Discovery
Introduction To Discovery
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Discovery

By Bill Crooks and Jackie Mouradian

Introduction To Discovery

Toolkit 1

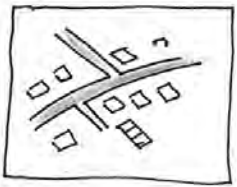
Toolkit 2

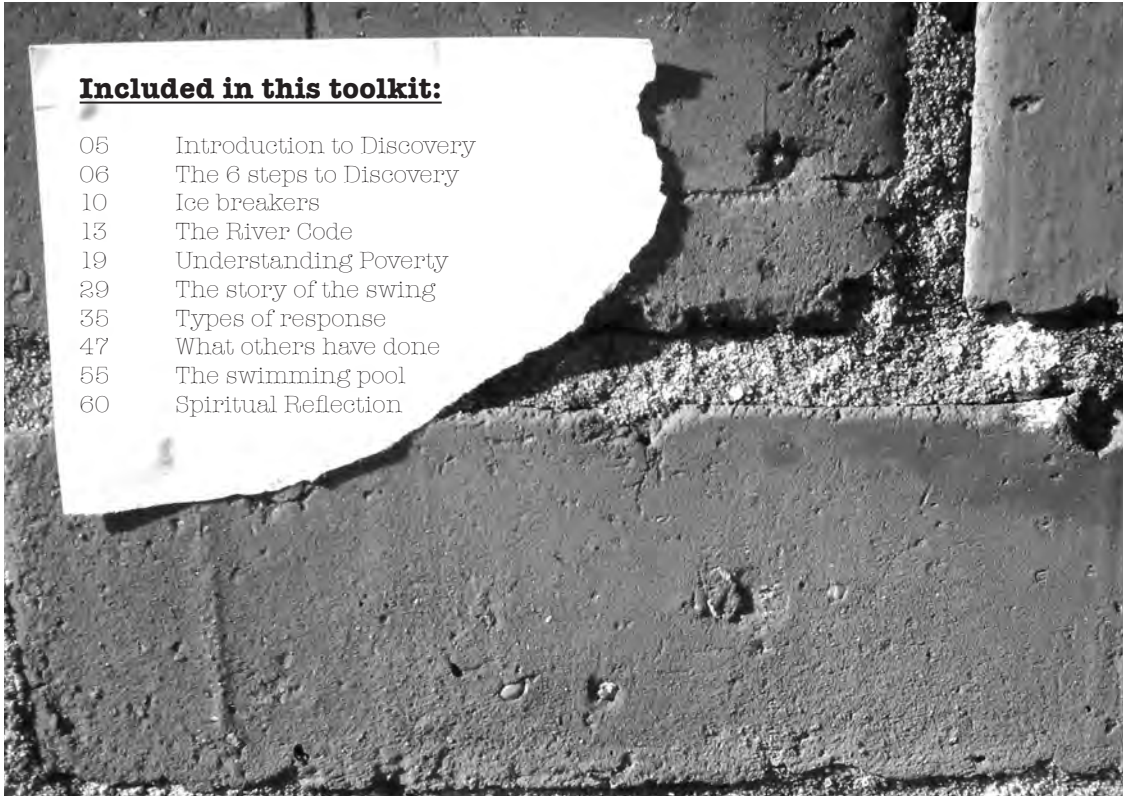
Toolkit 3

Toolkit 4

Toolkit 5

Toolkit 6





Included in this toolkit:

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Introductory notes to Discovery

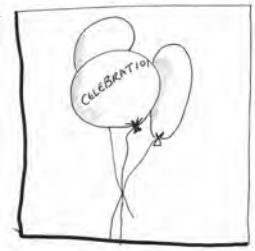
Welcome to this resource and we hope it will be enjoyable as well as making a difference to how your church works in your community. These resources are specifically designed to build on the strengths and aspirations of a church group that wants to make a difference in their community.

The desired outcomes of this approach are:

a) to build confidence in working together as a team
b) to reflect on the mission of the church to vulnerable and marginalised people
c) to initiate positive change in the community

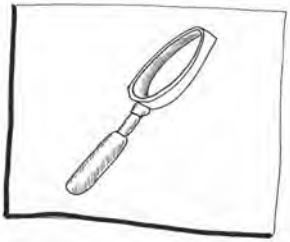
Discovery involves 6 key steps which are in the form of toolkits of practical learning resources. A4 cards of the 6 steps can be printed from the disk. It is usual to work through the 6 steps in order. However, it may be appropriate in some situations to start at a different point in the process as some churches may have completed some of the earlier steps themselves. It is therefore vital to find out where they are in their interest in working with the community and how far they have got with it to avoid wasting unnecessary time and effort.

The six steps to Discovery



1. Celebrating who we are and where we live

2. Understanding the needs of the community



3. Gathering specific information on community needs

4. Dreaming dreams and mobilising communities

5. Planning for action

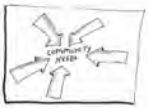
6. Organising ourselves and building a team.

Explanation of the steps and how they fit together

1: Celebrating who we are and where we live

This is an important first step as it seeks to start with things that people can celebrate and feel good about. The purpose is to help a group reflect on what they can build on.

2: Understanding the needs of the community



This helps participants establish an overview of the needs in the community so that they can prioritise and take time to understand the root causes and symptoms of specific problems.

3: Gathering information on community needs

This pack includes a range of practical tools designed to look in more depth at the priorities identified in step 2 so as to have a clearer idea of the response needed.

4. Dreaming dreams and mobilising communities

This step creates the opportunity to think creatively around a problem and come up with alternative solutions before deciding on a specific solution and project plan.

5. Planning for Action

This step seeks to turn the dream into a practical plan which can be used to guide the project. It contains practical tools for planning and monitoring and evaluation.

6. Organising ourselves and building a team

This last pack contains a range of practical tools for team building and organising those involved in delivering the project. It also raises awareness of legal issues.

Ice Breakers

1. North South East West

Stand in the middle of the room and call yourself a central point of the community. Then either indicate where north, south, east and west are or place the North, South, East, West cards from the disk around the room. Then invite participants to stand where they live in relation to this central point. When they have done this, ask them to introduce themselves, say where they live, how long they have lived there and one thing they like about their community.

