

## Cell training

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## **CELL TRAINING MANUAL – Fuller Version**

**Welcome to the fuller version of the ALOVE Cell Training Manual, written by Adam Bonner – Divisional Youth Officer for ALOVE London South East.**

**It includes some ‘extra’ sections that cover community life, pastoral issues and caring for new Christians. It also includes some ideas for worship, prayer, icebreakers and mission.**



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### A. Youth Cell - An Introduction

Welcome to the ALOVE youth cell training manual.

Youth cell is all about releasing and equipping young people to: be church; journey together with God; and get active in worship, discipleship, mission and social action.

Cell groups echo the model of Jesus and the early Church. Jesus didn't spend time building a religious institution, but invested in community – calling and training disciples. It was these disciples who founded the Church. Sharing their time and lives with Jesus and learning from him was enough to change the world.

This is the heart of discipleship within ALOVE; that through cell community we might kindle in each other a Christ-like character and empower one another to build the church.

If you are starting a youth cell group, want to train cell leaders, or just want to find out more about them, this manual is for you. It's jam-packed with advice, guidelines, ideas and resources to help you move forward.

To get the most out of it, try and meet up with someone to discuss the material and bounce ideas around. Take your time, go through it prayerfully, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you begin to develop your cell groups.



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## B. About Cell

### B1. Cell: What's it all about?

*1 Corinthians 12:27 says, 'you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.'*

The idea behind cell groups is that they should work within the church like cells do in a human body.

Human cells are unique, function together, keep the body healthy and enable it to grow as they multiply.

Similarly, a church cell group, as part of the body of Christ, is a 'basic building-block' of church. It's an environment in which each member fulfils their role, and works together in building up and multiplying the church. We cannot function in isolation.

### B2. Cell Basics

Cell is about living in a community of people that explore seriously how it looks and feels to have a love for God, a love for each other and a love for the world. There are some 'basics' or essential components for cell to function properly.

#### A successful cell group ensures that:

1. **Jesus is at the centre.** Our expectation is that we will encounter Jesus in our cell groups, so we need to ensure we create 'space' to engage with him through words, actions, silence, relationships (to name but a few).
2. **It's a community thing.** God doesn't intend us to be lone-ranger Christians. He gives us people to share the journey with. Cell is the place to be open and honest and have fun. It's also a place to involve others.
3. **Participation is the name of the game.** In cell life, each member is encouraged to discover and use their God-given gifts. It's all about changing the well known church "80-20" rule, which explains that in most churches, 80% of the work and ministry is done by 20% of leaders.
4. **Cell looks outwards:** Cell is more than having a good time together. It's designed to keep an eye and heart open for those not in the group, through social action and evangelism.
5. **It's about lifestyle.** Cell can be a safe place to keep each other accountable, so we can support one another in 'walking the walk'.



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## B3. Cell Vision and Mission

When forming a new cell group, the first thing to do is establish your vision and mission or focus. Your vision and mission are the things that inspire and fuel all you do as a group. At the outset write a mission statement to express it and involve all group members in this process so that everyone 'owns' the vision.

You might decide your cell will have a specific focus. e.g. campaigning about an issue, engaging with the local skateboarding community or reaching out to friends at school. You may also decide to give your cell a name that reflects the mission.

Discussion:

1. Have you been in a small group where the purpose was unclear? How did that feel?
2. Have you thought about writing a mission statement? If you need to get the ball rolling, perhaps you could express some of the cell 'basics' in your own words?



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### **B4. Cell and the ALOVE Essentials**

Cells are an excellent place in which to pursue the ALOVE essentials of worship, discipleship, mission and social action. These essentials are integral to the Christian faith.

#### **Cell as Worship**

Coming together in cell is an act of worship. As we spend time with each other, tell stories and celebrate what God's doing, it gives glory to him. Cell fuels our daily living love for God and enables us to expand our worship in all sorts of creative ways.

#### **Cell as discipleship**

A key aim of cell is for members to support one another in their discipleship. As learners and followers of Christ, we can share our experiences and encourage each other to journey forward.

#### **Cell as mission**

ALOVE's take on mission, is that it's all about pointing out what God is already doing in people's lives. If we believe that Jesus is a life-changing person to know, and that he's involved in the world, sharing it with other people is an exciting mission to be part of.

Cell is therefore an amazing way to engage with new people and help them learn more about the amazing story of Jesus and what he's done for them.

