



**Uniting Church In Australia  
Queensland Synod**

*presents*

**MISSION  
Stories**

**A short group-based course aiming to assist you in  
discerning your focus as a community of the gospel.**

**A RED EARTH FILMS PRODUCTION**



## **Mission Stories:**

### **A six part learning guide to the Church in Mission**

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*Pilgrim Learning Community*

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*With Jason Bray and Mike Crowhurst, Red Earth Films,  
and Peter Armstrong as narrator.*

*Copies of this manual can be downloaded at [www.faithstories.org.au](http://www.faithstories.org.au)*

*The Mission Stories DVD can be purchased at Pilgrim Learning Community (Queensland, Australia) or  
Mediacom, Adelaide, Australia. RRP \$100 including GST.*

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Welcome to **Mission Stories** – a discernment resource designed to help church leaders discover more about their God-given calling to local mission. The course consists of six sessions, each lasting between about 1½ and 2 hours. Throughout this journey you'll watch some inspiring stories, share your own experiences, study the Bible, pray together and discuss ideas. Between each session you are encouraged to research and record information relating to your own local setting, as well as put your learning and discoveries into practice.

*The titles of the different sessions are:*

Session 1 – **Mission in Context**

Session 2 – **Gospel People**

Session 3 – **Relational Disciples**

Session 4 – **Partnering with God's People**

Session 5 – **Who Are Your People?**

Session 6 – **Mission Together**

#### *COURSE GOALS*

- To encourage Christian leaders to reflect on God's mission in the world.
- To inspire Christian leaders to explore the potential of the local church, in its various forms, for to embody the Christian gospel.
- To equip Christians in discipleship in the context of everyday relationships.
- To build partnership between congregations, agencies of the church, local community stakeholders and people who have become alienated from the institutional church.
- To encourage cross cultural engagement in mission.
- To affirm the holistic nature of mission as carried out by many expressions of the church.

The course is best done over an extended period of time, allowing time for research and documentation between each session.



Most groups find it important to have someone lead or facilitate the group meeting. It doesn't have to be the same person every week. People may take it in turns. But always start with a more experienced leader to show others with less experience how it is done.

Facilitation is very important given the diversity of people within a group. There is likely to be a range of ages, a mix of spiritual experiences and a variety of viewpoints on social and political issues. Some people may also have better interpersonal skills than others (e.g. some will be better listeners; some may have more empathy than others.)

***People move through three stages in developing their participation in a group:***

- Inclusion (how can I feel part of the life of this group?)
- Influence (how can I have some say in what happens?)
- Intimacy (how can I feel close to the other people?)

The facilitator is a person who will help other people in a group participate more fully. The facilitator of a ***Mission Stories*** group needs to find ways to:

- Welcome people.
- Invite each one to participate.
- Value each one's contribution
- Encourage each one to offer their own contribution while still being open to the ideas of others'.
- Encourage people to exchange differing viewpoints in a spirit of humility (building each other up) rather than merely debating opposing positions (and tearing one another down);
- Challenge people to help each other step out of their comfort zones, and take small but significant moves to embody their learning in their daily lives.

### ***Structure of Each Session:***

Each session has two video components, with material presented by Peter Armstrong alongside personal reflections and case studies.

Each session includes Biblical reflection and opportunity for personal and group prayer.

Each session includes opportunities for further reflection, using excerpts from The Basis of Union.

Each session invites people to talk about their own experience, relating to their involvement in the work of the church and life experience in general.

Each session ends with a template for documenting the mission focus of a community of faith, using 'hard data' (information) and 'soft data' (quotes and stories). In most cases there won't be time to fill this out during the session. Check at the beginning of each session on how people went.

The [faithstories.org.au](http://faithstories.org.au) web site includes further reading material that may be helpful for people preparing for leading sessions or for further reading.

Small group time is best when people share in groups of three to five people, preferably with continuity from session to session.

### ***FOUNDATIONAL THESES***

1. Christian mission belongs to God. Christian mission is centred in God's engagement with the world, highlighted in the sending of Jesus into the world. (John 1:1-14)
2. The people of God are called to join in the mission of God in worshipping, witnessing and serving in the wider community. This participation is inspired by the gospel story and words/actions of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20).
3. The fruit of God's mission is brought about by the Holy Spirit acting in, through and beyond the people of God. The results are lives transformed, communities changed and people made whole (Luke 4:18-19).

