



# Leading our Gospel Gatherings

*To help people  
'taste and see that the Lord is good'*

*Workshop #2  
29 March 2025*

TrainingWORKS



Leaders'  
Training



## Session 2 | Saturday 29 March

# *Sift, Fold, Stir: Helping people to Taste and see God's goodness*

Since we last met, what effective or ineffective gathering leading have you experienced?

**1. Gathering as Anglicans**

**2. Opening, Closing and Transitions**

**3. How do we keep getting better together?**

- Resources
- Do One Thing
- Keep repeating it for the rest of the year
- Tell someone and ask for feedback

# What makes for effective gathering leading?

The **Church Gathering Leader** is the person responsible for leading a (Sunday) church gathering (or 'service').

The important role of the Gathering Leader is to set the appropriate tone and to help those present to engage with what is being taught from the Bible.

We want Jesus to be honoured, valued, and thanked in the gathering. Your role therefore, is **to point people to Jesus**.

You will need to think through some key questions...

- What does "good" like?
- How will I do this for the start, middle and end of the gathering?

## If you remember nothing else...

1. It's about \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_

2. You need to \_\_\_\_\_

3. Cut the \_\_\_\_\_

# 7 Tips for Gathering Leading

1. **Pray.** Please make sure you talk to God as you prepare for this role.
2. **Be prepared.** Set the running plan or order early (or by the deadline) and get it to those who will be playing a role in the gathering – this helps everyone to prepare well and keeps everyone on the same page.
  - Read and be aware of the Bible passage that is to be preached on.
  - From the preacher, be aware of the “big idea” or major theme that is being preached on.
  - Be aware of the themes (and if possible, the words) of the songs for the gathering.
3. Let your **personality** shine through. Be you, be real, be creative. Let it be known that you are excited to be there.
4. Throughout use the term ‘**Gathering**’ (rather than 'Service') as Christians are called *to gather*. Church is not a service put on for the sake of those who come. Church is a gathering of believers who meet around the Word of God.

**5.** Put effort and thought into **introductory and linking sentences** which help connect the different elements of the gathering, that is...

- i. Drawing Together
- ii. Hearing the Word
- iii. Responding to the Word
- iv. Sending out to serve

**6. Watch the time.** Start on time. Manage the time even if it means shortening or cutting things (apart from the Bible reading and Preaching) in order to finish on or before the scheduled time.

**7. Be mindful of the outsider** (visitor or unbeliever) – acknowledge and welcome them to reinforce their legitimate place in the gathering, (but DO NOT point them out or draw attention to them!) This indirectly helps the committed members of your church to know this is a place where visitors are welcome. Remove insider jokes. Try to remove or explain any jargon. Use first and last names.

That said, a Church gathering is the meeting place for a church family, so there are necessary things members will need to talk about so don't overdo the 'seeker sensitive' emphasis even though we want outsiders to join us in what we do.

In summary, a good principle to bear in mind is: **Make your first words and your last words in the gathering to be about God.**

# Putting it Together

## Pre-Gathering Prayer

As one of the purposes of a church gathering is to talk to people about God, it is helpful to first talk to God about people! Therefore, it is important for you to **lead all who are to be involved in the gathering in prayer** prior to the scheduled start time.

## The Welcome

The 'welcome' should aim to **orientate people to what will follow**. It can be after a song (or two), or it can be the formal start of the gathering.

There are a few different ways to welcome... (try to avoid reading your welcoming comments)

1. The Self intro (e.g. Welcome, I am...)
2. The Vertical intro (e.g. a verse or prayer)
3. The Orientation intro (e.g. why we gather and what the gathering will look like, what people might need)
4. The Expectation intro (e.g. what to expect, a teaser, a question - especially around the theme of the Bible passage/sermon)

**Let people know where things are**, for example, toilets, cry room, pick up a Bible, any handouts that might be necessary.

# Putting it Together

## During the Gathering

Be aware of the “vibe” throughout the gathering and if and when a brief reflective comment or pause or prayer might be helpful.