#### **Cell as social action**

Disciples get involved in changing the world. As salt and light, we're called to make a difference. Social action is a vital part of The Salvation Army's DNA. Through cell, we learn more about key issues of our world and join together in prayer and campaigning. Recent issues raised by ALOVE have included the concerns over the Draft Gambling Bill and the subject human trafficking. The organisation SPEAK also creates resources for people to campaign and pray for global justice, which can be explored in a small group context.



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## C. Leading and Supporting Cell

There are different roles and responsibilities in both running a cell group and supporting a youth cell programme and strategy.

### C1. The Role of the Cell Leader

The whole aim of youth cells is to **empower and release young people** to reach their peers and become **true disciples** of Jesus Christ.

The role of the cell leader (and assistant leader) is therefore really important in identifying and releasing the different gifts expressed within the cell, and also supporting new leaders to lead new groups as cells multiply.

Here are some qualities that are important in the role of cell leadership:

- **Be an example in Christian lifestyle – 1 Tim. 4: 12>** The cell leader 'sets the tone' for conduct and behaviour within the youth cell. People, especially young people, won't be conned by Christians who talk a good talk but don't live the life. You need to be open, transparent and vulnerable in your relationships with others.
- **Have a willingness to learn – 2 Tim. 2: 14-26>** Be open to take advice, to learn from others and, at times, to be corrected. We will probably never get to a place where we have everything sown up so it's important to remain teachable.
- **Have a servant attitude – Phil. 2: 1-11>** Leaders are servants of those they are leading. Your focus should be to serve, help people grow and think more highly of others than of ourselves.
- **Be able to gather others – Acts 6: 3>** Peer level leadership is an important dynamic in cell. Within any group there are always people who emerge as leaders, who others follow and who are easily recognised. As cell leader, you need to look out for that potential, encourage it and nurture it. You also need to be someone that is positive and enthusiastic.
- **Be available – Mark 1:17,18>** Leading a cell requires a commitment of time and we may need to drop other responsibilities. It takes time to prepare for a cell meeting, connect with others and meet up with friends who are not yet Christians. Before agreeing to take on the role of a cell leader you need to be sure that you are able to give the time needed.
- **Have vision –** People with vision create vision. Throughout the life of your cell, continually re-articulate the vision and focus the group around it.

- Discussion:
- How can you be more open and transparent in your relationship with others?
  - In what ways could you serve the people in your group more?
  - How busy is your week? Can you afford the time to lead a cell?
  - Why do you want to lead a cell group?



## C2. The Cell Leader – Responsibilities

1. **Co-ordinate weekly meetings:** This will involve preparation time in the week before the meeting with your assistant leader. You could plan a term of meetings to make life a little easier, but be prepared to alter these as necessary. Allow plenty of time for your planning. If rushed, your meeting will lack structure and may lose focus. You should plan time slots for activities. Even if you do not keep to them exactly, it will keep people from leaving before everything has been said.
2. **Identify and train potential cell leaders:** You will be in contact with potential leaders in your cell more than anyone else in the church. You will be able to spot potential leaders early on.
3. **Identify and include new people:** At larger events or cell gatherings be welcoming and inclusive of new people. Invite them to cell, if appropriate. At cell meetings, make visitors feel welcome, draw them in where possible, invite them to come back and get in touch with them during the week.
4. **Establish a cell co-ordination team:** If there are a number of cell groups within your church community, it will be a good idea to develop a co-ordination team with other cell leaders, to discuss how your cell group is going.

Discussion:

1. Are these responsibilities what you expected?
2. Do you think you will be able to meet these commitments?
3. What else do you think you might have to do as a cell leader?



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### C3. Assistant Leader

When a new cell forms, one of the first tasks is to appoint and mentor an assistant leader, with the expectation that they will lead a cell when the current cell cycle closes.

Invest time in meeting, planning and praying with them about the cell and give them the opportunity to learn from you. Just before the cell is ready to multiply let the assistant leader do most of the planning for the cell meetings. This will give him/her greater confidence when they are on their own

Discussion:

1. Who in your cell has potential to be a cell leader?
2. What qualities do they have?
3. How can you encourage them to develop in these areas?
4. How can you help them strengthen the weak areas?
5. Investing your time and prayers into key people in your cell can help to release and empower them. How are you going to do this?

