move through these stages that is exactly what is happening.

Of course, the question that immediately comes to mind when we are thinking about these stages is how do I move from one stage to the next? That is a great question! The ‘Reveal’ research identifies how that movement occurs. As you can see from the diagram on page 6 there are three key movements.

Movement 1 sees us moving from Exploring Christ to Growing in Christ. Movement 2 sees us moving from Growing in Christ to Close to Christ and finally Movement 3 sees us moving from Close to

Christ to Christ Centred.

Back to the ‘Reveal’ research... it tells us that there are certain key activities or practices that help us make these movements. ‘Reveal’ calls these ‘Catalysts to Growth.’ These catalysts come in four main types: Beliefs and Attitudes, Organised Church Activities, Personal Spiritual Practices and Spiritual Activities with Others.

Each of the three movements has catalysts of each type that help us to move from one stage of spiritual growth to another.

In the next section of this booklet we shall explain each of the stages and movements in more detail.



Diagram 2 – The Stages of the Spiritual Journey

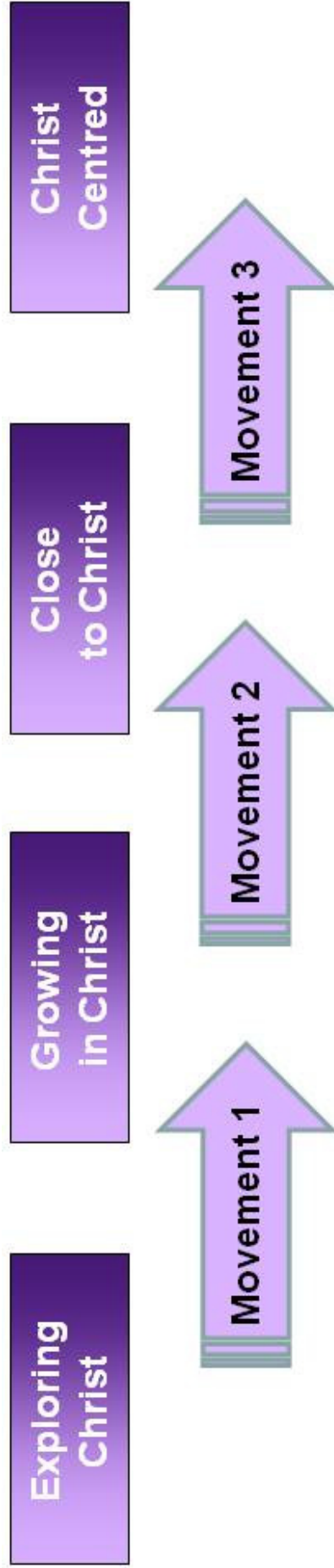


Diagram 3 – The Key Spiritual Transformation Movements

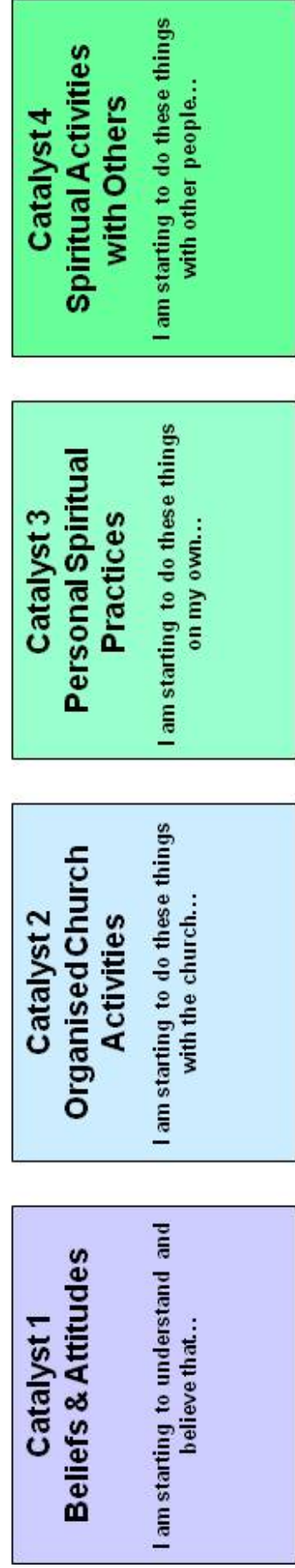


Diagram 4 – The Four Types of 'Catalysts to Growth'

Movements

This flow chart on the next page is designed to help you begin to work out where you might be in the Reveal Spiritual Transformation process. As you look through it, it will begin to point you to the definitions sections of the next few pages. As you read these sections see if you can identify which of the stages you might be at and as you do so you will begin to see which movement you can embark on to grow in your spiritual journey and some of the things you might do to enable that growth to happen.

Each of the practices and activities that will help you move through your journey are shown in the diagrams in each section.

The pink coloured activities are organised church activities such as services and small groups.

The light blue activities are courses that we run to help you and which are described in the Courses section towards the back of this guide.

The orange activities and practices are things that you can be doing on your own or organise to do with others.

The red activities are other things that you could be doing include reviewing our suggested materials lists (available from the church office or the EBC website – www.ebc-bracknell.org) and serving opportunities.