Be aware of practical steps you can take to **link the parts of the gathering together** which highlight themes and point people to Jesus.

## The Close

It is helpful to capture a personal aspect of the gathering in the way that you close. This can look like...

1. Pray in response to what has been said
2. Refer (briefly) to the Bible passage or a point made in the sermon
3. Provide a question for people to discuss over morning tea/supper
4. Suggest an application for people to adopt in the next couple of days
5. Encourage people to talk to someone they don't know
6. Mention the passage for the following week at Church

Your conclusion does not need to be heavy (there is no need to re-preach the sermon), or a profound statement. **Keep it short and simple** (e.g. after a big night, ‘It’s now Supper time’ can be helpful).

# Putting it Together

## Front of House - Other important stuff to know!

As the Gathering Leader you are responsible to ensure that the 'front of house' elements are in place – that is anything that occurs from the platform (or on the screen).

Please **be present at least half an hour before** the gathering is scheduled to start to check that all is in place. This should include:

- the lectern is where you want it (it does not need to be in the centre)
- your microphone works (and suits your purpose – often there are microphone choices: headset mic, remote handheld mic, or lectern mic) – and that you have the microphones you need for others (i.e. for an interview, Bible readers etc.)
- Check are Bible Reader/s, Prayer/s, Interviewee/s, Musicians etc. ready?
- Check the visuals to be used in the Gathering (that they are what you expect and in the order you want them)
- Check the space in which you are meeting. Is it “welcoming”, neat, tidy, and free of clutter, with no rubbish lying around? Are the lights on? Fans? Air-conditioning? Heating? Cooling? Is the cry room/creche neat and tidy? Are the toilets welcoming?



# Gathering as Anglicans

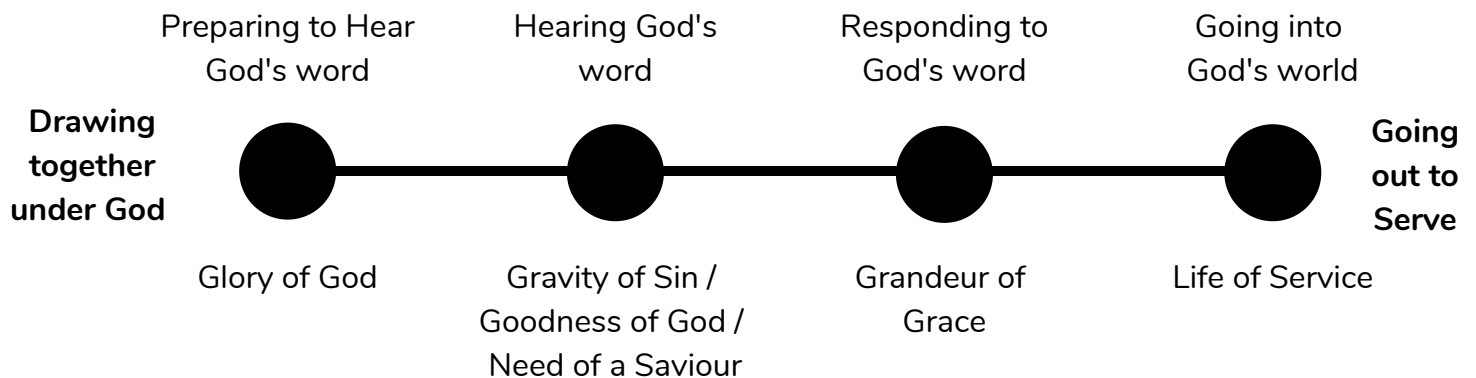
## Principles from the Book of Common Prayer

