

GOSPEL SHAPED
OUTREACH

Leader's Guide



GOSPEL SHAPED

OUTREACH

Erik Raymond



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PREFACE

GROWING A GOSPEL SHAPED CHURCH

The Gospel Coalition is a group of pastors and churches in the Reformed heritage who delight in the truth and power of the gospel, and who want the gospel of Christ crucified and resurrected to lie at the center of all we cherish, preach and teach.

We want churches called into existence by the gospel to be shaped by the gospel in their everyday life.

Through our fellowship, conferences, and online and printed media, we have sought to encourage pastors and church leaders to calibrate their lives around what is of first importance—the gospel of Christ. In these resources, we want to provide those same pastors with the tools to excite and equip church members with this mindset.

In our foundation documents, we identified five areas that should mark the lives of believers in a local fellowship:

1. Empowered corporate worship
2. Evangelistic effectiveness
3. Counter-cultural community
4. The integration of faith and work
5. The doing of justice and mercy

We believe that a church utterly committed to winsome and theologically substantial expository preaching, and that lives out the gospel in these areas, will display its commitment to dynamic evangelism, apologetics, and church planting. These gospel-shaped churches will emphasize repentance, personal renewal, holiness, and the wonderful life of the church as the body of Christ. At the same time, there will be engagement with the social structures of ordinary people, and cultural engagement with art, business, scholarship and government. The church will be characterized by firm devotion to the truth on the one hand, and by transparent compassion on the other.

The Gospel Coalition believes in the priority of the local church, and that the local church is the best place to discuss these five ministry drivers and decide how to integrate them into life and mission. So, while being clear on the biblical principles, these resources give space to consider what a genuine expression of a gospel-shaped church looks like for you in the place where God has put you, and with the people he has gathered into fellowship with you.

Through formal teaching sessions, daily Bible devotionals, group Bible studies and the regular preaching ministry, it is our hope and prayer that congregations will grow into maturity, and so honor and glorify our great God and Savior.



Don Carson
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Carson".

Tim Keller
Vice President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Keller".



INTRODUCTION

Evangelicals, by definition, should believe in and practice evangelism. And yet many churches and Christians can lose sight of this primary goal for our life and work.

This is not an “evangelism course” like many others available. Often these courses will focus on the “how to” of evangelism, offering various techniques, programs and methods of outreach that individuals and churches can use. These can be incredibly helpful in giving us the confidence and skills to explain the good news to others.

But this course is different.

In the nine sessions in this curriculum, I have not sought to show you a particular way of explaining the gospel, but to lay strong biblical foundations for a broad and deep appreciation of the wonderful gospel of grace that we are called to understand, believe, rejoice in and proclaim to a waiting world.

As you work through the material, you will be able to share your own experiences, and benefit from the ideas and encouragement of your fellowship. You will also, no doubt, discover that you need more help and training in specific aspects of your witness for Christ in your community. This course will not be the last word on evangelism, for you or your church. But what I am aiming to do is to impress upon you, both as individuals and as a whole church, a deep conviction that God’s mission of salvation in the world is also your mission; and that he is inviting you into the privilege of praying and working to advance his kingdom among your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and community.

The Gospel Coalition identifies five hallmarks of a gospel-shaped church. One of those is evangelistic effectiveness, about which it says:

Because the gospel (unlike religious moralism) produces people who do not disdain those who disagree with them, a truly gospel-centered church should be filled with members who winsomely address people’s hopes

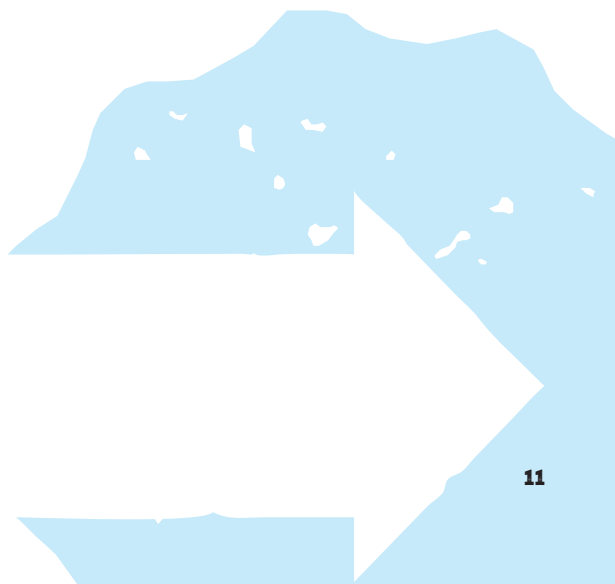
and aspirations with Christ and his saving work. We have a vision for a church that sees conversions of rich and poor, highly educated and less educated, men and women, old and young, married and single, and all races. We hope to draw highly secular and postmodern people, as well as reaching religious and traditional people. Because of the attractiveness of its community and the humility of its people, a gospel-centered church should find people in its midst who are exploring and trying to understand Christianity. It must welcome them in hundreds of ways. It will do little to make them “comfortable” but will do much to make its message understandable. In addition to all this, gospel-centered churches will have a bias toward church planting as one of the most effective means of evangelism there is.

