

Discipleship
E~~X~~PLORED
PRISON EDITION

Following Jesus.
What's it all about?

A flexible resource for prison ministry

Discipleship Explored Prison Edition – Leader's Guide
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INTRODUCTION

Are you content in every situation? Are you sure of your salvation? Are you able to say with conviction: "To me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"? These are some of the questions that we will be asking in *Discipleship Explored Prison Edition*.

This eight-session course explores Paul's letter to the Philippians and its call to live wholeheartedly for Christ. It is intended for new Christians who've just completed *Christianity Explored Prison Edition*.

Paul wrote his letter to a group of new Christians living in Philippi. He wanted to remind them of the good news they believed in, encourage them to let the gospel shine through every part of their lives, and also help them to keep going in difficult circumstances. Paul himself was under house arrest in Rome as he wrote. In many ways, then, Philippians is already very well suited to the prison context.

But in developing and piloting *Discipleship Explored* in prisons, we've also tried to take into account various factors which particularly affect learning in prison. These include the average reading age and attention span of the prison population, social background, mental/psychological vulnerability and present incarceration.

If you're running a *Discipleship Explored Prison Edition* course, please register it on our website, **www.ceministries.org/register**, so we can pray for you and support you. You can also discover and connect with other prisons who are running the course.

May God richly bless you in all you do for the honour and glory of Christ.

Stephen James, Gillian Pegler
and the Christianity Explored Ministries Team, September 2014

Stephen. Gillian

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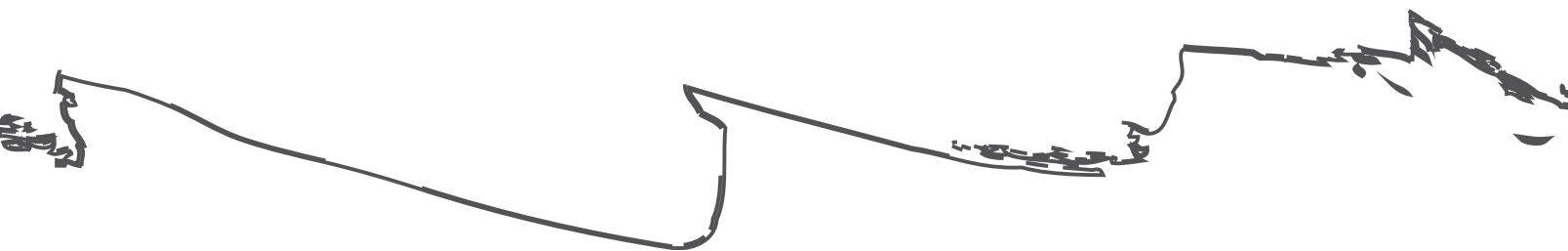
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How to run the course



Getting started

 *Note: This version of Discipleship Explored has been developed specifically for use in UK Prisons, and much of the introductory material assumes this. If you are using it in another country, you will have to adapt it to your own setting. Do make sure you understand properly the way the prison system works in your own country, and respect the rules completely.*

The first three chapters of this section are primarily intended for the main course leader, to help them organize the course. If you're not the main course leader, then read the training modules (pages 17 to 34), before your leaders' training session for *Discipleship Explored Prison Edition*. Your team leader will be organizing this training session for your team.

In order to train your team, the training modules (page 17-34) will give you the information you need. We would recommend that you, as team leader, attend an existing course at another prison before training your own team.

GETTING STARTED

Helping prisoners understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ is a stunning privilege and a huge responsibility.

It's a stunning privilege because Almighty God is pleased to call us his "fellow workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9) as he seeks and saves the lost. And it's a huge responsibility because we're nurturing and caring for those who are young in the faith. The Lord Jesus gives stern warnings to anyone who leads astray his "little ones" (Mark 9:42). Our work to make disciples must always be careful, prayerful and faithful.