- **Ceremonies Should Serve a Purpose**
  - Traditions and ceremonies should enhance understanding and edification, not obscure the gospel.
  - They should help people remember their duty to God and promote godly discipline.
- **Avoid Superstition and Empty Rituals**
  - Some traditions may begin with good intent but can become superstitious or burdensome over time.
  - Leaders should be willing to remove practices that mislead or burden people's consciences.
- **Order and Discipline Are Necessary**
  - Church gatherings require some structure to maintain order and avoid chaos.
  - A balance is needed between avoiding excessive ritual and ensuring services are conducted in a seemly and edifying manner.
- **Guard Against Legalism and Innovation for Its Own Sake**
  - The gospel is not a ceremonial law; Christian worship should reflect the freedom of the Spirit, not bondage to rigid rituals.
  - Avoid both extreme traditionalism (clinging to ceremonies for their own sake) and constant innovation (rejecting traditions simply because they are old).
- **Ceremonies Should Be Understandable**
  - Church practices should not be obscure or confusing; they should clearly point to Christ and the gospel.
  - Leaders should ensure that all elements of a service—prayers, readings, and sacraments—are accessible and meaningful to the congregation.
- **Adaptation for the Sake of the Gospel**
  - Churches should remove ceremonies that become stumbling blocks but retain those that promote reverence and faithfulness.
  - Different church communities may adopt different practices as long as they serve God's glory and do not lead people into error or superstition.
- **Church Leaders Must Act with Authority and Wisdom**
  - No individual should arbitrarily introduce or remove church practices without proper authority.
  - Changes should be made thoughtfully, with the goal of preserving unity and helping people grow in godliness.

# GOSPEL GATHERINGS

## How-To-Guide

A Gospel Gathering **PREPARES** us to **HEAR** God's Word, **RESPOND** to it, and sends us to **GO** into God's World.



A Gospel Gathering takes us from the **GLORY OF GOD** through the **GRAVITY OF SIN** to the **GRANDEUR OF GRACE** and a **LIFE OF SERVICE**

Rather than just asking 'where does this element go?', the Gospel Gatherings Framework shows how each practice can point us to the glory of God, gravity of sin, grandeur of grace, and help us prepare, hear and respond to the word of God.

When planning a church gathering we must ask of everything we are doing - **is this preparing us to hear God's word, hearing God's word, responding to God's word, or going into his world?**

Everything in the gathering must be done as preparing to hear God's word, hearing God's word, or responding to God's word. It places God's word at the centre, but also ensures proper preparation and response to God's word.

Each gospel practice contributes to the overall symphony. As a gathering leader you are a songwriter and conductor, putting together a gathering with rhythm that leads people through the gospel and interaction with and response to God's word, and then guiding people through that gathering.

- **We prepare to hear God's word** as we **draw together** under **God** and his **Glory**
- **We hear God's word** - being challenged by the **gravity of sin** and **goodness of God**
- **We respond to God's Word** and lead people to the throne of **Grace**
- **We go into God's word** as we live and serve for him

# Foundations

## Which part of the WORD are we hearing?

Passage 1:	
Passage 2:	
Big Idea:	

**Is the preacher clearly and simply explaining the gospel? YES / NO (circle one)**  
*If no, consider where you will include a 30 second clear and simple gospel presentation.*

## How do I want people to respond to God's Word?

*I want people to...*

*One way I can do this is...*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confession + Assurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Creed/Statement of Faith       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call and Response      | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singing                | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet Reflection               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Announcement of upcoming event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lord's Supper          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other / Creative Response      |

## Which Gospel Practice am I explaining in 30 seconds this week?

*Each week briefly explain one practice that happens in church*

- |  |                                  |                                    |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacrament |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer        | <input type="checkbox"/> Church  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other     |

**Are there any other segments (e.g mission profile) that need to be included? YES/NO**  
*If yes, consider whether it is 'drawing together under God' or 'responding to his word'*

# Prepare

The congregation comes to church with a variety of emotions from the depths of despair to the height of delight. Starting meetings with the **Glory of God** provides a deep understanding of the wonder of God's character and is the **only way** for all of the congregation to interpret the varying emotions they bring to church. **Focusing on God's Glory draws the whole congregation together as one church before God.**

## PREPARING to hear God's Word

**How am I drawing the whole congregation together as one church under God by showing them his GLORY?** (Tick which practices you will include)