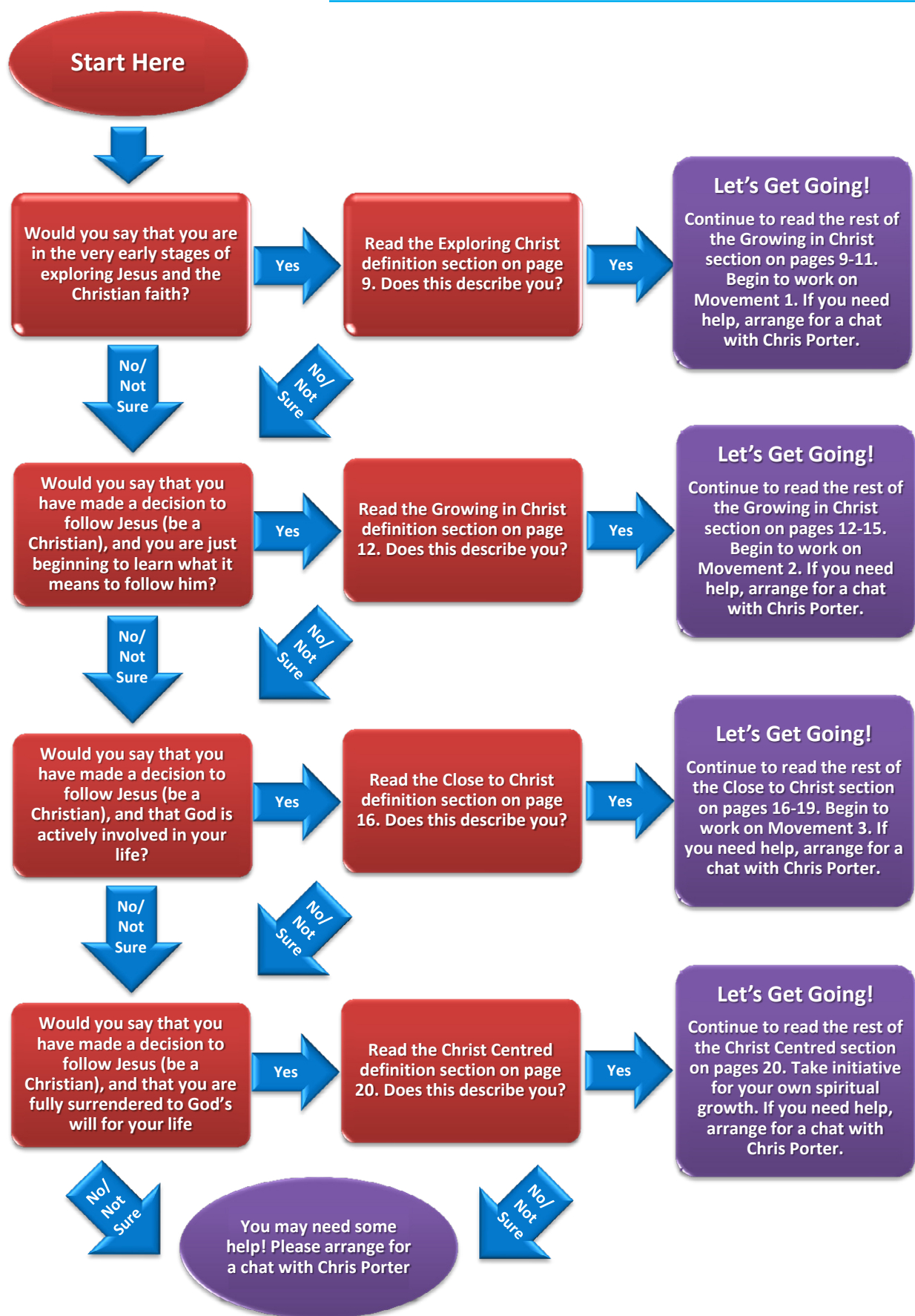


Diagram 5 – Where am I in the Spiritual Transformation Process

Exploring Christ

This is the very first stage of spiritual growth. It starts with someone who is exploring Jesus and the Christian faith. They are probably not a Christian when they start but are seeking to find out more about God and Jesus.

Definition

Someone who is Exploring Christ has a basic belief in God, but is unsure about Jesus and his role in their lives. They might summarise their beliefs like this: "I believe in God, but I am not sure about Jesus. My faith is not a significant part of my life."

Detailed Beliefs

When asked to give a bit more detail about what they believe, someone who is Exploring Christ might say this "I am not too sure about what I believe. I think that there is a God, but I don't know much about Jesus and am not sure how God or Jesus relate to my life. I may be sceptical about church and don't feel that my faith is an important part of my life."

What Are They Doing?

Someone who is at this stage may well be coming to Sunday services or some other activity run by EBC. They may be serving in some way and are probably enjoying being a part of the EBC community.

If these definitions don't apply to you, then feel free to skip on to the next section – Growing in Christ. However if they do describe you then in the information below

you will find details of how you can go about growing in your spiritual journey.

What Could They Do Next? Movement 1

Someone who is Exploring Christ and who is keen to grow in their spiritual journey could start that by embarking on 'Movement 1.' To do this check out the four key growth catalysts below. Each catalyst includes some ideas for things that you could do.

Catalyst 1: Beliefs and Attitudes

To move from Exploring Christ to Growing in Christ will involve understanding and then believing:

- That we are saved by grace
- That God exists as a Trinity (3 in 1)
- That God loves us personally and wants a relationship with each one of us
- That Jesus (Christ) should be the first priority in our lives
- That the Bible is God's word and has relevance and meaning to all of us

There are a number of things that you could do to help with understanding and coming to believe these things. These are:

- Regularly attending Sunday services when we explore these and other attitudes and beliefs
- Attending the Discovering Christianity and Discovering Baptism Courses
- Getting hold of and using the

"Exploring Christ Suggested Materials Worksheet," available from the Church Office or from the EBC website (go to the Spiritual Transformation Section under the Resources menu).

Catalyst 2: Organised Church Activities

To move from Exploring Christ to Growing in Christ will involve participating in some of the church activities that we organise at EBC. This is not because somehow being at an organised church event makes us spiritual! Rather being with and participating with others at an organised event encourages us and the things that are happening at those events will help us to grow:

- Regularly attending services
- Serving in some way in the church
- Regularly attending a small group

There are a number of things that you could do to help with getting involved with Organised Church Activities:

- Regularly attending Sunday services
- Attending the Discovering EBC course when we will introduce the different things that we do at EBC and how you can get involved with them
- Attending the Discovering Membership course when we will look at getting involved in the planning and decision making at EBC

- Start to serve in the life of the church – the Sunday rotas are a great place to start, you can speak to Eileen Charlton or Chris Porter about getting involved on one of these rotas. At the Discovering EBC course we shall also talk about serving.