To help your journey run smoothly, you will need to consider the following before the course begins.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Discipleship Explored Prison Edition has been developed to cover the letter of Philippians in eight sessions. You can run the course once a week for eight weeks ("once-a-week course"), or over four or five days ("five-day course") with one or two sessions each day. Each individual session can be tailored to last from 1 to 2.5 hours, depending on your time constraints.

We don't recommend skipping any sessions, but if you're not able to run eight sessions, make sure that all the starred (*) sessions are covered, and as many of the rest as possible, maintaining the order in which they are written. Session 8 contains material to end the course, so if you don't finish with session 8, make sure that you do include this material (section 8.11, page 140).

Session	Include
1: Confident in Christ	*
2: Living in Christ	*
3: Standing together in Christ	
4: Transformed by Christ	*
5: Righteousness in Christ	*
6: Knowing Christ	*
7: Rejoicing in Christ	
8: Content in Christ	

STRUCTURE OF A SESSION

Each session is based on a consistent "backbone", so that you and the group have a rough idea of what each session will contain before you start. There is a table showing this "backbone" on page 11.

In some of the sessions there are minor diversions from the backbone to accommodate specific learning needs.

APPROACHING THE PRISON CHAPLAIN ABOUT RUNNING DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORED PRISON EDITION

Discipleship Explored Prison Edition is a discipleship course. It is meant for Christians, including very young ones. Although we have run it with people who have not made a commitment to Christ, we've found we spend a lot of time backtracking into *Christianity Explored* in order to help these people to keep up. This can be unhelpful for the rest of the group, so we suggest you only run *Discipleship Explored* after running *Christianity Explored*.

This means you should be able to chat to the prison chaplain about bringing the group back for a further course. We suggest running *Discipleship Explored* immediately after *Christianity Explored*, or incorporating the participants from two successive *Christianity Explored* courses into one *Discipleship Explored* group. If you leave it too long between courses, some or all of the group will have been released, moved to other prisons, or simply be unproductive soil (Mark 4:1-20).

If this is the first *Discipleship Explored Prison Edition* course that you're involved in running, and you're not a prison chaplain, you'll need to approach the prison's Co-ordinating Chaplain for permission before planning anything else. (You may also have to speak to the Governor about this).

When you approach the chaplain, explain that:

- *Discipleship Explored Prison Edition* comes from the same team and organization as the *Christianity Explored Prison Edition* course. Explain that it's the follow-up course to *Christianity Explored*, and has a very similar format.
- The *Discipleship Explored* course has been in use for over ten years and the prison version has been developed over several years. The prison edition has been run as a pilot in many prisons including HMP Cardiff in Wales. All the pilots have been successful and produced excellent feedback.
- The course can run once a week for eight weeks, or for a whole week using eight sessions. Give a brief overview of the whole course (page 23) and the structure of a session (page 11).

If the chaplain is amenable to the idea, you should further explain that:

- Your leaders will be trained and that, if your leaders are paid prison staff, they will need to be allowed time to attend training.
- If the prison requires a chaplain or officer to sit in with you, even if they are not part of the team (ie: because of local prison policy), then that person must commit to attending every session of the course or covering every session with a rota.
- You need to be able to play a DVD on the course and would also be grateful if they could provide a flip-chart easel and paper, marker pens, ballpoint pens and sticky labels or post-it notes. You will also need a set of Bibles – all the same version (so that you can work by page number), preferably NIV 2011. (If use of a DVD is against local prison policy, this does not prevent you running the course – just don't use a DVD!)

You should also:

- Discuss any material you would need to bring in for the start of the course (eg: printouts of Bible studies and follow-up studies, the *Discipleship Explored* DVD, etc) and ask what the procedures are for bringing these in and storing them at the prison. (**Note:** the flip-chart and paper will stay at the prison. You cannot prepare the sheets at home and then bring them in, so you will need to allow time to write up the next set of sheets before each session.)