It is my prayer that as you work through this curriculum, you and your church will become more and more the community and people that you are called to be; a fellowship that is effective at, and excited about, bringing the gospel to those around you.



Erik Raymond







**MAKING THE MOST OF
GOSPEL SHAPED
CHURCH**



WHAT GOSPEL SHAPED CHURCH WILL DO FOR YOU

God is in the business of changing people and changing churches. He always does that through his gospel.

Through the gospel he changed us from his enemies to his friends, and through the gospel he brought us into a new family to care for each other and to do his will in the world. The gospel brings life and creates churches.

But the gospel of Jesus, God's Son, our Savior and Lord, isn't merely what begins our Christian life and forms new churches. It is the pattern, and provides the impetus, for all that follows. So Paul wrote to the Colossian church:

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving (Colossians 2:6-7).

Just as you received ... so walk... In other words, the secret of growing as a Christian is to continue to reflect upon and build your life on the gospel of the lordship of Jesus Christ. And the secret of growing as a church is to let the gospel inform and energize every single aspect of a church's life, both in what you do and how you do it, from your sermons to young mothers' groups; from your budget decisions and your pastoral care to your buildings maintenance and church bulletins.

Letting the gospel shape a church requires the whole church to be shaped by the gospel. To be, and become, gospel shaped is not a task merely for the senior pastor, or the staff team, or the board of elders. It is something that happens as every member considers the way in which the gospel should continue to shape their walk, and the life of their church.

That is the conviction that lies behind this series of five resources from The Gospel Coalition. It will invite your church members to be part of the way in which you shape your church according to the unchanging gospel, in your particular culture and circumstances. It will excite and equip your whole church to be gospel shaped. It will envision you together, from senior church staff to your newest believer. It will enable you all to own the vision of a gospel-shaped church, striving to teach that gospel to one another and to reach your community with that gospel. As you continue to work out together the implications of the gospel that has saved us, you will be guided into Christian maturity in every area of your lives, both personal and corporate.

This resource is for all kinds of churches: large and small; urban and rural; new plants and long-established congregations; all denominations and none. It is for any congregation that has been given life by the gospel and wants to put the gospel at the center of its life.

You can use the five tracks in any order you like—and you can use as many or as few of them as you wish. If you think your church is lacking in one particular area, it will always be helpful to focus on that for a season. But it is our hope that you will plan to run all five parts of the curriculum with your church—perhaps over a 3- or 4-year time frame. Some tracks may be more like revision and confirmation that you are working well in those areas. Others will open up new areas of service and change that you need to reflect upon. But together they will help you grow into an organic maturity as you reflect on the implications of the gospel in every area of life.



HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS CURRICULUM

Because the gospel, as it is articulated in the pages of the Bible, should be the foundation of everything we do, this resource is designed to work best if a congregation gives itself over to exploring the themes together as a whole. That means shaping the whole of church life for a season around the theme. The overall aim is to get the DNA of the gospel into the DNA of your church life, structures, practices and people.

So it is vitally important that you involve as many people in your congregation as possible in the process, so that there is a sense that this is a journey that the whole church has embarked upon together. The more you immerse yourselves in this material, the more you will get from it. But equally, all churches are different, and so this material is flexible enough to fit any and every church program and structure—see page 24 for more details.

Here are some other suggestions for how to make the most of this material.

PREPARE

Work through the material in outline with your leadership team and decide which elements best fit where. Will you use the sermon suggestions, or develop a series of your own? Will you teach through the main sessions in Sunday School, or in midweek groups? Will you use the teaching DVD, or give your own talks?