4. God acts through those who profess faith in Christ and put that faith into action. God's action and intent cannot be confined, contained or claimed exclusively by anyone. (Acts)


5. While the Christian gospel is for all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity or socio-economic context, it is and must be interpreted and embodied by particular people groups wherever they are. (Galatians)

6. God's missional engagement with the world is broader and deeper than any one person or group can comprehend. Together, as the reconciled and reconciling people of God, we have many opportunities to explore the fullness of God's action. (Ephesians)

SESSION  
**1**

*Mission in Context*

*LEARNING GOALS*

 **2 MINUTES** This first session is designed to help us reflect on the ways in which God's mission is expressed in our community, including an awareness of the impact of context on our mission. The session focuses on how God's involvement in the world leads to us being sent into the local community.



**VIDEO STORY**

 **5 MINUTES** **WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 1**

Peter Armstrong reflects on the early Church, Christendom and the 21<sup>st</sup> century contexts of mission. Duncan Macleod and Geoff Thompson talk about opportunities for the Church in Australia at the end of Christendom.



**SMALL GROUP**

 **15 MINUTES**

1. Reflect on changes in your understanding of mission. When did you first think about the word, "mission". What did it mean to you then? In what ways has the word changed in meaning for you since then?



2. Can you think of examples of Christian community today living as a minority in a risky or dangerous place? Where in the world would this be most common? Can you think of examples of Christian community being privileged, part of a dominant culture? Where in the world would this be most common? Can you think of examples of Christian community operating in a way that demonstrates partnership with the local community?

3. How is today's Australian context different to that of the early Church? How is today's Australian context different to that of Christendom in Western Europe?



## BIBLE READING



15 MINUTES

### **John 1:1-14, New Revised Standard Version**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*

*He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.*

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.*

The word “Mission” comes from the Latin phrase, “Missio”, meaning to send. The Greek word used in the New Testament is “Apostoleo”, to send. In Jesus we see the sending of God in action. Looking at the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, what do we learn about the way God interacts with our world?

Incarnation as a word comes from the concept of being “in the flesh”, and is often used to describe God living among us in the person of Jesus. What examples can you find of people continuing the “incarnational” life of God in your community?



 **15 MINUTES** **WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 1, TOWNSVILLE**


### ***PERSPECTIVE***

A sample of worship, witness and service from three congregations in Townsville. Interviews with Anne Harley, Mark Dewar and Craig Mischewski, prison chaplains, radio DJ, local businessman, MOPS convenor, backyard barbecue host.

What do you find encouraging in the mission approaches of these people in Townsville? What questions do you have?

The people interviewed in the video were focused on living out their life in God, responding to the hurts and hopes of their wider community. How do you see that happening where you live?



 **10 MINUTES** The writers of the Basis of Union recognised that the Uniting Church's context has changed and will continue to change, using words that recognised our continuing need for discernment.

*“The Church lives between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which Christ will bring. The Church is a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal. Here the Church does not have a continuing city but seeks one to come. On the way Christ feeds the Church with Word and Sacraments, and it has the gift of the Spirit in order that it may not lose the way.”*

*Basis of Union, Paragraph 3*

How has the scenery changed for the Uniting Church since its beginning? What has changed in our context that means we need to rethink the way we operate?

What are the signs of us “staying on the way” as the Church in our local community?



## PRAYER TIME

 **10 MINUTES** Spend some time thanking God for the stories of mission that you have shared.



## DOCUMENTING MISSION

### *HARD DATA*

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*(Hard data is easy to write down. It often relates to facts and figures)*

Does your congregation/faith community have a mission statement? A vision statement? List them here.

What do these say about how your church understands its role in the mission of God?

What is the local context that God has placed you in as a community? Do you have a geographical focus? Do you have an age-related or ethnicity-related focus? Which institutions do you relate to?

*(Soft data provides the “feel” and “human touch” to back up your hard data. It can be found and expressed in stories and quotes.)*

What stories help you understand your context? What events or situations give you clues about the world you’re called to live in?


If you wanted to discover more of these stories, you could spend time listening to the listeners and the story tellers of your community. Spend time in conversation with hairdressers, taxi drivers, shopkeepers, employers, educators, town planners, and so on.

What are your stories of “being sent”, into the local community and beyond? Include founding stories that have shaped your sense of identity, and emerging stories that provide hope for where you may be heading in the future.