All your team need to know the security policies. This may involve attending a local security course (the chaplains will advise you of the procedure for your local prison). There is a generic security document in this manual (see page 183) which we have composed, but please don't think that this

Section title	What happens in this section
Check in	The group sits in a semi-circle and each person says briefly how they are feeling / how they are finding the course.
Recap	The group works together to fill in the recap sheet on the flip-chart.
Brainstorm on stickers	A question on the session's theme is given, and each member of the group writes their answer on a sticker, which they then stick on the flip-chart. There's no right or wrong answer at this point – it's just a way of discovering what each person thinks about a particular subject.
Poster	In groups of two or three, people write/draw posters which answer a question. This helps them reflect on the session theme more deeply. Groups then feed back to the whole group.
Brainstorm on flip-chart	A further brainstorm, this time with answers written directly onto the flip-chart. The question posed is not definitively answered at this point – it's simply intended to introduce a biblical, theological theme.
Key verse	A verse from Philippians that sums up the theme of the session.
Self-directed learning	Completed in groups of two or three. Questions on flip-chart paper are given out, and groups write their answers on their paper. The groups then return to the semi-circle and share their answers. Definitive answers are given by the leader.
Break	
Bible study	The group splits into small groups for a 15-minute Bible study from Philippians.
DVD	The <i>Discipleship Explored</i> DVD is shown.
DVD questions	The group are asked questions relating to the DVD episode.
Recap	The session is recapped. Questions from this session that have not yet been addressed are now answered by the leader.
Give out follow-up studies	Follow-up studies are given out (if you're running a once-a-week course). These cover various topics, drawn from outside Philippians, to encourage growth in Christian discipleship.
Check out	The group articulates how they're feeling and how they found the session.
Debrief leaders	The main leader debriefs the other leaders. How are they feeling? Are there any concerns about individuals? Were there any security breaches? Any action points? Anything you would do differently next time?

is exactly right for every establishment in the UK. Every prison is different.

WHERE SHOULD YOU MEET?

You may not have much choice! Explain that the room you use needs to be quiet, not a thoroughfare for other prisoners, and it must be able to accommodate your group, allowing for activities that involve the group splitting up and moving around. You also need to have access to a DVD player and tea/coffee facilities.

The course can be run on the wing of a prison; however we would not advise this until you are familiar with the material and have run it a few times. There are so many distractions on the wing that, if you don't know the material inside out, you will lose your train of thought easily. It may prove a distracting venue for the prisoners too.

SETTING UP YOUR VENUE

You will need a semi-circle of chairs, with a flip-chart at the front, and the DVD screen visible to all, with good audio. It helps to have a small table in the middle, for putting pens, stickers and papers on. You need enough space for people to be able to move around and work on the floor in small groups.

We suggest that you do not let prisoners use comfy chairs, unless the whole group can do so, or sit on the floor (except when they are working on the floor in small groups), as the atmosphere can easily become unhelpfully complacent. (We've learned that one the hard way!)

Make sure that your leaders know where all the exits are, where the alarm bells are situated, and that you know where the nearest telephone and member of staff are. Don't push yourselves into a corner; if someone has to sit in the corner of a room, make sure it's the prisoners and not the leaders. Don't put yourselves into situations that you can't quickly get out of. For this reason, don't make a complete circle of chairs – keep the front open for the flip-chart and for access.

Choosing and training leaders

If you have overall responsibility for running the course, you will need to choose, and arrange for the training of, leaders for the course. We recommend one leader per four prisoners. You should always have more than one leader on every session – remember that you are in a prison!

You may have a much bigger team available than this. If this is so, then use a rota and use different leaders on different courses. This will also give you a pool of back-up leaders if someone is ill, etc. Try to keep the leaders of a whole course stable – avoid swapping people in and out of the course, because they will not be familiar with the personal issues of each prisoner if they are not present at every session.