Think about some of the likely pressure points this discussion will create in your congregation. How will you handle in a constructive way any differences of opinion that come out of this? Decide together how you will handle feedback. There will be many opportunities for congregation members to express their ideas and thoughts, and as you invite them to think about your church's life, they will have many suggestions. It will be overwhelming to have everyone emailing or calling the Senior Pastor; but it will be very frustrating if church members feel they

are not truly being listened to, and that nothing will really change. So organize a system of feedback from group-discussion leaders and Bible-study leaders; make clear which member of senior staff will collect that feedback; and schedule time as a staff team to listen to your members' thoughts, and pray about and consider them.

There is an online feedback form that could be distributed and used to round off the whole track with your congregation.

PROMOTE

Encourage your congregation to buy into the process by promoting it regularly and building anticipation. Show the trailer at all your church meetings and distribute your own customized version of the bulletin insert (download from www.gospelshapedchurch.org).

Embarking on this course together should be a big deal. Make sure your congregation knows what it might mean for them, and what an opportunity it represents in the life of your whole church; and make sure it sounds like an exciting adventure in faith.

Do involve the whole church. Younger children may not be able to grasp the implications of some things, but certainly those who teach and encourage children of 11 and upwards will be able to adapt the material and outlines here to something that is age appropriate.

PRAY

Pray as a leadership team that the Lord would lead you all into new, exciting ways of serving him.

Encourage the congregation to pray. There are plenty of prompts in the material for this to happen, but do pray at your regular meetings for the Lord's help and guidance as you study, think and discuss together. Building in regular prayer times will help your congregation move together as a fellowship. Prayer connects us to God, but it also connects us to each other, as we address our Father together. And our God "is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20-21) as his people ask him to enable them to grasp, and be shaped by, the love of Christ that is shown to us in his gospel.



FOUR WAYS TO MAKE (OR BREAK) THIS PROCESS

1. BE OPEN TO CHANGE AS A CHURCH

As churches that love the gospel, we should always be reforming to live more and more in line with that gospel. Change isn't always easy, and is often sacrificial; but it is exciting, and part of the way in which we obey our Lord. Approach this exploration of *Gospel Shaped Outreach* by encouraging your church to be willing to change where needed.

2. BE OPEN TO CHANGE YOURSELF

This curriculum will lead every member to think hard about how the gospel should shape, and in some ways re-shape, your church. You are giving them permission to suggest making changes. As a leader, giving such permission is both exciting and intimidating. It will *make* your course if you enter it as a leadership excited to see how your church may change and how you may be challenged. It will *break* it if you approach it hoping or expecting that your members will simply agree in every way with what you have already decided.

3. DISCUSS GRACIOUSLY

Keep talking about grace and community. Church is about serving others and giving up "my" own wants, not about meeting "my" own social preferences and musical tastes. Encourage your membership to pursue discussions that are positive, open and non-judgmental, and to be able to disagree lovingly and consider other's feelings before their own, rather than seeking always to "win." Model gospel grace in the way you talk about the gospel of grace.

4. REMEMBER WHO IS IN CHARGE

Jesus Christ is Lord of your church—not the leadership, the elders or the membership. So this whole process needs to be bathed in a prayerful sense of commitment to follow him, and to depend on his strength and guidance for any change his Spirit is prompting. Keep reminding your church that this process is not about becoming the church they want, but the one your Lord wants.



HOW TO USE
GOSPEL SHAPED
OUTREACH

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HOW TO USE GOSPEL SHAPED OUTREACH

Gospel Shaped Outreach is designed to be a flexible resource to fit a wide variety of church settings. The **Main Teaching Session** is the core of the curriculum—the other components grow out of this. The more elements you use, the greater the benefit will be to your church.

The elements of this course are:

- **MAIN TEACHING SESSION** with DVD or talk, and discussion (core)
- **PERSONAL DEVOTIONALS** (recommended)
- **GROUP BIBLE STUDY** (recommended)
- **PERSONAL JOURNAL** (optional)
- **SERMON SERIES** (suggested passages given)

Each church member will need a copy of the *Gospel Shaped Outreach Handbook*. This contains everything they need to take part in the course, including the discussion questions for the **Main Teaching Session**, **Personal Devotionals**, and the **Group Bible Study**. There's also space to make notes during the sermon, and a **Personal Journal** to keep a record of the things they have been learning.