## *Gospel People*

### *LEARNING GOALS*

 **2 MINUTES** This first session is designed to help us connect our understanding and experience of God in the world with our understanding and expression of being God's people sent into the world, embodying the compassion and generosity of the gospel.



### **VIDEO STORY**

 **5 MINUTES** **WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 2, GOSPEL PEOPLE**

*Duncan Macleod and Geoff Thompson on being a Gospel people, reflecting the priorities of Jesus, grounded in the gracious, generous and compassionate nature of God.*

What are your first responses to the video?

What encouragement do you take from the video? What questions would you like to explore?



## SMALL GROUP

We are called to take part in proclaiming and living out the gospel of Jesus Christ. Looking at the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, what do you think the good news is about? How many ways can you find to describe that good news?



## BIBLE READING

 15 MINUTES **Acts 2:43-47**

*All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

Geoff Thompson talks about us finding our bearings in the gracious, generous and compassionate nature of God.

Duncan Macleod talks about us discovering what it means to be gospel people.

The Apostle's Creed talks about the community of Jesus being united (one), focused (holy), accessible (catholic) and sent by God (apostolic) into the world. We're called to become involved in God's work of reconciling, transforming, boundary crossing and sending.



Where do you see this gospel in action in this story of the early Church?

Where do you see the Christian gospel in action in your context?



 **10 MINUTES** **WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 2, *GENEROUS COMMUNITY***

Ashmore Uniting Church – Op Shop Fashion Show. Brad Foote and members of the Op Shop team reflect on being a gospel people in action.

What did you pick up from this story?

When have you seen the church today express the compassionate and generous nature of God?



*“Jesus of Nazareth announced the sovereign grace of God whereby the poor in spirit could receive God's love. Jesus himself, in his life and death, made the response of humility, obedience and trust which God had long sought in vain. In raising him to live and reign, God confirmed and completed the witness which Jesus bore to God on earth, reasserted claim over the whole of creation, pardoned sinners, and made in Jesus a representative beginning of a new order of righteousness and love.”*

*Basis of Union, Paragraph 3*

Which images of good news can you find in this paragraph?

As members of the “new order of righteousness and love”, how do your worship, witness and service reflect the good news of Jesus in your local community?



## PRAYER TIME



**10 MINUTES**

Give thanks for the many ways people live out the gospel of Jesus Christ.



## DOCUMENTING MISSION

### *HARD DATA*

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*(Hard data is easy to write down. It often relates to facts and figures)*

List documentation from your governing framework

e.g. Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Mission Priorities, Strategic Plan.

How do these reflect the priorities of the Christian gospel?

How has your church used property and funding for the benefit of others. Include ways in which you give away funds to others.

How does your shared stewardship reflect the priorities of the Christian gospel?

What are your gospel stories in action? Find stories of how living out your values as a community has led to changed lives.


For example:

- Stories of how experiencing and offering compassion have changed lives.
- Stories of how experiencing and offering generosity have changed lives.
- Stories of how standing in solidarity with the suffering has changed lives.
- Stories of how experiencing and offering forgiveness has changed lives.
- Stories of how providing a welcome to strangers has changed lives.

SESSION  
3

*Relational Disciples*

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This session helps us think through what being a member of a missional community might involve. We look at discipleship through the lens of transformation and renewal.



VIDEO STORY

 **5 MINUTES** **WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 3, *CHANGING CONTEXT***

Kaye Ronalds talks about relational missional discipleship, referring to the story of Russell Reynoldson's involvement in the Emerald community during the 2009 floods.

Discipleship is more than a private focus on living correctly before God. It's lived out in relationships, with God, in the context of primary relationships (family and close ones), in the context of our local community (work, play, study, street), and in our local community of faith.

Discipleship involves following Jesus, connecting with the people Jesus connects with, learning to live with God's compassion, being transformed as we live day by day.

 **SMALL GROUP**

What's your first response to the video?

What does Christian discipleship look like in action for you? What are the practices you need to develop to follow in the way of Jesus?

 **BIBLE READING**

 **15 MINUTES** **Matthew 28: 16-20**

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'*

Jesus gives his followers the challenge of helping people in all people groups (nations, cultures, ethnic groups) learn to follow him as disciples, teaching them to do all the things he had taught them to do. What is your experience of this happening today?



*“The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.”*

*Basis of Union, Paragraph 13*

What might confessing the faith of Christ crucified involve in your context?