CHOOSING LEADERS

Leaders should be mature Christians, with at least one having prison ministry experience. They should be able to teach and care for participants, encourage discussion, and abide by security rules. Bear in mind that they may also have to have full security clearance from your local prison, which can take several months to achieve.

In selecting a leader, ask yourself:

- Is this person able to teach the Bible faithfully and clearly?
- Will he or she be able to deal with difficult questions from Philippians and on life in general?
- Will he or she be able to avoid getting diverted from the course material by questions from prisoners? (There are sections on answering difficult general questions from prisoners, and questions specifically from Philippians, on pages 191 and 185.)
- Will this person be able to promote discussion without dominating it, or going into “preaching” mode? (In a prison context, where academic ability is not generally high, the prisoners need to learn by self-discovery, not by

being given information. Leaders need to help (a lot!), but the group members need to find the answers themselves from the Bible, so that they remember them. Your leaders need to be able to help with that, without using material that is from outside the course, or outside Philippians. Remember, one of the aims of this course is to keep it simple and focus on a few verses to learn about what it means to live as a Christian.)

- Is this person someone who will welcome prisoners and make them feel cared for and safe, but will not allow their own security to become compromised in doing so? (Leaders need to be able show God’s love, without becoming unduly attached to individuals, or allowing individuals to become attached to them. Leaders who allow themselves to become emotionally vulnerable in front of prisoners may need to step down, temporarily or permanently.)
- Will this person be able to follow security rules, even if they don’t understand why they are in place?
- Is this person someone who will be committed to pray for this course – its participants and fellow leaders?

Make sure that in a male prison, your leaders include at least one man, and in a female prison, that your leaders include at least one woman.

TRAINING LEADERS

We strongly recommend that you, as the main course leader, train your whole team in using the *Discipleship Explored Prison Edition* course material. The training modules, starting on 17, will fully equip you to do this.

It may be helpful for you to sit in on an existing course at another prison, so that you can see how a session runs, why the course includes the material that it does and why each piece is important.

Training should take place before the course begins. Once a leader understands the reasoning behind *Discipleship Explored Prison Edition*, it becomes much easier for him or her to commit the time required and deliver the material effectively. As well as preparing leaders for the course, training together cements relationships within the team.

PRAYING – PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCENES

Consider having a separate team outside the prison who are praying for your ministry. Other local prison ministries may also be keen to pray for the course. Prayer support is incredibly important.

Ask people to pray that prisoners will come, and that those prisoners will start to apply what they learn about being a disciple of Jesus.

Ask for prayer for protection of your team – physically, mentally and spiritually.

Recruiting and advertising

The best way to advertise *Discipleship Explored* in a prison is to tell your current *Christianity Explored* group!

You should make it clear, though, that *Discipleship Explored* is intended for people who are Christians. The course, like the letter to the Philippians, is addressed to “God’s holy people in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:1).

In some ways, the trickiest part of the course is simply getting the prisoners to turn up! So we suggest that someone is made responsible for keeping an up-to-date list of the prisoners on your course, and their locations in the prison.

Every week, that person should inform the wing staff that these people are on a course. This person must also have access to the computer and the prisoner database, and so might not be part of your leadership team.

WAYS OF RECRUITING

- Keep a list of prisoners who have done *Christianity Explored* to remind you of people from previous courses who may be interested. (You will need to keep this list in the prison – do not take it home.)
- Advertise in a Sunday service the week before you are due to start.
- Follow this up by taking written invitations, with details of dates and venue, to the individuals on the wing in the week before you start.
- Downloadable posters and logos for *Discipleship Explored* are available at www.goodbook.co.uk – you can personalize them with your own course details.

1 Disciple-making in prisons

 *Note: This section is intended for every leader and will prepare you to lead group members through the course. We strongly encourage you to work through this section and meet with your fellow leaders to discuss it before Discipleship Explored Prison Edition begins.*

WHY RUN A DISCIPLESHIP COURSE IN PRISONS?