### C4. Supporting Cells

As well as making each cell group happen, there are a number of other people that should be involved in supporting the cell programme, to ensure that it's as effective as possible (especially as it grows). Of course, the support structure you develop may differ, depending on your local needs.

#### 1. The Cell Co-ordinator

As the number of cell groups grow, it's really important to ensure that they are travelling in a common direction. You need someone of vision that keeps the cells focused and moving together. The Co-ordinator should seek to:

- a) Co-ordinate regular cell leaders meeting.
- b) Meet regularly with all cell supervisors.
- c) Co-ordinate any cell gatherings or events planned.
- d) Meet regularly with all those involved as 'specialist workers'.
- e) Ensure relevant discipleship resources are available.
- f) Oversee the training and development of leaders.

#### 2. The Cell Supervisor

They provide extra support to clusters of cell groups and their leaders. Specifically, they will:

- a) Normally oversee three or four cell groups.
- b) Assist the cell leader in identifying and training potential cell leaders.
- c) Take responsibility for some issues of pastoral care within the cells they are involved with.
- d) Be involved in the process of multiplying a cell or identifying when a cell has come to the end of its life.



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- e) Be available to help, advise and support the cell leader as they lead their cell.

### 3. 'Specialist workers'

There will inevitably be young people within cells who are facing complex issues and will need specialist help and support to get through it.

This can be a role for parents of those involved in youth cells, or may need the referring to an expert. The 'specialist worker' takes responsibility to:

- a) Regularly meet with the young person concerned.
- b) Seek to create an appropriate and 'safe place' for the young person as part of their family or network of relationships.
- c) Set goals with the young person that are attainable in the short term.
- d) Meet regularly with others involved in this role and communicate regularly with the cell leader.



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### C5. Keeping Cell Safe & Sound

When running a youth cell it's essential that you adhere to good child protection practice. Every centre should have their own child protection policy based around Safe & Sound. If you don't, you need to develop one.

Below is a bullet point summary of advice and guidance to consider when looking at starting cell or to help you run it safely:

- All leaders must have completed The Salvation Army's Safe & Sound training course.
- All leaders over 16 working must complete a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.
- Parents and guardians must always be kept informed about what your cells are for, how they are run, where they meet and what parents can do to support them.
- Every effort must be made to ensure no unnecessary risks are taken during the course of the cell. If a specific cell meeting has more risky elements (e.g. rock-climbing, litter-picking in the community), a risk assessment should be carried out.
- Leaders must always be aware who their immediate supervisor is, such as the overall youth leader or corps officer.
- Each cell leader must be aware of your centre's process for reporting sensitive situations (e.g. abuse, bullying, etc), which is uncovered during or as a result a cell meeting.
  
- If someone shares information of a sensitive nature, don't promise confidentiality, make sure that you listen, clarify the issue with sensitive questions, explain that you would like to share this with the person who is supporting your cell and pray for the person.
- It is important that sharing really sensitive information is not encouraged within the context of a group, as it can leave people very confused.
- As much as possible, keep the group together so that there are at least 2 leaders around and that unhelpful relationships do not develop whilst others aren't aware.
- Seriously consider the appropriateness of your meeting venue.
- Work hard to ensure shy young people do not become isolated in this small group context just because they speak less than others.
- Follow up when people have missed one or a few meetings.
- Make every effort to keep the groups' activities as open and transparent as possible. Perhaps a newsletter / email list will help in this. Sharing of cell news in wider corps meetings such as on a Sunday will also help people understand what you are doing.

**Further help available from your DYO or Territorial Child Protection Adviser.**



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### D. Running Cell

#### D1. The Cell Meeting - Structure

So, you have decided to start a cell group. You've recruited the leaders and you have a group of people that are interested in coming, but how do you structure an actual meeting? Where do you meet? How long should it last?

Ideally, the cell meeting should normally consist of the following elements.

##### WELCOME

How welcome people feel will affect the whole evening. It's normally good to have some music playing and some refreshments at this stage. A lively and warm environment will help people feel relaxed and welcome. Try to get everyone involved from the start. Using 'ice breakers' at this point can take the getting to know you stage a bit further

##### WORSHIP

Once the ice has been broken it's important to get people centred on God. We do this because we recognise that Jesus is with us and we want to encounter Him.

##### WORD

This is the point in the evening when you need to draw people out. The discussion may spring out of what you read in the week, the weekend meetings, the cell guide or what happened in the worship. If the cell has grown to 10 or more it is good to go into smaller groups at this point or only the loudest will be heard.