Catalyst 3: Personal Spiritual Practices

To move from Exploring Christ to Growing in Christ will involve doing some things on your own that help to grow your faith:

- Reading and reflecting on the Bible from time to time
- Praying to receive guidance from God and to confess

sins from time to time

There are a number of things that you could do to help with these personal practices:

- Regularly attending Sunday services when we explore these practices
- Regularly attending a small group where these things are modelled and encouraged
- Attending the Discovering Christianity course where these things are discussed
- Try out reading the Bible and praying on your own

Catalyst 4: Spiritual Activities With Others

To move from Exploring Christ to Growing in Christ

will involve doing some things with other Christians:

- Building spiritual friendships i.e. friendships with other Christians for encouragement and guidance

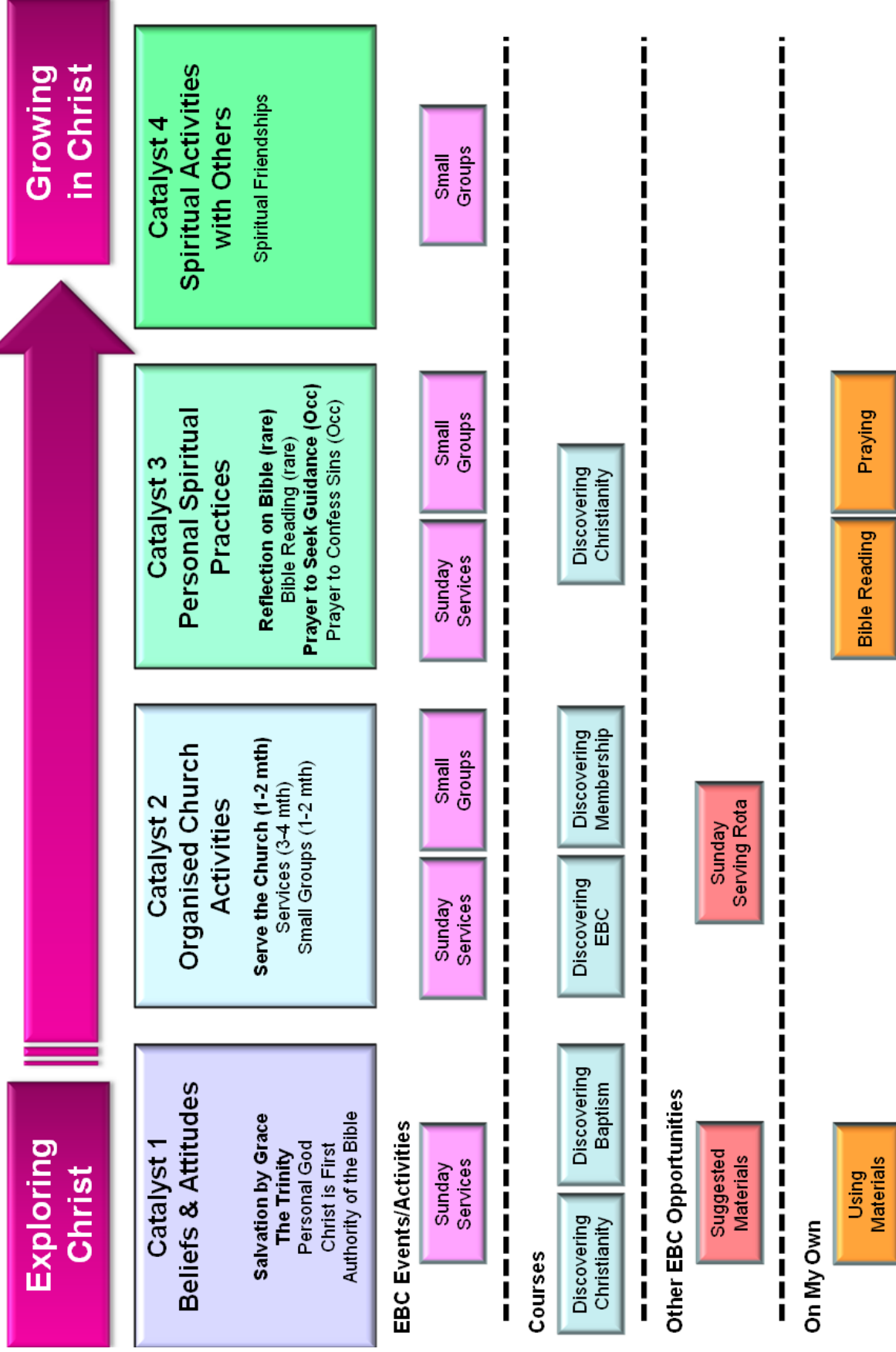
There are a number of things that you could do to help with this. These are:

- Regularly attending a small group
- Serving alongside other Christians on a team

The diagram on the next page summarises Movement 1 including the 4 growth catalysts and the things we might do to help us grow.



Movement 1



Growing in Christ

This is the second stage of spiritual growth. It starts with someone who has recently become a Christian and who is starting to find out more about the Christian faith and how it applies to their life.

Definition

Someone who is Growing in Christ has a personal relationship with Jesus. They have made a commitment to trust him with their salvation and for their eternity, but are just beginning to learn what it means to be in a relationship with him. They might summarise their beliefs like this: "I believe in Jesus and I am working on what it means to get to know him."

Detailed Beliefs

When asked to give a bit more detail about what they believe, someone who is Growing in Christ might say this: "I believe nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation, I am in a relationship with God because of his grace. I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit and I believe God is actively involved in my life. My desire is that Jesus is the priority in my life and I also believe that the Bible should have decisive authority over what I say and do."

What Are They Doing?

Someone who is at this stage will be coming to Sunday Services or other worship events regularly. They will be

serving in the church regularly possibly in several different areas. They will probably be attending one of the EBC small groups on a regular basis.

If these definitions don't apply to you, then feel free to skip on to the next section – Close to Christ. However if they do describe you then in the information below you will find details of how you can go about growing in your spiritual journey.

What Could They Do Next? Movement 2

Someone who is Growing in Christ and who is keen to grow in their spiritual journey, could start that growth by embarking on 'Movement 2.' To do this check out the four key growth catalysts on page 14. Each catalyst includes some ideas for things that you could do.