Each person who will be leading a group discussion, either in the **Main Teaching Session** or the **Group Bible Study**, will need a copy of the *Gospel Shaped Outreach Leader's Guide*. This includes leader's notes to help them guide a small group through the discussion or Bible-study questions, and other resources to give more background and detail. In the Leader's Guide, all the instructions, questions, comments, prayer points etc. that also appear in the Handbook are in **bold text**.



Further copies of the *Handbook* and *Leader's Guide* are available from
WWW.GOSPELSHAPEDCHURCH.ORG/OUTREACH

A FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM

Gospel Shaped Outreach is designed to be a flexible resource. You may be able to give your whole church over to working through it. If so, a typical week might look like this:

SUNDAY

- Adult Sunday school: **Main Teaching Session** using DVD or live talk (talk outline given in *Leader's Guide*)
- Morning service: **Sermon** based on main theme (suggested Bible passages given in the *Leader's Guide*)

MIDWEEK

- Small groups work through the **Group Bible Study**

CHURCH MEMBERS

- Use the **Personal Devotionals** from Monday to Saturday
- Use the **Personal Journal** to record their thoughts, questions and ideas about things they've been learning throughout the week

Or, if you choose to use the curriculum on a midweek basis, it may be like this:

MIDWEEK

- Small groups work through the **Main Teaching Session** using the DVD

CHURCH MEMBERS

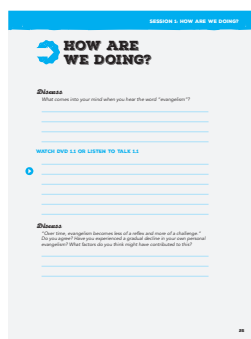
- Use the **Personal Devotionals** from Monday to Saturday
- Use the **Personal Journal** to record their thoughts, questions and ideas about things they've been learning throughout the week

Or you can use the components in any other way that suits your church practice.

HOW TO USE EACH ELEMENT

These sample pages from the ***Gospel Shaped Outreach Handbook*** show the different elements of the curriculum.

All of the material in this curriculum quotes from and is based on the ESV Bible.



MAIN TEACHING SESSION

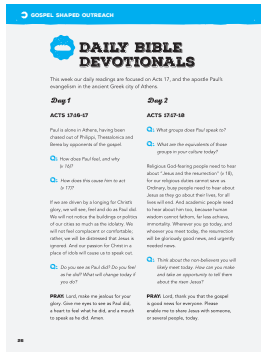
- 60 minutes
- Choose between DVD or live talk
- Discussion questions to help group members discuss the DVD/talk and apply it to their own lives and their church
- Guidance for answering the questions is given in the ***Leader's Guide***
- Suggestions for praying together

This is the core of the curriculum. It can be run using the ***Gospel Shaped Outreach DVD***, or by giving a live talk. A summary of the talk is included in the ***Leader's Guide*** (see page 34 for an example). A full editable script can also be downloaded from www.gospelshapedchurch.org/outreach/talks.

In each session, the DVD/talk is split into either two or three sections, each followed by some discussion questions. At the end of the session there are suggestions to help the group pray specifically for each other.

The discussion questions are designed to help church members unpack the teaching they have heard and apply it to their own lives and to the church as a whole. There are not necessarily right and wrong answers to some of the questions, as this will often depend on the context of your own church. Let group members discuss these openly, and apply them to their own situation.

Keep the discussion groups the same each week if possible, with the same leader (who will need a copy of this ***Leader's Guide***) for each group, so that relationships are deepened and the discussions can build on those of previous sessions.



PERSONAL DEVOTIONALS

- Six devotionals with each session
- Designed to be started the day after the main teaching session
- Linked with the theme for each teaching session, but based on different Bible passages
- Help church members dig more deeply into the theme on a daily basis

Each session is followed by six personal devotionals that build on the main theme. They are ideal for church members to use between sessions. For example, if you have the main teaching session on a Sunday, church members can then use the devotionals from Monday to Saturday.

These short devotionals can be used in addition to any regular personal Bible study being done by church members. They would also form a useful introduction for anyone trying out personal Bible reading for the first time.