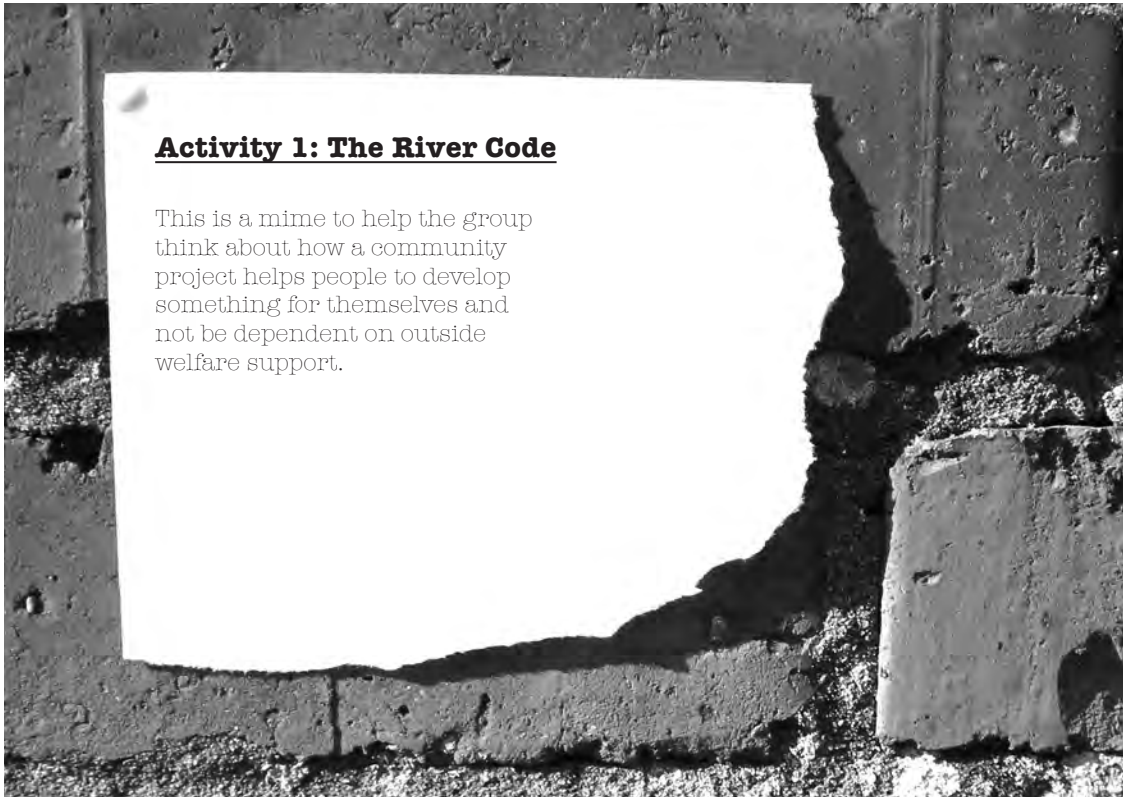
Variations

As above but ask people to stand where they were born. Then you could ask them to stand where they would like to live in the future.

2. Spectrum Lines

This is a simple way of getting people talking to each other and expressing an opinion. Put a card with 'Strongly Agree' on one wall and a card with 'Strongly Disagree' on the opposite wall. Then explain that there is an imaginary line running between the walls which represents a sliding scale between the two extremes. Read out the following statements and ask participants to place themselves on the line according to how they feel about the statement. You could make up your own statements according to the group. Choose some trivial ones among statements to do with community development

- Men make better chefs than women
- Spiritual needs are more important than physical needs
- It's important to live in the community you are trying to help
- Children should be rationed when it comes to watching television
- Footballers earn far too much money and give nothing back to society
- I would rather be deaf than blind
- Northerners are more romantic than southerners
- The lack of strong male role models is a major cause of youth crime



Activity 1: The River Code

This is a mime to help the group think about how a community project helps people to develop something for themselves and not be dependent on outside welfare support.

Print the river code cards from the disk and ask 3 participants to read these cards through and practise the mime.

Then they can show it to the rest of the group and use the question card for discussion.

Two lines fairly wide apart are drawn on the floor in chalk to represent the banks of the river. String can also be used if you don't want to draw on the floor. Pieces of paper are used to represent stepping stones in the river and an island (piece of newsprint is put in the middle of the river).

1. Two men come to the river and look for a place to cross. The current is very strong and they are both afraid to cross.

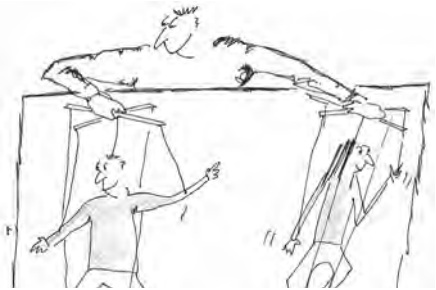
2. A third man comes along and sees their difficulty. He leads them up the river and shows them the stepping stones. He encourages them to step on them but both are afraid, so he agrees to take one on his back.

3. By the time he gets to the middle of the river, the man on his back seems very heavy, and he has become very tired, so he puts him on the little island

4. The third man goes back to fetch the second who also wants to climb on his back. But the third man refuses. Instead he takes his hand and encourages him to step on the stones himself.

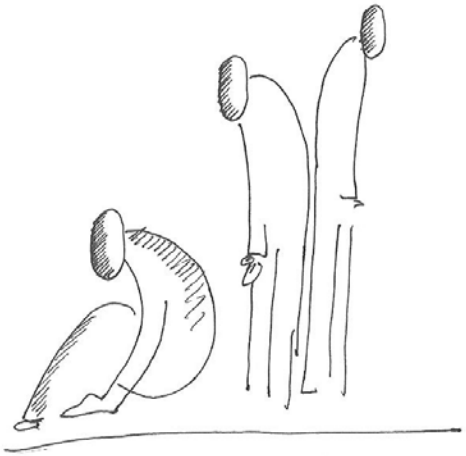
5. Halfway across the second man starts to manage alone. They both cross the river.