Catalyst 1: Beliefs and Attitudes

To move from Growing in Christ to Close to Christ will involve understanding and then believing more deeply:

- That God loves us personally and wants a relationship with each one of us
- That we are saved by grace
- That the Bible is God's word and has relevance and meaning to all of us
- That Jesus (Christ) should be the first priority in our lives
- That our identity is wrapped up in our relationship with Jesus

There are a number of things that you could do to help with understanding and coming to believe these things more deeply. These are:

- Regularly attending Sunday services when we explore these and other attitudes and beliefs
- Attending the Discovering Danger and Discovering the Holy Spirit courses
- Attending the Discovering the Bible and Discovering Baptism courses if you have not yet done them
- Getting hold of and using the "Growing in Christ Suggested Materials Worksheet", available from the Church Office or from the EBC website (go to the Spiritual Transformation Section under the Resources menu).

Catalyst 2: Organised Church Activities

To move from Growing in Christ to Close to Christ will involve participating in some of the Church Activities that we organise at EBC. This is not because somehow being at an organised Church Event makes us spiritual! Rather being with and participating with others at an organised event encourages us and the things that are happening at those events will help us to grow:

- Serving those in need in some way through a church organised ministry (1-2 times a month)
- Serving in some way in the

church (1-2 times a month)

- Attending some of the courses and workshops that are run by the church
- Regularly attending a small group (1-2 times a month)

There are a number of things that you could do to help with getting involved with Organised Church Activities:

- Regularly attending Sunday services
- Make sure that you are part of one of the EBC small groups – Steph Littlejohn (our Assistant Minister) oversees these groups and would love to meet with you to discuss which group might work best for you
- Attending the Discovering EBC and Discovering Membership courses if you have not yet done them
- Start to serve more regularly in the life of the church – as well as serving on the Sunday rotas you could be considering serving in some of the other ministries in

the church including those that we run to help people in need; a great way to identify how to do this is to attend the Discovering Spiritual Gifts course (see below)

- Attending the Discovering Spiritual Gifts course will help you to identify your particular gifts and talents and think through areas of the church where you might enjoy serving and using those gifts and talents
- Think about doing a cross cultural activity, these are things where you are taken out of your 'comfort zone' to serve those in need. These might include serving in our Storehouse ministry, joining one of our teams going overseas or serving on a team with children, young people or older people; for more information about these opportunities please speak to Chris Porter or Steph Littlejohn

Catalyst 3: Personal Spiritual Practices

To move from Growing in Christ to Close to Christ will involve doing some things on your own that help to grow your faith:

- Reading and reflecting on the Bible (frequently)
- Praying to receive guidance from God (frequently)
- Giving financially sacrificially and generously – could include tithing (giving 10% of your income)
- Spending a portion of time on your own, in solitude with God (occasionally)

There are a number of things that you could do to help with these personal practices:

- Regularly attending Sunday services when we explore these practices
- Regularly attending a small group where these things are modelled and encouraged
- Attending the Discovering the Bible course if you haven't already done so
- Attending the Discovering Prayer course, where we explore different ways of praying and listening to God
- Getting hold of and using the Growing in Christ Suggested Materials Worksheet, which includes sections on guided retreats and resources available for planning times of solitude with God and Bible reading notes and plans; this worksheet is available from the Church Office or from the EBC website (go to the Spiritual



Movement 2

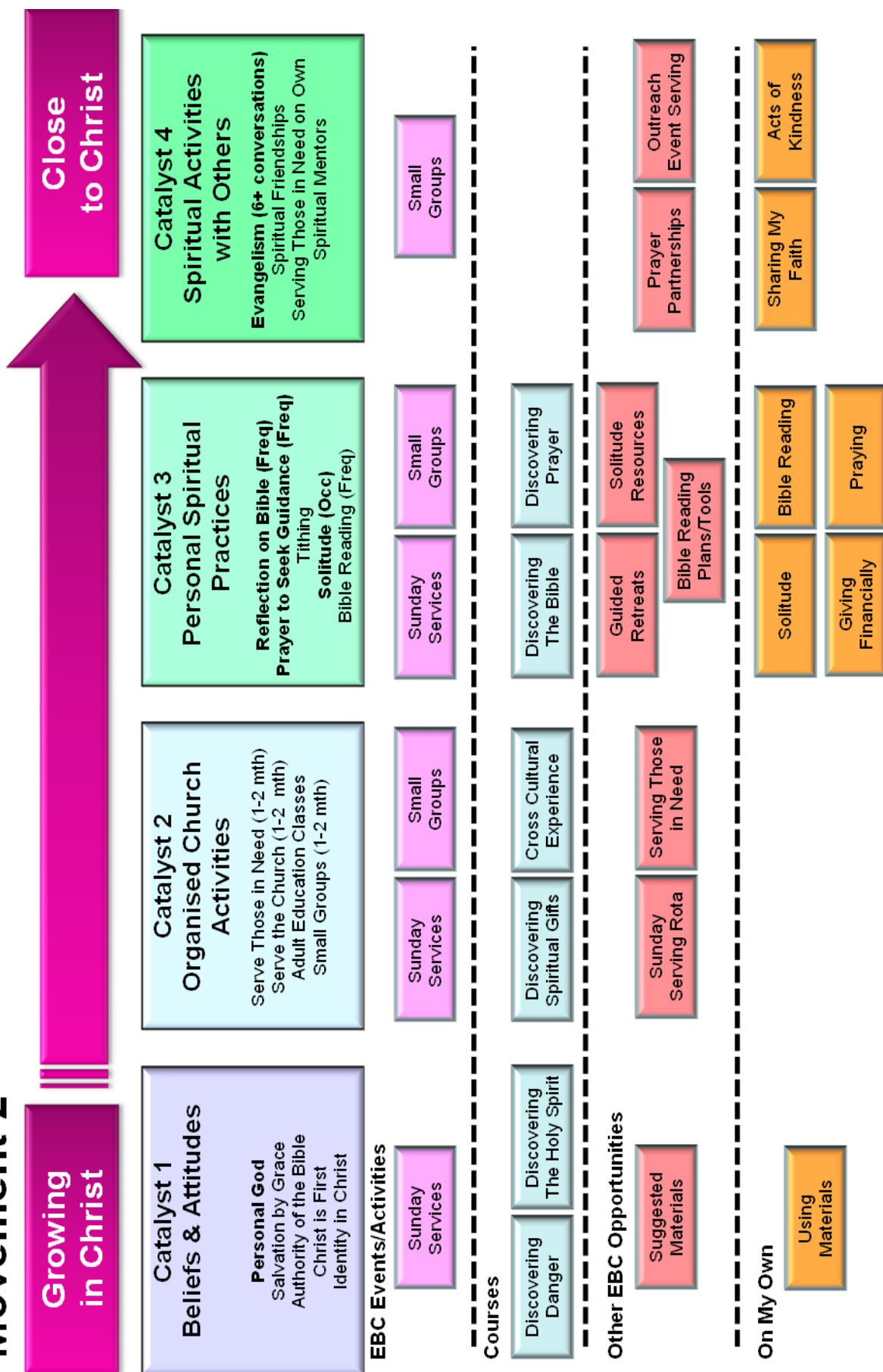


Diagram 7 – A Summary of Movement 2

Transformation Section
under the Resources menu)