As well as being in the group member's *Handbook*, the personal devotionals are available for a small fee on the Explore Bible Devotional app. This can be downloaded from the iTunes App Store or Google Play (search for "Explore Bible Devotional"). Select "Gospel Shaped Outreach" from the app's download menu.



PERSONAL JOURNAL

- A useful place for church members to note down what they have been learning throughout the week, and any questions they may have.

SERMON NOTES

- If the Sunday sermon series is running as part of *Gospel Shaped Outreach*, this is a helpful place to make notes.



GROUP BIBLE STUDY

- 40 – 50 minutes
- An ideal way for small groups to build on what they have been learning in the main teaching
- Uses a different Bible passage from the DVD/talk
- Suggested answers to the questions are given in the **Leader's Guide**

This study is ideal for a home group or other group to work through together. It builds on the theme covered by the main teaching session, but is based on a different Bible passage. You can see the passages and themes listed in the grid on pages 28-29.

If possible, give 40 – 50 minutes for the Bible study. However, it can be covered in 30 minutes if necessary, and if you keep a close eye on time. If your church is not using the Bible studies as part of a regular group, they would also be suitable for individuals to do on their own or in a pair if they want to do some further study on the themes being looked at in the course.

SERMON SUGGESTIONS

The **Leader's Guide** gives a choice of three sermon suggestions to tie in with each session:

- A passage that is used in the main teaching session (DVD or live talk).
- The Bible reading that is being studied in the Group Bible Study that week.
- A third passage that is not being used elsewhere, but that picks up on the same themes. This is the passage that is listed in the overview grid on pages 28-29.

FURTHER READING

At the end of each session in the **Leader's Guide** you will find a page of suggestions for further reading. This gives ideas for books, articles, blog posts, videos, etc. that relate to the session, together with some quotes that you might use in sermons, discussion groups and conversations. Some of these may be helpful in your preparation, as well as helping any group members who want to think more deeply about the topic they've been discussing.

CURRICULUM OUTLINE AT A GLANCE

SESSION	MAIN TEACHING (DVD/TALK)	PERSONAL DEVOTIONS	GROUP BIBLE STUDY	SERMON*
1 How are we doing?	The priority of outreach for both the local church and individual Christians. Various passages including Romans 10:13-15 and Ephesians 6:18-20 .	Looking at Paul's trip to Athens in Acts 17 , seeing what we can learn about our evangelism from the apostle's example.	Acts 1:1-11 Helping group members see the priority of outreach clearly, and assess where they are at in their own thinking, and in the thinking of the whole church.	ROM 1:13-17
2 Who is Jesus?	Unpacking core truths about Jesus Christ. Various passages including Luke 9:22 , 1 Peter 3:18 , John 1:3 and Matthew 28:18-20 .	Looking into aspects of Jesus' identity that were highlighted in the main teaching session—taken from the Gospel of Matthew .	Colossians 1:15-23 Reinforcing core truths about Christ that show how amazing the Lord Jesus really is—and what a privilege it is that we get to tell the world about him.	REV 1:9-19
3 Who are we?	Establishing our identity as missionaries. Based on Matthew 28:18-20 and John 14:15; 20:21 .	1 Peter 2 , showing us the church's identity and how declaring God's excellence to the world is at the heart of God's purpose for his church.	Acts 2:42-47; 4:18-31 We are part of a family on a mission. Our lives, both as individuals and as a group, should be focused on that mission.	2 KINGS 7:3-16
4 Who are we reaching?	How should we view unbelievers? Various passages including Matthew 9:35-38 .	The compassion of the Lord Jesus, seen in how he interacted with a variety of hungry, hurting people in Mark , Luke and John .	Ephesians 2:1-10 How does God see unbelievers? How can we more constructively communicate with them the liberating gospel of grace?	GEN 3:1-24
5 What is the gospel plan?	The gospel was God's plan from the very beginning. Based on Genesis 3,11 and 12 , Revelation 5 and Matthew 28 .	Episodes from the lives of Abraham , Moses , Naaman , David and Esther , showing how God pointed forward to the life, death, resurrection and rule of his Son, Jesus.	Acts 16:11-34 Helping group members to be clear about God's part and our part in evangelism, and to see how God's gospel is for everyone.	ACTS 13:13-43