##### WITNESS

It is important to remember that as 'church', we are here for others and not simply for ourselves. The end of the meeting should therefore focus on praying for others and discussing how we may reach out to them.

**Remember:** You don't have to rigidly follow this '4 W' structure. It is simply there to facilitate the meeting. Following it, even loosely, does allow all the values of cell to come through.

##### VENUE>

Cell meetings can be held in someone's home, a park, a café or your church the list goes on. Just ensure that the venue is appropriate, non-threatening and a safe environment.

##### TIME>



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A cell can meet after school, or work, at the weekend or in the evening. It's good to have a fixed meeting time. Ideally, you should meet once a week and meet consistently. It should last between 1-2 hours. Always be aware of the time so you don't save the most important message until the last 2 minutes.

Discussion:

1. How can you involve everyone in the different parts of the meeting?
2. Is your planned venue and time suitable for everyone in your cell?
3. Ask for feedback from a number of individual cell members. How did it go? How could it be better? Did they feel involved?



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## D2. The Cell Cycle

It's important to realise that your cell group will go through different phases of development. As a cell leader you will need to recognise each stage, know how to deal with it and lead the group through.

In 1965, Bruce Tuckman came up with a model that described four stages a group goes through: forming, storming, norming and performing. The stages have some application to the cell model too:

**Stage 1 FORMING**> The cell is formed with a cell leader and five or six members. Generally everyone is looking forward to the new cell; foundations are laid, direction and focus are established.

**Stage 2 STORMING**> After the initial 'honeymoon' period, things begin to get a little more difficult. Tension or disagreements can arise. Attendance can sometimes drop. Don't be discouraged by this phase. Relationships are developing at a deeper level – so push on through.

**Stage 3 NORMING**> Now the group can really begin to function. The excitement is back but this time with more reality and honesty in the group.

**Stage 4 PERFORMING**> Worship and prayer really take off; the ministry is powerful; new people join the group. This is the best time for a cell to multiply and the cycle begins again.

## D3. Multiplying a Cell

A key part of cell groups is that they grow and multiply. When they are attracting 12-13 people regularly, it's time to think about multiplying. It's a delicate, but vital part of your cell programme and the growth of the church.

There are two main models for growing new cell groups. The first works well with younger teens; the second with those that are slightly older.

### Method 1

- Talk with the assistant leader that is supporting your cell and begin to work towards a fixed date.
- Decide which members of the cell will stay with you and who will go with the new cell leader. Ensure a good balance in each cell between people at different levels of growth.
- Share with the cell about the multiplication. Say who will lead the new cell and encourage them to pray about it.
- Try to meet with each cell member and share how you feel they would fit in best. Encourage them to pray about it. Be open to changing your mind, but only for good reasons.



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- Encourage the new cell leader to spend time with those who will be with her/him after the multiplication.
- The date arrives. You may like to do something special together, like have a meal. Result=smooth transition!

## Method 2

- The expectation with this method is that every member can be a leader.
- Each person in the cell is encouraged to find three others to form a new cell with.
- The original cell still continues to meet for input and encouragement.
- Gradually each person could be leading a cell of 10 or 12 and then the cycle is repeated.

Of course, the above methods won't work every time. Some cells may have grown so much that it will be necessary to create 3 new cells rather than just 2. Also cells develop at different times, so the multiplication process happens in a staggered way. Alternatively, it may be necessary to dissolve a dysfunctional cell into other cells. In addition, young people often move around, going to university or taking a job in another city. It may also take time for the assistant leader to feel ready to lead the new cell. Ultimately, it's essential to be patient and not over idealistic.

Discussion:

1. What stage do you think your cell is at?
2. What steps should you take to help your cell now?
3. Is your cell attracting enough people to think about multiplying?
4. Are you ready to lead your own cell?
5. How are you and your cell leader going to decide who goes in which cell?
6. What do you think the benefits are of Model 2?



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## D4. Running a good meeting

Good meetings will depend on a number of criteria:

### 1. Preparation

This is so important in the smooth running of any meeting. Often meetings have no sense of purpose or direction and everyone leaves feeling a little cheated and frustrated. You need to take time to plan your meeting, discuss it with the person who you working with and pray that God will guide you as you do this. Think about people you can delegate aspects of the meeting to and give them plenty of warning so they can prepare.

