

The Welcome Section

Welcome Worship Word Witness

How to lead the welcome section

The idea of the welcome section is to relax the group and help good relationships to grow. Going round the group with a simple question can be very effective because it gives *everyone* a chance to speak (and be listened to!). The aim is that, over time, group members will begin to share more of themselves with the group. One good method is to go round the group one at a time, making sure everyone has a chance to contribute.

The welcome activity doesn't need to be linked to the theme of the whole session. And it *shouldn't* be a difficult or religious question, as that might put pressure on newcomers. A good welcome activity should include all group members. Your responsibility is to listen carefully to each member's contribution and ensure that they are not interrupted or ignored. Taking time to listen to each other is good practice for the Word section, later on. In most groups (except perhaps youth groups), welcome activities should last about 5-10 minutes.

Welcome Ideas

Easier questions for new groups:

- What is your most treasured possession?
- What was the first movie you ever saw?
- What's the aspect of your job that you like least?
- What is your most embarrassing experience?
- Tell us about your best (earthly) friend...
- What room in your house do you like best?
- What is the one thing you want to accomplish next week?
- When was the last time you did something for the first time?
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- What is your favourite movie or TV show?
- What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
- What is your favourite time of day?
- If you could chose to go anywhere in the world for 3 days, where would you go, and why?
- If I could choose my career over again I would ...
- For what are you thankful?
- What is the most memorable event of your life and why?
- Where did you grow up? What's one thing you remember about it?
- Talk about your favourite holiday spot and why you enjoy it there?
- Share about a spiritual experience you have had...
- How do you relax?
- What is your favourite type of music / song etc?
- One thing which has stressed me out this week ...
- When you were a child, who was your hero and why?
- Who was your best friend as a child?
- If you could go on any adventure, anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
- What is your favourite snack meal and where would you choose to eat it?
- If you could change your nationality what would you choose and why?
- What is the biggest crowd you have ever been in - where was it - why were you there?
- What is your biggest or longest standing "unfinished task"?

- With the exception of your toothbrush, what do you never travel without?
- What do you miss most when you're away from home?
- What do you enjoy about your work?
- What were you doing this time last year?
- What type of music did you listen to as a teenager?

Deeper questions for growing groups:

- Take the first letter of your first name and use it to start a word which is one of your qualities (e.g., Helen – Helpful).
- How do you think that others perceive you?
- What would you like to achieve in this year that you didn't achieve last year?
- What was one of the happiest moments of your life?
- What is a recent regret in your life?
- What's one of the hardest things you've ever done?
- What's the best compliment you could ever receive?
- If you could change something about the way you were raised, what would it be?
- Who is your favourite relative? Why?
- What is your favourite memory as a child?
- Who has had the greatest influence on your life since we last gathered?
- Recall a time when you failed recently
- What do you value most in a human relationship?
- My greatest disappointment...
- The gift I will never forget...
- What was the most important event in your life this past week?
- Ask each person to say why they are glad to be a Life Group tonight
- One thing I would really like see happen at the moment in my family? ... my church? ... our Life Group?
- What is the most encouraging thing said to you this week?
- What encouraging action have you done to someone this week?
- What do you still want to accomplish with your life?
- What has happened to you during this week which you would like to tell the rest of the group?
- The last time I got really angry was ...
- What do you want said at your funeral?
- One thing which makes me feel guilty ...
- One thing which I do not understand about the opposite sex is ...
- Take the letters of your Christian name and think of a quality you would like to grow in for each letter. e.g. Peter = Patience - Endurance - Thankfulness - Encouragement - Reliability (Don't worry if you can't cover every letter - especially with long names!)
- If you had this week over again what would you do differently?
- In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust God? Other people?
- Name one quality or characteristic of someone close to you that you admire.
- Think of an example of when you were last let down by someone. How did YOU react?
- Have you ever been lost? (Or if not lost, have you ever been desperate?)
- What is one question you've always wanted to ask the person on your right (needs caution and extra time!)?
- Have you surprised yourself this week?
- If you could play the part of any character in a film/book/play, who would you be?
- What has made you happy in the last year?
- What dreams did you have about the future when you were young?

- What one thing would you like to change / improve in the next year?
- How do you react when upset?

Activities and games (particularly for youth groups):

- Do a simple mime that represents the day you've just had.
- Divide into two teams for a very short pictictionary game using different things in the story of Easter, Christmas or something else that's relevant.
- In two teams take turns in being blindfolded and guessing by feeling the identity of some ordinary household objects e.g. Scissors - an egg - a sock - a corn flake - an oxo cube - etc
- Give everyone a piece of paper and get them to draw a picture of their face only - illustrating the kind of day they have had. THEN - Fold the pictures, get everyone to choose one at random, you have to guess who it is and what they are feeling. Don't reveal the correct identities until the very end.
- CHINESE WHISPERS. Depending on the size of the group. Prepare some short messages - e.g. a shopping list with 4 or 5 items; Instructions to meet somewhere including the time, the place, the reason and something to wear; an order for a three course meal. Then whisper it down the line and get the last person to write out the message. Compare all the messages at the end. Talk about the importance of listening and understanding.
- Prepare some smells - eg lemon / banana / strawberry / marmite / bleach (careful) / meths etc. Form two teams and take turns in guessing whilst blindfolded.
- TEAM GAME. How many people's names can you make from the letters in PENTECOST SUNDAY in 5 minutes? e.g. STAN / DANNY / PETE
- TEAM GAME. In two teams - give each team a large potato. Make a list of as many uses you can think of for a potato in 5 minutes - sensible and silly.
- ALPHABET FEAST - Go round the circle in turn. Start with "I went to a feast and we all ate - APPLE PIE. Next Person "I went to a feast and we all ate - APPLE PIE and BACON ROLLS. Next...CHICKEN LEGS.
- In teams make a body sculpture of a famous building (e.g. Eiffel Tower, Nelson's Column, Sphinx) – the other team has to guess what it is
- In groups dramatize (or mime) a famous moment from a movie or TV programme – can the others guess what it is?
- Design a quick quiz for people and play it in two teams
- Write some famous names on slips of paper (do about 5 per group member in advance) and put them in a bag. Take turns trying to describe as many people as you can in 60 seconds, without mentioning their name, while everyone else (or your team) guesses
- Play a mini-version of a commercial game like Taboo, Pictionary, Rapidough etc...
- Play 'just a minute': where you have to speak on a given topic for 60 seconds without hesitation, deviation or repetition. If someone spots a mistake they get to complete the remaining seconds. The person talking when the 60 seconds are over wins.