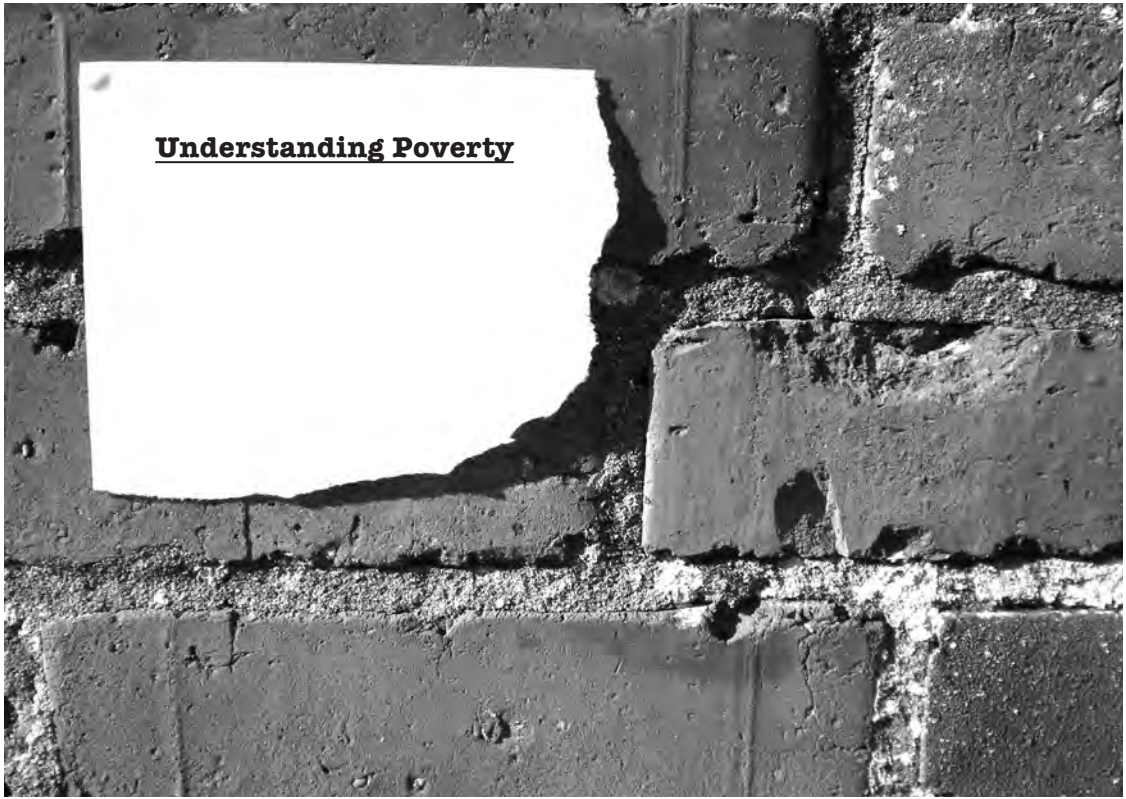
6. When they get to the other side, they are extremely pleased with themselves and they walk off together, completely forgetting the first man, sitting alone on the island.



Discussion Questions

1. What did you see happening in the mime?
2. What different approaches were used to help the two men across?
3. Who could each person represent in real life?
4. What does each side of the river represent?
5. Why does this happen?
6. In what ways do community projects build a sense of dependence?
7. What must we do to ensure that those we work with develop a sense of independence?




Understanding Poverty

Look at the following quotes. Which of these best describes your understanding of poverty?

We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.
- Mother Teresa

Poverty is one of humanity's biggest problems. It is often a result of social corruption, war, physical or economic disaster, or personal irresponsibility. Its underlying cause is sin, usually committed against those affected by it, and not by themselves. It is a painful, fearful, hopeless and vulnerable way of life due to exploitation, isolation, lack of choice and powerlessness
- Saul Cruz-Ramos, Mexico

Poverty is in the head, not in the pocket
- Francis Njoroge, Kenya

Poverty is experienced by people who are limited by choice.Economic poverty is limited ability to meet basic needs. Spiritual poverty is limited knowledge of God and his Son, Jesus Christ as redeemer of the world. Poverty dehumanises people so that they believe that the problems that they face need to be solved by someone else
- Francis Njoroge

Poverty is the worst form of violence
- Mahatma Gandhi

The Poverty Trap

Poverty can be seen as a series of interlocking factors which prevent people from reaching their potential. Working with communities involves breaking these chains and being aware of how they interact with each other

Financial Insecurity

Physical weakness

Powerlessness

Vulnerability

Isolation

Question?
Which of these aspects of poverty do you see in your local community?

Powerlessness
Unable to influence policy or speak for themselves
Lack of self esteem
Exploitation by others
Inability to challenge injustice
Lack of confidence
Isolation
Marginalised
Lack of family support
Lack of friendships
Vulnerability
Poor social skills
Isolation
Prejudice
Lack of education

Poverty Paper Chain Activity

Purpose:
To reflect on the causes of poverty in our community and to understand how many factors link together to cause poverty

Step by step guide

1. Brainstorm all the different causes of poverty in our community - both physical and emotional
2. Construct some paperchains made of coloured paper or card or newspaper
3. Glue them together and then write on them, the various causes of poverty.
4. Form them into a big circle round the room and discuss as a group which ones are more important than others and which do we have the capacity to do something about.
5. You could use the spiritual reflection to pray over them.

Spiritual Reflection - Exodus – The poverty of the Israelites

Read Exodus 1 vs 6 - 22

"So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They made their lives bitter with hard labour in bricks and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labour the Egyptians used them ruthlessly"

This passage shows us the how disempowered the Israelites were. They were powerless, vulnerable and isolated and the result was they became dehumanised

Read Exodus 2 vs 11 - 13

"The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?"

In our communities, think of examples of how poverty can dehumanise people to the extent that they fight amongst each other.