☐ Greeting/Introduction

☐ Sacrament

☐ Singing

☐ Prayer

☐ Confession + Assurance

☐ Say Church Aims

☐ Announcement

☐ Creed/Statement of Faith

☐ Interview/Testimony

☐ Bible Verse / Psalm

☐ Kids Spot

☐ Other

*Write your plan for how you will integrate these practices*

☐ **A clear gospel explanation was included** *this box should be ticked ONCE per document*

☐ **A gospel practice was explained in 30 seconds** *this box should be ticked ONCE per document*

**Checkpoint: Have I pointed to God's Glory?**

# Hear

## HEARING God's Word

**How am I going to help people HEAR God's Word?**

(Tick which practices you will include)

- |  |   |                                  |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading       | <input type="checkbox"/> Kids Spot                | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sermon              | <input type="checkbox"/> Confession + Assurance   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interview/Testimony | <input type="checkbox"/> Creed/Statement of Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Other   |

*The Sermon and Bible Reading are the CORE of this section, but consider whether to include another aspect - especially if a younger gathering struggles with two Bible Readings straight into the Sermon followed by Formal Prayer. If there is an Old Testament reading that is not explained in the sermon, can you respond to that reading - and give it a clearer place in the gathering - by singing in response afterwards? I.e, if it is an Old Testament judgment passage, link it to a song afterwards about God's holiness as righteous judge.*

- ☐ A clear gospel explanation was included
- ☐ A gospel practice was explained in 30 seconds

**Checkpoint: Have I been challenged by the WORD and applied it to myself?**

# Respond

The framework reminds us to conclude on **grace**. Rather than simply stirring people to try harder we are intentionally **leading people each week to the throne of Grace**. If the sermon doesn't land there then the gathering leader should consider how to get there with song/s and prayer. We never want to end with the idea of people having to try really hard to please God.

## RESPONDING to God's Word

How am I creating space to **humbly respond to God's word** and leading people to the **throne of Grace**? (Tick which practices you will include)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call and Response   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacrament                | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer              | <input type="checkbox"/> Confession + Assurance   | <input type="checkbox"/> Thanksgiving        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Announcement        | <input type="checkbox"/> Creed/Statement of Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview/Testimony |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Verse / Psalm | <input type="checkbox"/> Group Discussion         | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet Reflection    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other               |   |  |

*Songs can be one form of response, and can be used in combination with another form of reflection. I.e., Sermon > Song that responds and allows people to move around > Prayer, Interview, etc*

- ☐ A clear gospel explanation was included
- ☐ A gospel practice was explained in 30 seconds

**Checkpoint: Have I led people to the throne of Grace? Have I given them time to respond?**

# Go

Having drawn together under God and been reminded of his glory and grace, we now ask, how then shall we live? How are we as individuals and as a congregation **going to serve God**, each other, and the world this week? How are you, as the gathering leader, going to **send people out**?

## GOING into God's World

How am I going to **SEND** people into God's World?  
(Tick which practices you will include)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Re-read key verse   | <input type="checkbox"/> Re-state main point       | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer              | <input type="checkbox"/> Give a challenge/question | <input type="checkbox"/> Thanksgiving         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Announcement        | <input type="checkbox"/> Creed/Statement of Faith  | <input type="checkbox"/> Blessing/Benediction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interview/Testimony | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                     |   |

*Please note: Sending out is more than saying 'thanks for coming' or 'enjoy morning tea'. You can ask people to stay around for morning tea or dinner, but then follow it with something stronger like a blessing.*

- ☐ A clear gospel explanation was included
- ☐ A gospel practice was explained in 30 seconds

**Checkpoint: Have I sent people to live in a continuing response to God's word?**

# Songs

Where do the songs fit into the gathering?				
	God's Glory / Drawing Together / Preparing to Hear	Hearing God's Word	Responding to Sermon / Rejoicing in Grace	Sending Out / Living as a Christian
Song 1				
Song 2				
Song 3				
Song 4				
Song 5				
Song 6				