What does being Christ's faithful servant involve for you?

The gifts of God are given by the Spirit to help us take part in the ministry of Christ, in the world. How do you see yourself using God's gifts in your every day life?



## VIDEO STORY



**15 MINUTES** **WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 3, *SENDING COMMUNITY***


Andrew Lee talks about being a disciple in Central Queensland and in Papua New Guinea. We talk to young people and their parents about their plans for a trip to Papua New Guinea. Bruce Mullan talks about how we equip people for discipleship in local and global contexts.

How do you see the people in the video living out their discipleship of Jesus? What training and preparation did they need?

What training and preparation might you and members of your community need to live out your outward-focused discipleship?



## PRAYER TIME

 **10 MINUTES** Pray for the people represented in your group and in your community of faith, as they seek to live out their life of discipleship. Pray for both inner disciplines and relational or outward disciplines.





## DOCUMENTING MISSION

### *HARD DATA*

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How do our members of your community of faith resource themselves as disciples?

What resources and programs do we invest in that help people grow as disciples?

How do those resources and programs equip people in everyday discipleship lived out in the community?

What stories do we have of members confessing the faith of Christ crucified?

What stories do we have of people using their gifts to serve in the name of Christ?

How do we help people discern their call to discipleship?

How do we commission our members in their everyday discipleship?


What are the stories of transformation?

What are the stories of perseverance that lead to transformation?

SESSION  
4

*Partnering with God's People*

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This session is designed to help us focus on our partnership with others in exploring God's mission. Who does God call to be involved in reconciliation and renewal? It's useful to think beyond our own congregation or faith community.



VIDEO STORY

 **5 MINUTES** **WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 4, MEET OUR PARTNERS**

Peter Armstrong takes us for a tour of Redcliffe, introducing us to the concept of partnering in God's mission, with congregations, agencies, community allies and exiles.

What is your response to the video? What do you find encouraging in these stories? What questions do you have?



SMALL GROUP

In the video we saw a reference to mission of God being carried out by people in congregations, in agencies or parachurch organisations, and by people who we find in the wider community, in community groups and alone. Who do you know in your community that could be described in these ways?



## BIBLE READING

15 MINUTES **Luke 10: 1-7**

*After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid.'*

Jesus sent his disciples out into communities, telling them to first find people of peace and hospitality. Who in your community have you found to be people of blessing and hospitality?

 VIDEO STORY

 15 MINUTES **WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 4, LOCAL PARTNERS**

Peter Hobson and Glebe Road members take us for a tour of Ipswich, to meet members of the community who they regard as partners in mission. Blue Care Director of Mission Colleen Geyer and Maleny minister Peter Overton about being the church beyond the congregation. The story of Townsville's Stable on the Strand introduces us to the collaboration between congregations of different denominations, the local city council and businesses.

What are your first responses to these stories?

Who are your partners or potential partners in your field of work as a community of faith?



*“The Uniting Church lives within a world-wide fellowship of Churches in which it will learn to sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought. Within that fellowship the Uniting Church also stands in relation to contemporary societies in ways which will help it to understand its own nature and mission. The Uniting Church thanks God for the continuing witness and service of evangelist, of scholar, of prophet and of martyr. It prays that it may be ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds.”*

*Basis of Union, Paragraph 11*

What can we learn about our calling and mission from other parts of the Church?


What can we learn about our calling and mission from contemporary society?

*“The Congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God's Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world. The congregation will recognise the need for a diversity of agencies for the better ordering of its life in such matters as education, administration and finance.”*

*Basis of Union Paragraph 15*

The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church reflects the nature of God's mission, on its way to becoming the reconciling, transforming, boundary-crossing and commissioning people of the Gospel. The Basis of Union mentions education, administration and finance as needing organisation beyond the congregation, in a diversity of agencies. What other aspects of our life as the people of God might we need to plan for specifically?



 **10 MINUTES** Pray for people who are carrying out the work of God, whether they are in recognised parts of the church or beyond.



## DOCUMENTING MISSION

### *HARD DATA*

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Who are the other congregations or communities of faith in your neighbourhood or sphere of influence? How do you partner with them in mission?

Who are the agencies of the church in your neighbourhood or sphere of influence. Include other denominational and non-denominational groups, as well as individuals who are acting on behalf of the church. How do you partner with them in mission?

What are the community organisations and stakeholders you are in partnership with? How do you partner with them in mission?