Breaking the chains of poverty

Giving people a voice

This is also about influencing and challenging those who have power over vulnerable people. By giving people a voice to raise their concerns, we are empowering them to take control of their lives. Read Exodus 3 7-10

Building community and belonging

Helping people to work together builds strong, resilient communities and opportunities to share skills and experiences as well as enjoying the sense of belonging which comes from being part of a group. Read Acts 4: 32 – 35

Good health and well being

Giving people a vision and some hope for the future will improve their sense of well- being and stop them from being involved in destructive practices such as drugs and alcohol abuse. Read Jeremiah 29 vs 11 and John 10 vs 10

Worshipping community

This is about helping people to have a relationship with God and experience his love.
Read Acts 2 vs 42-47

The Story of the Swing

This story is useful for enabling those involved in designing projects with the local community to think about the importance of listening to community needs. This has been adapted from materials used by Oxfam in Zimbabwe. You can use the disk to show the story on a screen or print it off on A4 cards or paper.

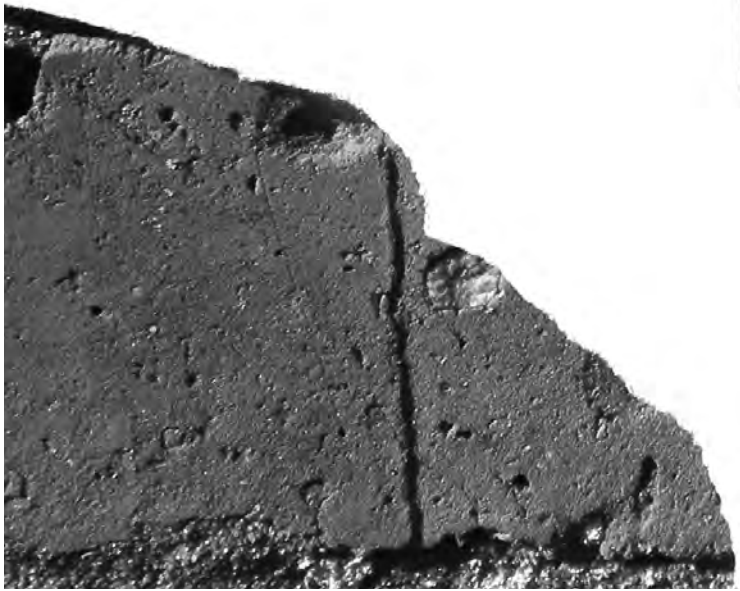
1. There was once a group of children who played in a park, but there was no swing. So they asked their parents to help them get a swing. The parents got recommendations from the local authorities...but the children were not impressed!

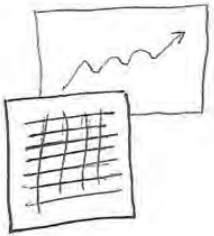
2. They then got advice from the regional swing advisory panel ...but the children were not impressed!

3. Then they got sent recommendations from the All England Panel on Swings and Health and Safety (AEPSHS) ...but the children were not impressed!

4. The panel referred them to Executive Swing Council of the European Union...but the children were not impressed!

5. Finally, a delegation of all the above groups visited the village and asked the children what exactly did they want.....and the children drew a picture like this...



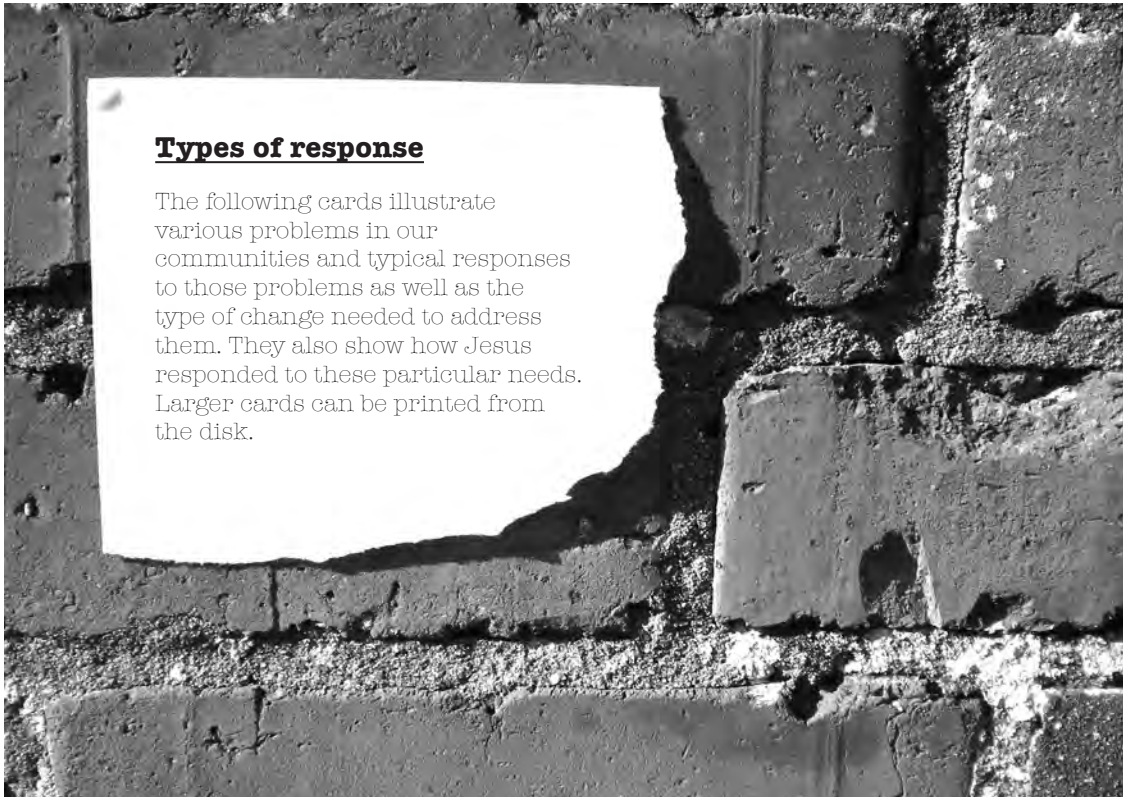


Questions

- What are some of the risks of not consulting the people we are trying to help?

- Can we think of examples where people have not been consulted?

- How can we involve people we are trying to help in deciding what the best solutions are?