SESSION	MAIN TEACHING (DVD/TALK)	PERSONAL DEVOTIONS	GROUP BIBLE STUDY	SERMON*
6 How should we pray?	Encouraging us to pray for workers, opportunities, boldness, clarity and blessing. Based on Matthew 9:35-38, Colossians 4:2-4 and Ephesians 6:18-20 .	Colossians 4:2-6 , seeing how Paul emphasizes the need for our prayers, our words and our lifestyles each to be committed to sharing the gospel.	1 Timothy 2:1-7 When we pray for our evangelism, we are praying within the will of God; we are asking him to do the very thing he has told and shown us he wants to do in the world.	MATT 6:7-15
7 What do we say?	Our message must be focused on speaking about Jesus. Based on 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 .	Six instances of communicating the gospel in the Gospels and the book of Acts .	Acts 10:1-3; 34-44 How to express essential gospel truths in ways that are relevant and understandable in our culture.	ROM 3:21-26
8 How do we speak?	How do we talk with others about the gospel? How can we live in ways that grow our opportunities for reaching out to others? 1 Corinthians 3:6-7	1 Peter 3:14-18 , focusing on the context for our witnessing in a world that rejects Christ; and the heart, words and manner of the gospel witness.	John 4:1-30 Looking at one way the Lord Jesus modeled evangelism, and thinking about specific ways we can live as "people on mission."	1 THESS 2:2-12
9 How do we keep going?	How can we ensure that evangelism remains at the heart of church life? Various passages including 1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 4:11-15 and Matthew 28:19-20 .	In Matthew 9:35 – 10:8 , we see Jesus' compassion for the lost; his prayer for workers; his call to his people to go and proclaim his kingdom; and his training for the mission field.	2 Corinthians 5:11-20 Tying together everything we've been thinking about by looking at the motivation for evangelism, and what a privilege it is to be part of God's mission in the world.	2 COR 4:1-18

* **NOTE:** The *Leader's Guide* gives three sermon suggestions to tie in with each session. The first picks up a passage from the Main Teaching Session; the second uses the passage from the Group Bible Study; and the third is a new passage, linked with the theme but not used elsewhere in the session. This third passage is the one listed here.



DOWNLOADS

In addition to the material in this *Leader's Guide*, there are a number of extra downloadable resources and enhancements. You will find all of them listed under the Outreach track at www.gospelshapedchurch.org and on The Good Book Company's website: www.thegoodbook.com.

- **DIGITAL DOWNLOAD OF DVD MATERIAL.** If you have already bought a DVD as part of the *Leader's Kit*, you will have access to a single HD download of the material using the code on the download card. If you want to download additional digital copies, in SD or HD, these can be purchased from The Good Book Company website: www.thegoodbook.com/gsc.
- **DVD TRAILERS.** Trailers and promotional pieces for the series as a whole and for the individual tracks can be downloaded for free. Use these trailers to excite your church about being involved in *Gospel Shaped Church*.
- **TALK OUTLINES.** We're conscious that for some churches and situations, it may be better to deliver your own talk for the main session so that it can be tailored specifically to your people and context. You can download the talk transcript as both a PDF and as an editable Word document.
- **FEEDBACK FORMS.** Because *Gospel Shaped Church* is designed as a whole-church exploration, it's important that you think through carefully how you will handle suggestions and feedback. There's some guidance for that on pages 17-18. We've provided a downloadable feedback form that you can use as part of the way in which you round off your time using the resource. Simply print it and distribute it to your church membership to gather their thoughts and ideas, and to get a sense of the issues you may want to focus on for the future. In addition, there are also fully editable versions of this feedback form so that you can create your own customized sheet that works effectively for the way in which you have used this material, and which suits your church membership. Alternatively, you could use the questions to create your own online feedback form with Google Forms or some other software, to make collecting and collating information easier.

- **RESOURCE LIST.** For each session in this *Leader's Guide* we have included a list of resources that will help you in your preparation for sermons, discussions, Bible studies and other conversations. On the *Gospel Shaped Church* website, you will find an up-to-date list of resources, plus a shorter downloadable list that you might consider giving to church members to supplement their own reading and thinking.
- **BULLETIN TEMPLATES.** Enclosed with the *Leader's Kit* is a sample of a bulletin-insert design to promote the Outreach track to your church. You can download a printable PDF of the design from the *Gospel Shaped Church* website to add your own details, and to print and distribute to your congregation.
- **OTHER PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL.** Editable powerpoint slides and other promotional material to use.



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