Who are the people of faith who, for whatever reason, find it difficult to belong to organised expressions of the church? How do you partner with these people in mission?



Ask key members of your community about their perspective on the hopes and concerns of your community. People to ask might include employers, school principals, hairdressers, law enforcement staff, medical staff, tertiary education staff, leaders and participants in programs, people who use or share your buildings?

**Questions to ask:**

What is your best experience of this community?


What was your role in that experience?

What have you learnt from conversations with key people in your area?

SESSION  
**5**

*Who Are Your People?*

*LEARNING GOALS*

 **2 MINUTES** This session helps us think through being in mission with particular people groups, with a focus on going to marginalized people, as well as people to whom we relate to naturally.

 **VIDEO STORY**

 **5 MINUTES** **WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 5, *MISSIONAL EDGES***

Rob Bos talks about his experiences as a Dutch born immigrant in Australia, and as a visitor to North India.

 **SMALL GROUP**

What are your first responses to the video?

What experiences have you had of going into an unfamiliar culture? What did you find easy?  
What did you find difficult?

What do you think is meant by “on the margins”?

In what ways did Jesus spend time with people on the margins?



## BIBLE READING

### 15 MINUTES **Paul in I Corinthians 9**

*For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.*

Paul led the way on finding ways of relating to many different people groups? What would have been the advantages of being so flexible? What were the risks involved for Paul as he changed his approach?

What are the ways you have seen people attempting to relate the gospel to new contexts? What has been most effective?



### **20 MINUTES WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 5, *THESE ARE MY PEOPLE***

Fa Ngalaufe talks about connecting with her Tongan community. Geoff Maskelyne talks about his involvement in the local Ulysses Motorcycle Club.

Who are the people groups that you enjoy spending time with? What do you have in common with them?

Christianity is a universal movement, with a faith that can be adopted and adapted by people in any culture. We can attempt to work on a generic expression of church for a generic population, or we can nurture welcoming expressions of church that take on the colours, flavours, smells and tastes of local communities.

How do we identify the people groups that we might connect with?

1. Is there a culture that has developed in the local community, associated with shared experiences and shared perspectives on the world? Rural and mining communities have economies that shape their culture, for example. What are the best expressions of that shared culture? This is an easier question to explore in smaller communities.
2. Are there particular ethnic identities in which people share a common understanding of the world? These people may have an existing connection through a soccer club (Spanish, Portuguese for example), a cultural dance group (Maori, Filipino, Cook Island). People may be scattered and disconnected, and looking for a place to be themselves.

3. Are there particular life stages or transition points that you have an affinity for? Pre-schoolers, school children, teenagers, young adults, students, parents of young children, engaged couples, parents of teenagers, divorcees, newly arrived immigrants, retirees, widows and widowers...
4. What about generational focus points? Do you have a natural affinity with the aspirations of Baby Boomers, Gen X, or Gen Y as they travel through life? Not to be confused with life stages such as teenagers or young adults.
5. Are there particular clusters focused on needs that you could relate to? Think grief recovery, parenting support, disabilities, people on low income, single parents, mental health...
6. Are there shared passions that you could connect with? Gardening, fishing, music, art, food, sport, craft, biking, exercise, writing, movies, technology, gaming, photography, shopping, philosophy, travel, clothing, animals, science
7. Are there shared world views and spiritualities that you connect with? Progressive and careful thinkers? Passionate seekers of supernatural experience? Contemplatives? Activists?



*“(The Uniting Church) believes that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries, and to this end the Uniting Church commits itself to seek special relationships with Churches in Asia and the Pacific. The Uniting Church declares its desire to enter more deeply into the faith and mission of the Church in Australia, by working together and seeking union with other Churches.”*

*Basis of Union, Paragraph 2*

We have a mandate to explore and present the gospel in ways that connect to people from any cultural, economic, national or racial background. How have you seen that carried out? What are the best examples of worship, of witness and service focused on particular people groups?



## PRAYER TIME



**10 MINUTES** Pray for each of the people groups represented by those gathered in your group.

Pray for courage and sensitivity as you find ways of connecting with people on the margins.

Pray for discernment and creativity for people as they find ways of connecting with people in their natural networks.



### *HARD DATA*

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From the Australian census figures what do you know about the people groups living in your area? List information about people who live in your local context, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics census data from 2001, 2006, 2011.

How many people live there?