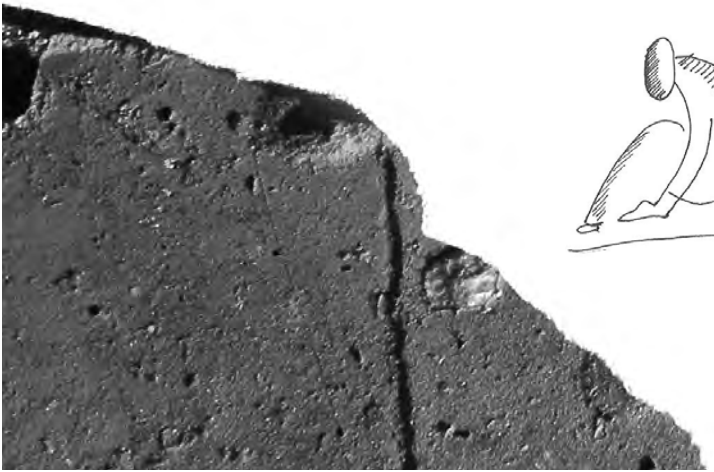


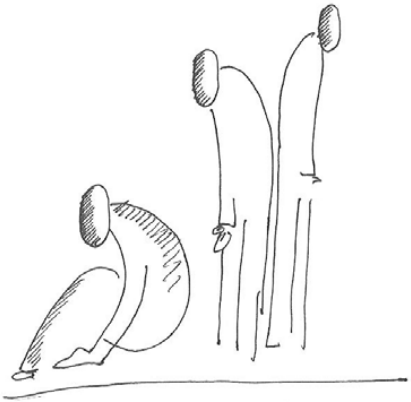
Types of response

The following cards illustrate various problems in our communities and typical responses to those problems as well as the type of change needed to address them. They also show how Jesus responded to these particular needs. Larger cards can be printed from the disk.

Community Welfare

Problem:
Individuals falling on hard times needing immediate assistance of food, shelter, safety, protection or one-off events.





Typical Response

Soup kitchens
Night shelters
Visiting programmes
Emergency accommodation
Counselling/befriending

Type of change

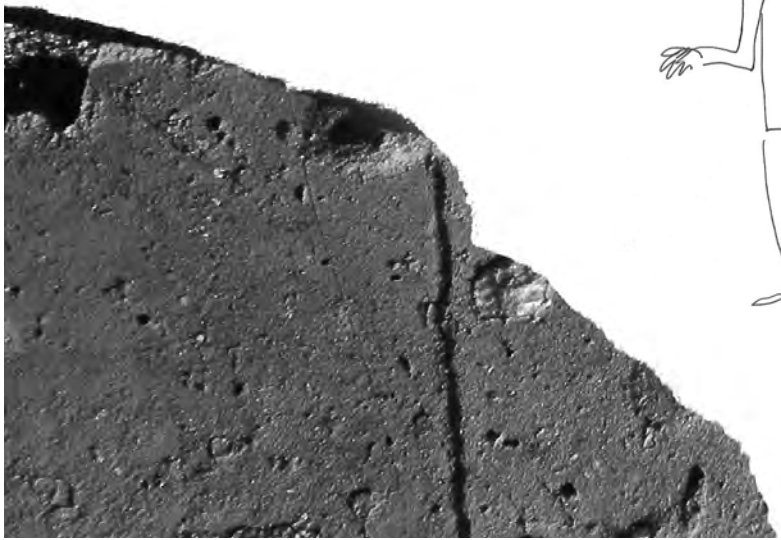
Short term/temporary
But can lead to longer term
interventions

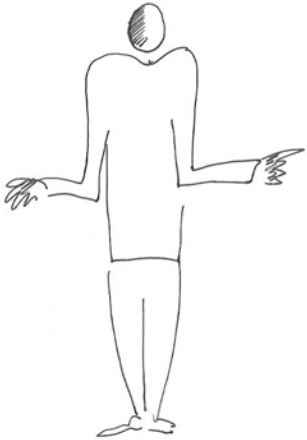
Jesus' response

Jesus took it upon himself to meet the needs of others. Jesus and his disciples gave regular gifts of money to people so that their immediate needs could be met. (John 12 vs 4-6 and 13:29)

Community Education

Problem:
Individuals lacking skills and knowledge to improve their quality of life





Typical Response

Skills training
IT skills
Vocational training
(building, carpentry, plumbing,
business development)
Life skills
Social skills

Type of Change

Enhanced skills, competency
self esteem, confidence at an
individual level

Jesus' response

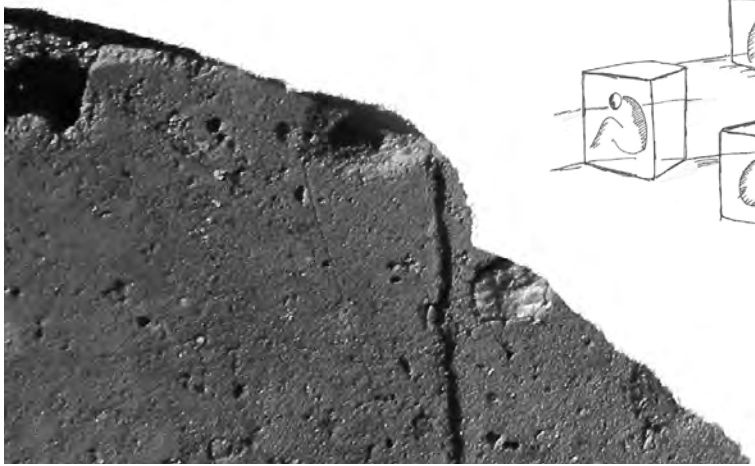
Jesus also taught the community to meet their own needs. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught people that there would never be enough resources in the world to gratify anyone's greed but there are more than enough resources in the world, if shared, to satisfy everyone's need.

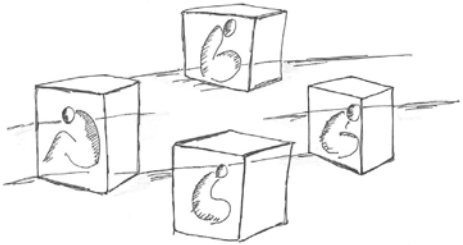
Community self help groups

Problem

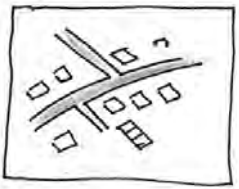
Lack of community unity or spirit to tackle community problems.