- Spending time on your own praying, reading the Bible and being alone with God
- Reading the “What We Believe About Giving” worksheet available from the EBC website or from the church office
- Praying about and planning your financial giving

Catalyst 4: Spiritual Activities With Others

To move from Growing in Christ to Close to Christ will involve doing some things with other Christians:

- Serving at events and in ministries designed to introduce people

who don't know God to him (evangelism)

- Building spiritual friendships i.e. friendships with other Christians for encouragement and guidance
- Serving those in need on your own through acts of kindness
- Asking someone to be a spiritual partner with you for encouragement, prayer and accountability

There are a number of things that you could do to help with this. These are:

- Regularly attending a small group
- Asking someone to form a prayer partnership with you
- Serving in some of the EBC outreach events e.g. Fun

Days, Refresh Café, School Assemblies, Holiday at Home etc. Speak to Chris Porter or Steph Littlejohn who can guide you

- Sharing your faith in an easy and natural way with friends and family
- Looking to do acts of kindness for those who you meet or who you know are in need e.g. sending a card to someone who is ill, visiting someone in hospital, cooking a meal for a member of your small group etc.

The diagram on the next page summarises Movement 2 including the 4 growth catalysts and the things we might do to help us grow.

Close to Christ

This is the third stage of spiritual growth. It starts with someone who feels that they are in a close, personal relationship with God and with Jesus and who is living for him and looking to God for daily guidance.

Definition

Someone who is Close to Christ has a personal relationship with Jesus. They depend on Jesus daily for their lives and see him as someone who assists them in life. On a daily basis, they turn to him for help and guidance for issues they face.

They might summarise their beliefs like this: “I feel really close to Christ and depend on him daily for guidance.”

Detailed Beliefs

When asked to give a bit more detail about what they believe, someone who is Close to Christ might say this: “I believe that God is actively involved in my life and I believe that nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation – I am saved by the grace of God. I believe that the Bible has decisive authority over what I say and do and I desire Jesus to be first in my life. I live to know, love and serve God.

What Are They Doing?

Someone who is at this stage will be coming to Sunday Services or other worship events regularly. They will be serving in the church regularly, possibly in several different areas. They will be

looking for opportunities to help those in need and they will be attending one of the EBC small groups on a regular basis. They will have attended and be attending a number of the different ‘Discovering’ courses that are run by EBC. They will also be keen to be sharing their faith with other people.

If these definitions don’t apply to you, then feel free to skip on to the next section – Christ Centred. However if they do describe you then in the information below you will find details of how you can go about growing in your spiritual journey.

What Could They Do Next? Movement 3

Someone who is Close to Christ and who is keen to grow in their spiritual journey, could start that growth by embarking on ‘Movement 3.’ To do this check out the four key growth catalysts below. Each catalyst includes some ideas for things that you could do.



Catalyst 1: Beliefs and Attitudes

To move from Close to Christ to Christ Centred will involve understanding and then believing more deeply:

- Giving away my life
- That Jesus (Christ) should be the first priority in our lives
- That our identity is wrapped up in our relationship with Jesus
- That the Bible is God’s word and has relevance and meaning to all of us
- That they should be sacrificially and generously giving away their resources (time, energy, passion, finances) to serve the church and those in need

There are a number of things that you could do to help with understanding and coming to believe these things more deeply. These are:

- Regularly attending Sunday services when we explore these and other

attitudes and beliefs

- Attending the Discovering Danger and Discovering the Holy Spirit courses if you have not already done so
- Attending the Discovering Money Management course
- Getting hold of and using the Close to Christ Suggested Materials Worksheet, available from the Church Office on from the EBC website (go to the Spiritual Transformation Section under the Resources menu)

Catalyst 2: Organised Church Activities

To move from Close to Christ to Christ Centred will involve participating in some of the Church Activities that we organise at EBC. This is not because somehow being at an organised Church Event makes us spiritual! Rather being with and participating with others at an organised event encourages us and the things that are happening at those events will help us to grow: Serving those in need in some way

through a church organised ministry (1-2 times a month)

There are a number of things that you could do to help with getting involved with Organised Church Activities:

- Regularly attending Sunday services
- Make sure that you are part of one of the EBC small groups – Steph Littlejohn (our Assistant Minister) oversees these groups and would love to meet with you to discuss which group might work best for you
- Think about doing a cross cultural activity, these are things where you are taken out of your ‘comfort zone’ to serve those in need; these might include serving in our Storehouse ministry, joining one of our teams going overseas or serving on a team with children, young people or older people. For more information about these opportunities please speak to Chris Porter

or Steph Littlejohn

Catalyst 3: Personal Spiritual Practices

To move from Close to Christ to Christ Centred will involve doing some things on your own that help to grow your faith:

- Reading and reflecting on the Bible (frequently)
- Spending a portion of time on your own, in solitude with God (occasionally)
- Praying to confess sins to God (frequently)
- Giving financially sacrificially and generously – could include tithing (giving 10% of your income)
- Praying to receive guidance from God (frequently)

There are a number of things that you could do to help with these personal practices:

- Regularly attending Sunday services when we explore these practices
- Regularly attending a small group where these things are modelled and encouraged
- Attending the Discovering Your Gifts course if you have not already done so
- Attending the Discovering the Bible Advanced course
- Attending the Discovering Spiritual Disciplines course, where we explore different ways of drawing closer to God
- Getting hold of and using the Close to Christ Suggested Materials Worksheet, which includes sections on guided retreats and resources available for planning times of solitude with God and