What can you find about:

- Ethnic groups?
- Age groups?
- Educational levels?
- Employment and income figures?
- Kinds of households?

How has your community changed over the last ten years? How is it likely to change in the next ten years?

How do these figures relate to the information you have on membership of your church?



Talking to people in your context what ethnic groups, interest groups, family groups, online communities do they connect with?

In what ways do you see the evidence of God's values being put into action in these people groups?


Where are the places of hospitality in which you might become guests or co-hosts?

What are the hopes and concerns found in these people groups?

SESSION  
**6**

*Mission Together*

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This session helps us think through what it might mean to hold together all that mission involves.

 **VIDEO STORY**

 **15 MINUTES** **WATCH THE FIRST VIDEO IN SESSION 6, MISSIONAL INTEGRITY**

Clive Ayre introduces the Five Marks of Mission from the Anglican Consultative Council. We have examples given by Lu Senituli, Rodney Minniecon, Beatriz Skippen and James Hughes.

- **Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God**
- **Teach, Baptise and Nurture**
- **Loving Service**
- **Transform unjust structures of society**
- **Safeguard creation and sustain the earth**

What are your first responses to the video?

What do you find affirming?

What do you find challenging?



What parts of the five marks of mission do you most relate to?

Which parts are more difficult?



### Jesus in Luke 4:17-20

*When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'*

Jesus used Isaiah to talk about the ways the Spirit had commissioned him. What would you use today to describe the Spirit's calling, as an individual, group or community?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because...



 **15 MINUTES** **WATCH THE SECOND VIDEO IN SESSION 6, *WHAT ARE WE DISCOVERING?***

Clive Ayre introduces us to a recent discovery at Caloundra Uniting Church, a calling to care for the environment.

What are your responses to the Caloundra exploration of environmental stewardship?

What are the emerging dreams and visions that God is calling your community to explore?



*“As a people journeying together we affirm our calling under God:  
to preach Christ the crucified and risen one and confess him as Lord;  
to bear witness to the unity of faith and life in Christ, rising above cultural,  
economic, national and racial boundaries;  
to engage in fearless prophetic ministry in relation to social evils which deny  
God’s active will for justice and peace;  
to act with God alongside the oppressed, the hurt and the poor;  
to accept responsibility for the wise use and conservation of the finite resources of  
this earth for the benefit of all;  
to recognise, treasure and use the gifts of the Spirit given to all God’s people for  
ministering; and  
to live a creative, adventurous life of faith, characterised by openness, flexibility,  
hope and joy”*

*(Based on a statement from the inaugural worship service of the Uniting Church in Australia,  
June 1977).*

In what ways do you see your community already living out their calling? What calls do you see as a fresh challenge for today?



## PRAYER TIME



**10 MINUTES**

Give thanks for those expressions of God’s calling that are being lived out where you are.

Pray for renewed courage, wisdom and grace to embrace the whole calling of God together.



## DOCUMENTING MISSION

### *HARD DATA*

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List the ways in which you as a community of faith recognize and support faith sharing, nurture of disciples and learning, serving together, transforming society and environmental stewardship.

List the action plans/strategies you have for building capacity in faith sharing, nurture of disciples, serving together, changing society and environment.

### *SOFT DATA*

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What are your stories of teamwork and collaboration that honour different gifts, ministries and approaches to mission?

What are your long term and emerging stories of faith sharing, compassionate care, learning/teaching/nurture of disciples, shaping community attitudes and structures, and caring for environment.



The Five Marks of Mission, endorsed by the Lambeth Conference 1988 and the Forum of Churches Together in England 1997, hold together expressions of mission that are at times set against each other.

**1. TELL - To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom**

Proclamation may be in words - effective communication of the Gospel - but also in actions, by living the Good News we preach.

**2. TEACH - To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**

Christian discipleship is about lifelong learning, so we all need formal and informal resources for growing in faith, so that the Church is a learning environment for all ages.

**3. TEND - To respond to human need by loving service**

Churches have a long tradition of care through pastoral ministry. Christians are called to respond to the needs of people locally and in the wider human community.

**4. TRANSFORM - To seek to transform unjust structures in society**

Jesus and the OT prophets before him challenged oppressive structures in God's name. Christians should not only press for change, but also demonstrate justice within Church structures.

**5. TREASURE - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

The Bible's vision of salvation is universal in its scope. We are called to promote the wellbeing of the human community and its environment, so that Creation may live in harmony.