No unity or strength to build a force for change.





Typical Response
Self help groups
Group saving schemes
Co-operation
Community action groups



Type of Change
Collective change through groups of people working together to support each other and make a difference in the community.

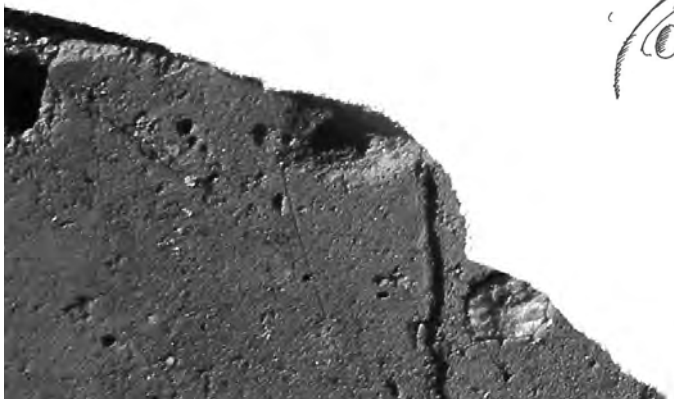
Jesus' response
Jesus developed an alternative model of community. Jesus and his large band of at least 70 disciples shared a common purse. People contributed to the common fund, as much as they could afford, and took from the fund as much as they needed. (John 12)

Community Lobbying

Problem

Unjust policies, structures/ systems in local/ national government

General injustice allowed to go unchecked and affect the conditions of the most vulnerable groups.



Typical Response

Lobbying, campaigning
Formation of pressure groups
Use of radio/media programmes
Working in alliances and partnerships to build a ground swell for change

Type of Change

Structural change that improves the position of the most vulnerable and marginalised

Jesus' response

Jesus challenged injustice and oppression of the poor. A good example of this is his encounter with the tax collector Zacchaeus, and how he got him to redistribute his wealth. (Luke 19 vs 1-10)

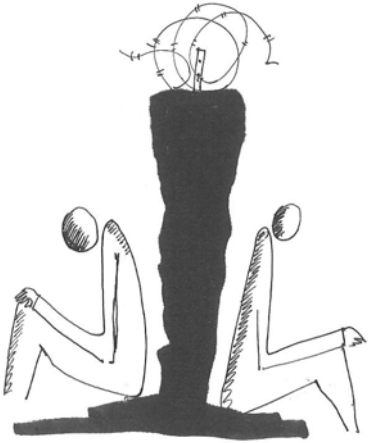
Community Transformation

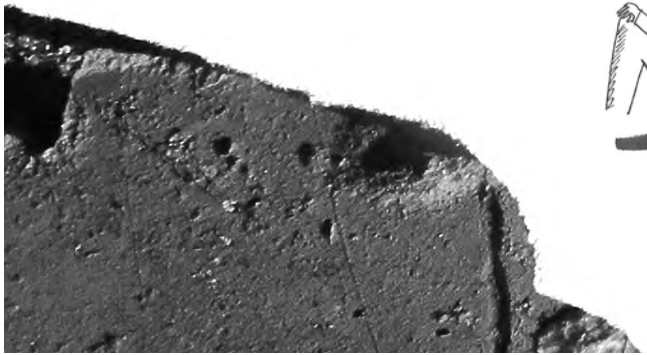
Problems

Divided community, racial and ethnic tension and conflict.

Community divided by wealth and resources

Unequal access to resources and services





Typical Response

Conflict resolution, reconciliation, rehabilitation, peace and justice commissions, peace building, social enterprise

Type of Change

Broad social change across whole communities, involving key champions and community leaders to lead the process of change as demonstrated in their own lives which often involves challenging their own prejudices and perspectives.

Jesus' response

Jesus encouraged a movement of people to live cooperatively and to apply the common purse to a whole range of personal, social and economic issues in their communities. They devoted themselves to relationships, sharing meals, praying for one another and they were all together with sincere hearts and had everything in common. (Acts 2 43-45 4: 32-34)

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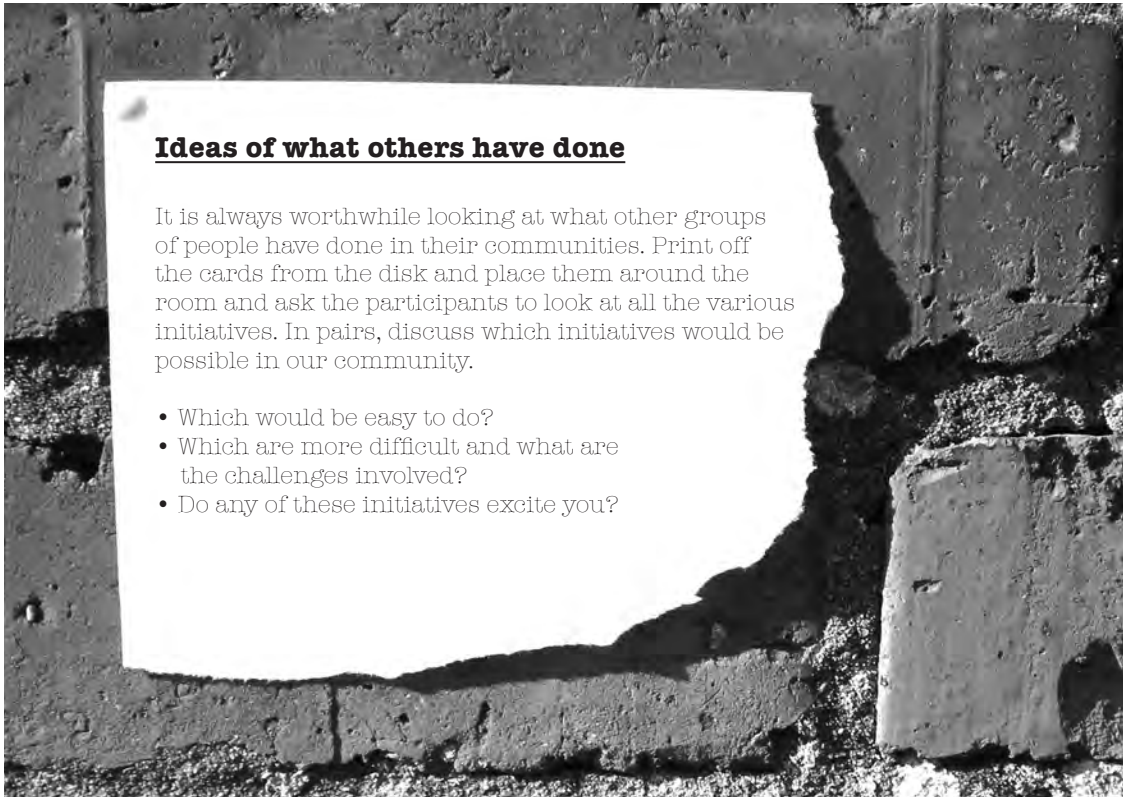