Bible reading notes and plans; this worksheet is available from the Church Office or from the EBC website (go to the Spiritual Transformation Section under the Resources menu)

- Spending time on your own praying, reading the Bible and being alone with God
- Reading the “What We Believe About Giving” worksheet available from the EBC website or from the church office
- Praying about and planning your financial giving

Catalyst 4: Spiritual Activities With Others

To move from Close to Christ to Christ Centred will involve doing some things with other Christians:

- Serving at events and in ministries designed to introduce people who don't know God to him and being prepared to share your faith naturally with others (evangelism)
- Asking someone to be a spiritual partner with you for encouragement, prayer and accountability
- Serving those in need on your own through acts of kindness

There are a number of things that you could do to help with understanding and coming to believe these things. These are:

- Regularly attending a small group
- Asking someone to form a prayer partnership with you
- Serving in some of the EBC

outreach events e.g. Fun Days, Refresh Café, School Assemblies, Holiday at Home etc; speak to Chris Porter or Steph Littlejohn who can guide you

- Sharing your faith in an easy and natural way with friends and family
- Looking to do acts of kindness for those who you meet or who you know are in need e.g. sending a card to someone who is ill, visiting someone in hospital, cooking a meal for a member of your small group etc.

The diagram on the next page summarises Movement 3 including the four growth catalysts and the things we might do to help us grow.



Movement 3

Close
to Christ

Christ
Centred

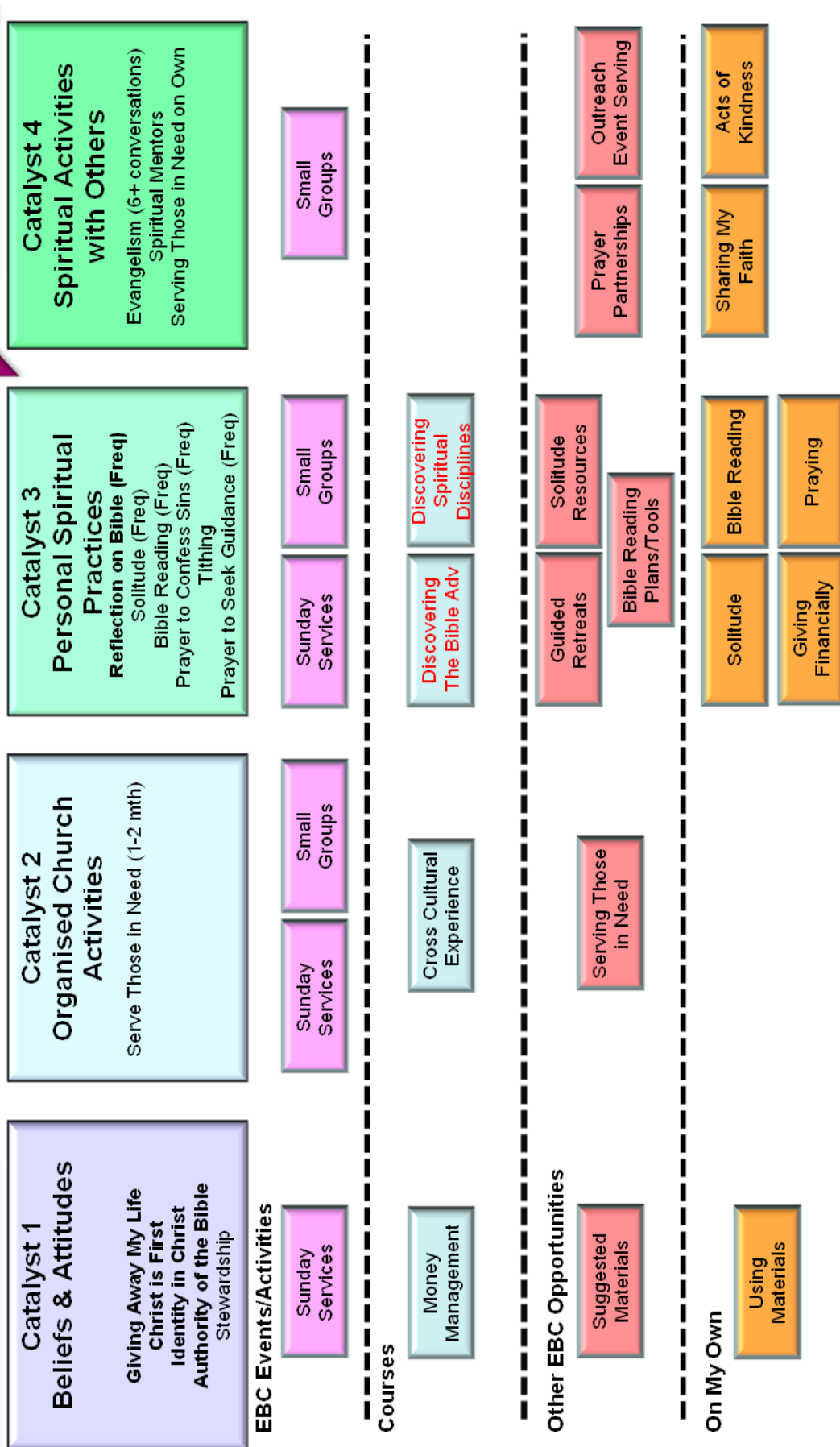


Diagram 8 – A Summary of Movement 3

Christ Centred

As we stated in the introduction to this booklet, becoming Christ Centred is the goal of our Spiritual Transformation process. Someone who is Christ Centred will be becoming more and more like Jesus. He will be the centre and passion of their lives.

Definition

Someone who is Christ Centred sees their relationship with Jesus as the most important relationship in their entire lives. They see their lives as fully surrendered to Jesus and his agenda, subordinating everything to his will and his desires.

They might summarise their beliefs like this: “My relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in my life. It guides everything I do.”

Detailed Beliefs

When asked to give a bit more detail about what they believe, someone who is Christ Centred might say this: “I am willing to risk everything that’s important in my life for Jesus Christ. I desire for him to be first in my life and I exist to know, love and serve God. I believe that the Bible has decisive authority over what I say and do and I believe a Christian should live a sacrificial life that is not driven by pursuit of material things.

What Are They Doing?