For many people, time in prison offers a rich opportunity for reflection and change. And there is no deeper, more lasting change than the one God brings about through his Holy Spirit as his word is taught.

But disciples – especially young disciples – also need fellowship with and encouragement from other Christians. In prison, there may be few opportunities for this. So *Discipleship Explored* provides a chance for Christians to strengthen each other as they learn of Christ together.

DISCIPLE-MAKING

We are called to *be* disciples and *make* disciples. Jesus commanded Christians to “go 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 I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

People learn about what it means to be a disciple, not just from the things we teach, but also from our behaviour as well. That’s why Paul tells Timothy to “set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity ... watch your life and doctrine closely” (1 Timothy 4:12, 16).

Read the following verses and then write down what it will mean for you to “set an example” during *Discipleship Explored*.

John 13:35

Romans 15:14

Ephesians 4:29

Ephesians 6:18

Hebrews 10:24

1 Peter 3:8-9

Pray that you will be able to put these verses into practice.

2 Introducing Philippians

Philippians is a letter written by Paul to a group of Christians living in the city of Philippi, a Roman colony in ancient Greece.

Paul was originally called Saul. As a devoted Jew, he hated the first Jewish Christians and put many of them in prison. But while travelling to Damascus, he was stopped by a bright light and heard Jesus Christ speaking to him (Acts 9). This experience changed Paul completely. He became a Christian and was sent by Jesus to be a witness to him.

Paul travelled around southern Europe and Asia, telling others about Jesus Christ. He organized the new disciples into churches, and wrote letters to them, teaching them and encouraging them to keep going. He was often persecuted himself, and was eventually executed by the Romans. Many of Paul's letters are now in the New Testament. The letter to the Philippians is one of them.

Paul and Timothy visited Philippi to tell people about Jesus (see Acts 16:11-40). They were forced to leave after a short time because the city rulers did not want them to cause any trouble. They left behind them a small group of new Christians. Paul wrote this letter to them from prison in Rome. He wanted to:

- Encourage the new Christians in Philippi.
- Help them keep going as Christians in difficult times.
- Remind them about the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Give them practical instructions on what it means to live as a follower of Christ. That is what "disciple" means – a learner, a follower.

Everything that Paul said to the Philippians was written from a prison, and can be lived out in a prison too.

The following section gives further background information on the book of Philippians. You will also find a map of the region around Philippi on 195.

WHO WROTE IT?

The apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Not only is Paul's writing style much in evidence, but the early church unanimously declared it to be his work.

WHERE WAS IT WRITTEN?

Philippians 1:13-14 tells us that Paul wrote the letter while in prison, most likely when he was under house arrest in Rome.

Acts 28:14-31 reveals some fascinating details about this period of Paul's life. He was allowed to live by himself in his own rented house, although with a soldier to guard him. He was also free to receive visitors, and able to preach and teach "with all boldness and without hindrance!"

WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?

The evidence suggests that Philippians was written around AD 61.

WHO WAS PAUL WRITING TO?

The city of Philippi in Greece was a successful Roman colony whose inhabitants prided themselves on being Roman citizens. Many Philippians made a point of speaking Latin, and even dressed like Romans.

WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?

Paul wanted to thank the Philippian Christians for the gift they had sent him, when they found out he had been detained in Rome.

But he does several other things too: he reports on his present circumstances; he encourages them

to stand firm and rejoice in the face of persecution; he urges them to be humble and united; and he warns them against certain dangerous people within their church (see Philippians 3).

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT THE LETTER?

Philippians gives a radical picture of what it means to be a Christian: self-humbling (2:1-4), single-minded (3:13-14), anxiety-free (4:6), and able to be content in all circumstances (4:13).

Unusually, Philippians contains no Old Testament quotations, perhaps because there was no synagogue in Philippi.

It is also the New Testament letter of joy: the word, in its various forms, occurs sixteen times in Philippians.

In order to familiarize yourself with Philippians, it will help to read the letter several times.