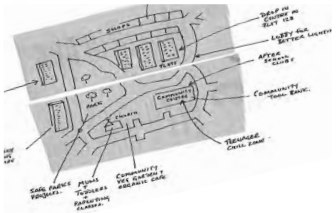
Ideas of what others have done

It is always worthwhile looking at what other groups of people have done in their communities. Print off the cards from the disk and place them around the room and ask the participants to look at all the various initiatives. In pairs, discuss which initiatives would be possible in our community.

- Which would be easy to do?
- Which are more difficult and what are the challenges involved?
- Do any of these initiatives excite you?

Acts of kindness and building relationships

- Visiting and befriending individuals
- Visiting and befriending vulnerable or marginalised families
- Visiting and befriending asylum families
- Asking groups if they would like the church to pray for them

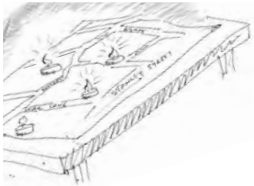


Small Initiatives

- Regular picking up of litter
- Tidying up allotments
- Removing graffiti
- Providing lifts
- Teaching/sharing skills
- Cooking meals and freezing them for families in need
- Helping to paint and decorate homes

Bigger one-off initiatives

- Designing and painting a mural
- Planting trees and improving parks
- A fun day for the community
- Half term holiday club

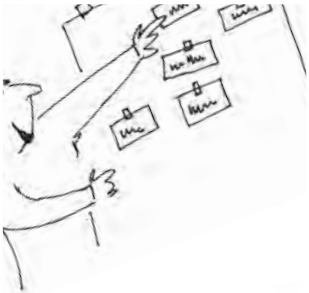


Regular initiatives

- OAP aerobics
- Running a drop in coffee bar for young people
- After school club
- After school kids club
- Soup kitchen for the homeless

Influencing others for a better community

- Getting to represent the community on key committees
- Develop a community bulletin
- Develop a local radio programme
- Work with other faith based groups on a common issue
- Lobby a key issue



Major initiatives

- Community café + keep fit club
- Home start
- Allotments and community gardens

The Swimming Pool Activity

Purpose:

To review how a group is feeling about doing a new initiative, or to review how a group is working.

Step by step Guide

1. Print off the swimming pool cards and lay out the room according to the signs. Feel free to add additional items – rubber rings, ducks etc to add atmosphere

2. Invite the group to go and stand where they think they are in relation to their commitment to the new initiative

3. Go round the group and ask them to say briefly why they chose where they are standing

4. Explore with the group what this might mean for them in taking this initiative further

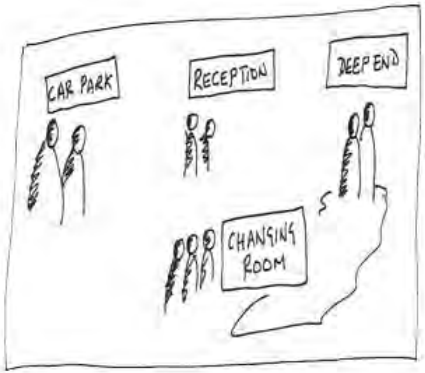
5. Summarise the main conclusions on to cards

Tip – It's very useful to do this exercise at different points throughout the project – to check if everyone is on board

Tips for running this exercise

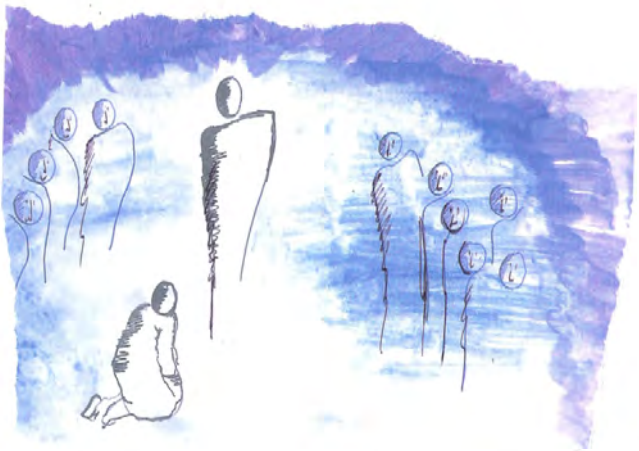
To make this exercise more colourful, you could illustrate the cards with pictures from magazines or with pictures from the internet. Use some or all of the following areas:

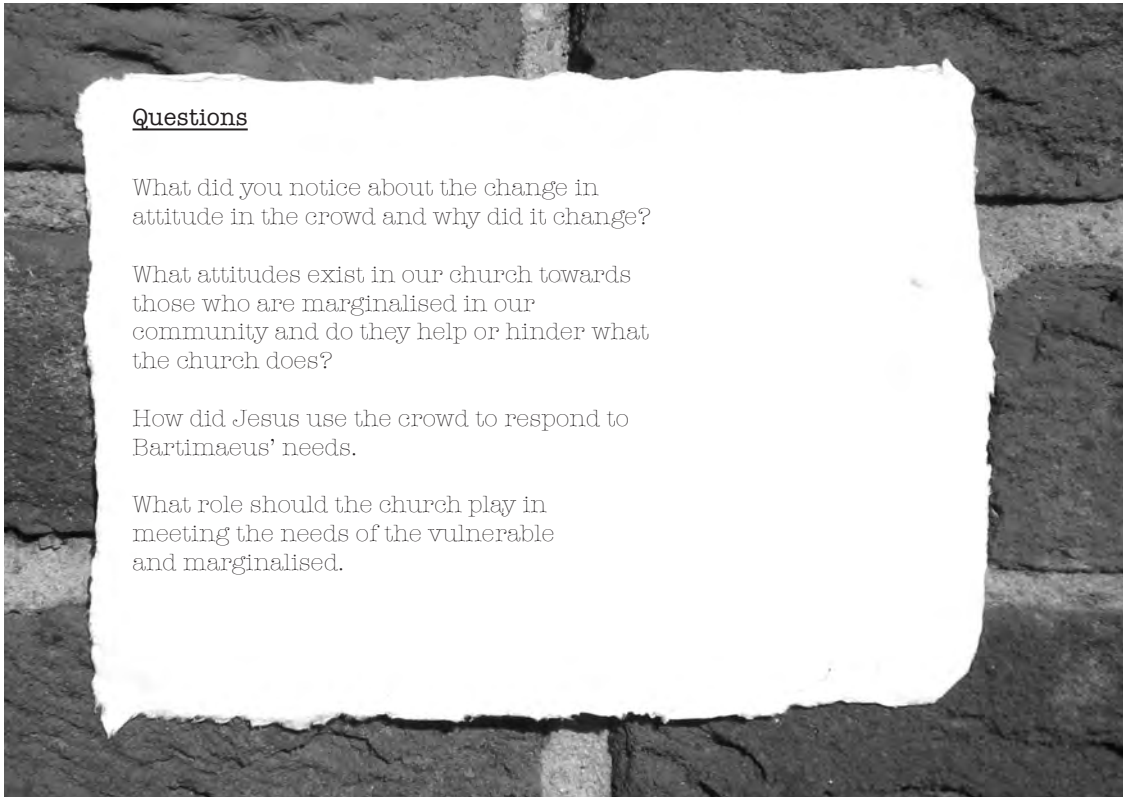
Car park
Reception
Changing Rooms
Toddler pool
Shallow end
Island
Deep end
Diving Board
Flume



Spiritual reflection – Bartimaeus

Read Mark 10 vs 46 - 52





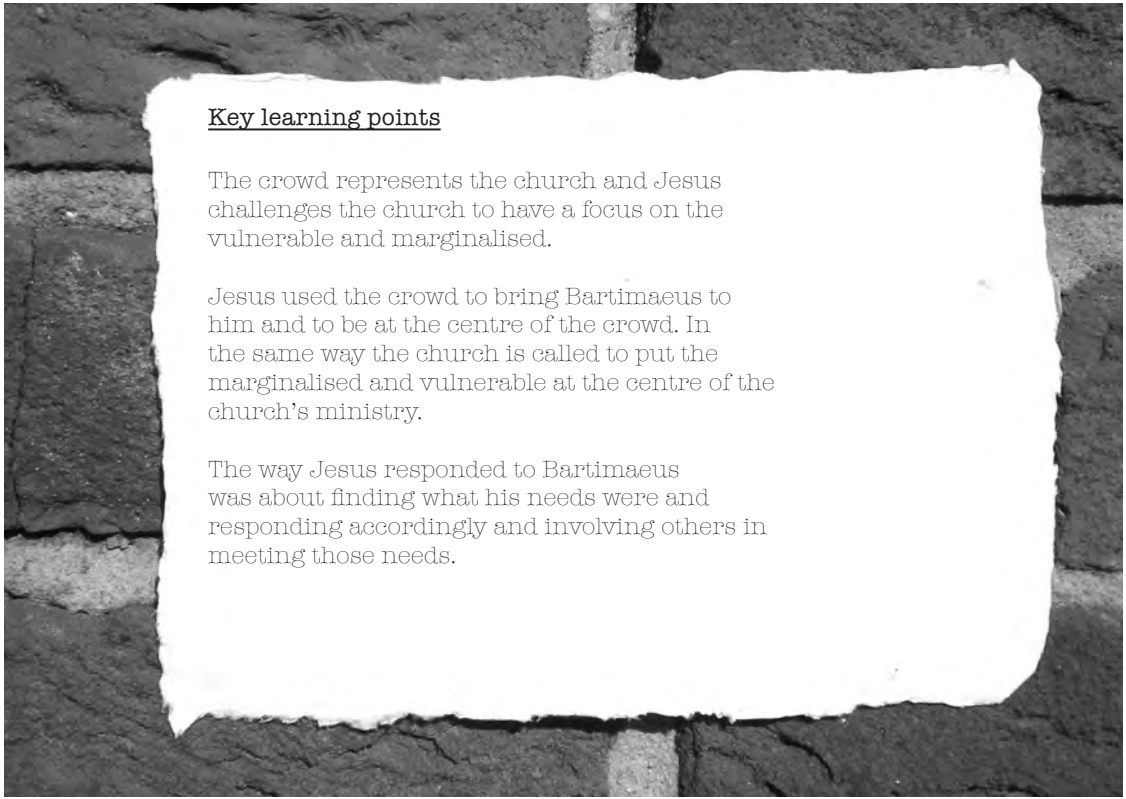
Questions

What did you notice about the change in attitude in the crowd and why did it change?

What attitudes exist in our church towards those who are marginalised in our community and do they help or hinder what the church does?

How did Jesus use the crowd to respond to Bartimaeus' needs.

What role should the church play in meeting the needs of the vulnerable and marginalised.



Key learning points

The crowd represents the church and Jesus challenges the church to have a focus on the vulnerable and marginalised.

Jesus used the crowd to bring Bartimaeus to him and to be at the centre of the crowd. In the same way the church is called to put the marginalised and vulnerable at the centre of the church's ministry.

The way Jesus responded to Bartimaeus was about finding what his needs were and responding accordingly and involving others in meeting those needs.

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