Someone who is at this stage will be coming to Sunday Services or other worship events regularly. They will be serving in the church regularly, possibly in several different areas. They will be looking for opportunities to help those in need and they will be attending one of the EBC small groups on a regular basis. They will have attended a number of the

different ‘Discovering’ courses that are run by EBC. They will be recognising that in order to keep growing in their faith that they need to be taking initiative on their own for their spiritual growth. They will also be looking to share their faith with others and have their eyes open to spot opportunities to help, serve and pray for other people.

Christ Centred Growing

Because Christ Centred is the last stage of the spiritual transformation journey there are no catalysts to growth to help move to the next step. The most important thing for someone at this stage of their spiritual journey is that they are taking initiative on their own for their spiritual growth and maintaining those practices, relationships and personal disciplines that have helped them reach this stage in the spiritual transformation process.



Courses

Overview

At EBC we run a number of courses or workshops that seek to equip you for spiritual transformation. The courses/workshops are all labelled “Discovering...” and include Discovering EBC, Discovering the Bible, Discovering Christianity, Discovering Prayer and many more. The courses normally range between a single session and three sessions (with

one or two exceptions that are a bit longer). They take place at different times of the year and usually run on a weekday evening. They are designed to be interactive and as well as presenting some material, they also include exercises and time for discussion, questions and feedback. Some of the courses even include a bit of homework for you to practice something we have been

discussing during the week!

On the following pages you will find an overview of each of the different courses/workshops and inserted into this booklet you will find a list of dates of when the next courses are running together with details of how to sign up to attend one or more of the courses.

Discovering Christianity

Course Overview

This six session workshop is designed to introduce what Christianity is all about and give people a chance to discuss and debate the big questions of life.

Course Description

Come and meet some elephant dung, a plastic windmill man, the world's least successful kite flyer and more. All in a quest for answers to life's biggest questions, like:

- Can anyone know “for sure” about anything they can't see, hear, touch, smell, feel or taste?
- Why so many religions – and “so what” anyway?
- What about life after

this one – and why does heaven sound so boring?

- Can there really be a God in a world with so much suffering?

If you think “God questions” are only ever dealt with by those with no sense of humour, be ready for your illusions to be shattered!

Location and Timings

The workshop is held in people's homes or in our church building on South Hill Road and usually runs in the evenings.

Who Should God?

This is a great workshop for those who are still trying to work out whether they believe in God or Jesus and whether this Christianity thing is true.

Course Contents

Session 1

- Is there more to life than this?

Session 2

- Can anyone really know what God is like?

Session 3

- It was all so long ago, can we really believe that now?

Session 4

- Why so much suffering and so many religions?

Session 5

- Is there really life after death and can God make a difference to my life now?

Session 6

- Who wants to be stuck with a set of boring old rules?

Discovering Baptism Course

Course Overview

This one session course is designed to explain what baptism is and why it is important.

Course Description

At EBC we believe that people should be baptised when they have made the decision for themselves to follow Jesus and

to become a Christian. At that point baptism is a great way of following Jesus' commands and to mark the beginning of your journey of faith

Location and Timings

This course is held at the church building on South Hill Road and runs in the evening and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon.

Who Should Go?

People who are Christians and want to know more about baptism or are thinking about being baptised.

Course Contents

Session 1

- Introduction to believers baptism, the biblical basis for it and the practicalities of being baptised at EBC.

Discovering EBC Course

Course Overview

This three week course is designed to give an overview of EBC and our vision and values.

Course Description

At EBC we believe that God has given us a purpose and a vision. We are passionate about being the church that God has called us to be. This course is a great introduction to EBC and we will look together at the core values, mission and vision of EBC. We will also look at the different things that go on at EBC and introduce some of

the leaders of the church. It will give you an opportunity to ask questions about what we do and why we do it. The course is hosted and run by our Senior Minister – Chris Porter and his wife Ruth. It is a great way to get to know Chris and Ruth as well as the church.

Location and Timings

The course is held on weekday evenings at Chris and Ruth's home – 51 Evedon and runs from 8pm to 9.30pm. Refreshments will be included.

Who Should Go?

Anyone who has attended

an EBC event and wants to know more about the church or is considering becoming a regular attender with us.

Course Contents

Session 1

- Welcome to EBC, Core Values Overview, Mission and Vision

Session 2

- Community (including introduction to small groups), Caring and Celebrating

Session 3

- Communication and Commitment

Discovering Membership Course

Course Overview

This one session course is designed to introduce the idea of membership and what it means to become a member of EBC.

Course Description

Membership is a very significant part of our life at EBC. Church Members have significant responsibility in helping to discern God's will for the direction and strategy of the church. This course is designed to introduce the responsibilities of membership

and what it means in the context of the church's life.

Location and Timings

This course is held at the church building on South Hill Road and runs in the evenings and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon.

Who Should Go?

People who are regular attenders at EBC and have completed the Discovering EBC course and who want to find out more about membership and commitment to EBC.

Course Contents

Session 1

- Introduction to Membership including the role of membership, the biblical basis for that role and the responsibilities of membership. We will also look at discerning God's will including how to hear and respond to God in the context of the church. We will also look at the church meeting and how we contribute effectively and well in a church meeting.

Discovering the Bible Course Overview

This three session workshop is designed to help people understand more about what the Bible is, how it is made up and how they can read it and use it to grow spiritually.

Description

We believe that the Bible is God's word to us and that he can speak to us through it. We also believe that the Bible is a key tool in helping us grow in our journey of faith and to help us get to know God better. We also realise that reading the Bible regularly is not always easy and that it can be difficult to know where to start or even how to read it and what it means. On this workshop we shall talk about what the Bible is, how it is made up, whether or not we can trust it and we shall also look at why and how we can read it and include some

practical exercises on different ways of reading the Bible.

Location and Timings

This workshop is held at the church building on South Hill Road and runs in the evenings and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon.

Who Should Go?

People who want to know more about what the Bible is and who want to be inspired and equipped to read it regularly.

Contents

Session 1

- Introduction to the Bible. Why should I read it? Why don't we read it? What is it? How should I read it part 1? Exercise on reading, understanding and applying a Bible passage. Homework to try out one or two of the different aids to Bible reading that are available.

Session 2

- What is the make up of the Bible and where did it come from? (the different styles of writing and books). Can I trust it? How should I read it part 2? Exercise on reading, understanding and applying some of the different styles of writing. Feedback on the different aids that were tried as homework. Homework to try out one or two more of the different aids to Bible reading that are available.

Session 3

- What are the major themes of the Bible including Jesus, Kingdom, Salvation and covenant? What's next? Exercise on reading, understanding and applying a more difficult or complex passage. Feedback on the different aids that were tried.

Discovering Prayer

Overview

This three session workshop is designed to help people understand more about what prayer is, different types of prayer and how we can pray.

Description

To maintain and grow a healthy relationship with someone, communication is vital. A relationship with God is no different. To maintain and grow a healthy relationship with God, regular interaction and conversation with him is hugely significant and important. That interaction and conversation is what we call prayer. Many of us find prayer difficult and sometimes even awkward. We see others praying and think we should do it in exactly the

same way. Perhaps what we don't realise is that there are lots of different ways we can pray. During this course we will look at those different ways of praying and talk about why and how we can pray. We shall try some practical exercises on different types of prayer.

Location and Timings

This workshop is held at the church building on South Hill Road and runs in the evenings and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon.

Who Should Go?

People who want to know more about what prayer is and who want to be inspired and equipped to do it more regularly.

Contents

Session 1

- Introduction to Prayer. Why should I pray? Why don't we pray? What is it? How should I pray part 1? Homework to try out one or two of the different types of prayer.

Session 2

- What are the different types of prayer part 1? Homework to try out some more types of prayer.

Session 3

- What are the different types of prayer part 2? What resources are available to help me pray? Is prayer a two way conversation? Feedback on the different types of prayer that were tried.

Discovering Gifts

Overview

This two session workshop is designed to help people understand more about the spiritual gifts and talents that God has given to us and how we can use them to serve.

Description

We believe that every Christian has been given spiritual gifts from God that they are commanded by him to use in serving him. Often times we find it hard to identify our particular gifts and to think about how we might use them. This course will help you to find out what your gifts might be

and how you could use them to serve in the church and beyond.

Location and Timings

This workshop is held at the church building on South Hill Road and runs in the evenings and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon.

Who Should Go?

People who want to know more about serving in the church and who want to discover what their spiritual gifts might be and how they can use them.

Contents

Session 1

- Why serving is important

and what it can achieve.

A look at where we might serve including an exercise on personal passions. Introduction to Spiritual Gifts. Homework to fill out a spiritual gifts questionnaire.

Session 2

- More about Spiritual Gifts including a fuller description of the different gifts and some dangers to watch out for. A chance to discuss with others what your gifts might be (as highlighted by the spiritual gifts questionnaire) and to think about how you might use them.

Discovering the Holy Spirit

Overview

This three session workshop is designed to help people understand more about the Holy Spirit (God's presence with us) and how the Spirit helps us hear God and pray for others.

Description

It is part of our vision and strategy at EBC that we should be encountering and experiencing more of the power of God among us. We are keen to give more opportunity to the Holy Spirit to work in and through us in our small groups, Sunday services and in our

children's and youth work. This course will help you understand more about who and what the Holy Spirit is and how you can experience more of the work of the Spirit in your life.

Location and Timings

This workshop is held at the church building on South Hill Road and runs in the evenings and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon.

Who Should Go?

People who want to know more about who the Holy Spirit is and who want to be inspired and equipped to experience more of the power

of God at work in their lives.

Contents

Session 1

- The what, how and why of the Holy Spirit.

Session 2

- The what, how and why of hearing God including an exercise to try out hearing God's voice.

Session 3

- The what, how and why of healing including an exercise to try out praying for others to be healed.

Discovering Leadership

Course Overview

This twelve session course is designed to help people understand more about the spiritual gift of leadership and how it can be used.

Description

The Bible tells us that there is a spiritual gift of leadership and that those who have it are supposed to 'lead with all diligence.' This course will help us understand what leadership is all about and the character, competence and chemistry required for leadership in and of teams.

Location and Timings

This course is held at the church building on South Hill Road and runs in the evenings with one evening session a month for a year.

Who Should Go?

People who are either in leadership positions or who have the potential to be leaders in the future or people who want to know more about leadership and to discover if they have the spiritual gift of leadership.

Contents

Theme 1

- Firm Foundations for Christian Leadership (5

sessions including topics: Leadership Matters, Establishing Identity, Clarifying Call and Developing Character)

Theme 2

- Key Skills of Christian Leadership (4 sessions including topics: Discerning Direction, Developing Leaders, Working Together)

Theme 3

- Keeping Faithful in Christian Leadership (3 sessions including topics: Embracing Cost, Staying Fresh and Continuing Well)

Discovering Danger

Course Overview

This thirteen session course is designed to explain what radical living and radical discipleship looks like in the 21st century.

Description

This course is based on some material called “More Than Conquerors” written by Simon Guillebaud who has spent the last 10 years in Burundi radically living as a follower of Jesus. Life is not a dress rehearsal. We only get one shot at it. Most people are just trying to arrive safely at death, but Jesus offers a better way. In this course we are going to find out how we can live every day as an adventure.

Location and Timings

This course is held at the church building on South Hill Road and normally runs

early in the morning so that people can go off to work after attending the course. Each session lasts 45 minutes and includes a 10 minute video from Simon Guillebaud

Who Should Go?

People who want to know more about pursuing the dangerously adventurous life Jesus has in mind for them and how they can do that in the UK in the 21st century. People who:

- Want the adventure of living not just the safety of existing
- Are itching for a deeper and rawer expression of following Jesus
- Want to be dangerous, wide eyed radicals, dreamers and visionaries
- Refuse to resign themselves to a sanitised, respectable, middle class Christianity

Contents

Theme 1

- How Can I Live Radically? (5 sessions including topics: Three Seconds, Aroma, Trust, Hang On In There, In His Presence)

Theme 2

- Why Live Radically? (3 sessions including topics: Ubuntu, Living Sacrifice, Are You Ready)

Theme 3

- What Will Radical Living Look Like? (4 sessions including topics: Dreamers, Screaming Injustice, Got To Go, Total Surrender)

Theme 4

- So What's It Worth? (1 session)

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