- Be sensitive to people

When the people arrive you need to begin to assess how they are feeling, how their week is going and what is going on in their lives. Ask questions, show interest. You may need to adjust your plans depending on the feedback.

- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit

Be aware of how the meeting is flowing. What seems to be an emphasis that is coming out in discussion or prayer? Is there something God is trying to do or say? Don't be afraid to throw away your plans if the Holy Spirit takes the meeting in another direction.

- Let the structure be a servant

You don't have to rigidly follow the 4 W structure. It is simply there to facilitate the meeting. Following it, even loosely, does allow all the values of cell to come through. It is also an easy way to involve people who may be less confident. It's lot easier to be asked to do 15 minutes of Worship than run a whole meeting!

- Be aware of group dynamics

Each cell will be made up of a variety of people of different personalities and temperaments. It is important to allow everyone to be the best expression of who God has made them and let everyone feel equally valued. Here are some tips on working with different people:

#### a. The Over -Talkative Person

- emphasise the need to listen
- use small group work with time limits
- gently but firmly cut them short if they begin to ramble or dominate
- speak to them privately if necessary

#### b. The Withdrawn Person



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- use non-threatening ice breakers
- build a good relationship with the person
- make a fuss of them during the Welcome / Refreshment time
- draw them out by asking for their opinions (open-ended questions prevents monosyllabic answers)
- use small-group work

## c. The Not-Yet Christian

- be real
- avoid jargon
- allow them to feel relaxed and part of the cell
- draw them out - don't dismiss their opinions
- build relationship with the person

## d. The Argumentative Person

- don't allow the cell to become a heated debate
- deal with sensitive issues privately, one to one
- a persistent argumentative person needs to be confronted privately

## 2. Pray

It is important to remember that a meeting is only an expression of community. If no community is being expressed throughout the week then the meetings will become dry and hard work. You need to be praying for each member of your cell on a regular basis as they interact with their friends, family and schoolmates.

## 3. Regular Assessment

Take time to think about how the cell is going. Talk with the person supporting you. Try not to settle into a rut. Think of ways to keep things fresh.

Discussion:

1. Can you think of people in your cell who fall into the categories listed? How does that behaviour show up?
2. What can you do to ensure that your meetings are better?



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## E. DEEPER STILL

### E1. Developing a healthy community

In an increasingly fragmented society, young people are desperately seeking a place where they can experience and participate in real community. God has placed within every human being the need to belong. Our society emphasises the role of the individual, God's focus is on us becoming more self-less and more 'otherly' in our lifestyles.

How do we create a real sense of community in our cells? How do we ensure it's a place where young people are able to grow and contribute, feel 'safe' to try out new things, ask difficult question and be valued?

#### Pray

Jesus prayed for his disciples. Pray for those in your cell. Pray for God's life to flowing between them during the week.

#### Teach

Talk about community, what it is, how it feels, how to achieve it. Brainstorm community words - together, sharing, co-operation, love, peace, listen etc.. Find stories. Identify community values. Don't run from conflict, address it together. Always empower [actively encourage] people to know they are all part of shaping this community. In turn, The Salvation Army that is seen and known in their community is going to be expressed by them!

#### Model

It is so important that you as the leader model what you hope to see built. Be open, honest and encouraging. Make the time to phone cell members. Arrange evenings out. Show interest in others'. Check up on yourself to see if you're living it out. If you get frustrated that people aren't responding or moving on as you would like, just keep living it yourself – ultimately that is all you can do!

#### Have fun!

Make time to hang out, do crazy things, get active outdoors, eat together. A lot of what Jesus did was in a relaxed informal setting.

- Discussion:
1. When was the last time you all had an evening out?
  2. How much is your cell a meeting rather than a community?
  3. How can you cultivate community in your cell?
  4. Who in your cell has a gift for building community?



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### E2. Delving into Discipleship

One of the main tasks of the cell leader or team is to try to assess where each person is in their walk with God and help them take a step or two closer. It is unhealthy to become judgemental and it is all too easy to write people off or think we know all about their “shallow faith” but we may not fully know what is going on in their life.

Rather than evaluating people on whether they put their hands up when singing, how loud they pray, how many friends they have, how many WWJD bracelets they wear it's healthy to help people think through how balanced their spirituality is. The ALOVE essentials help us consider some of the key elements of growing in Christ. So when considering your group and “where people are at” try and have a holistic thought on worship, social action, mission and discipleship. As a group or youth leadership team brainstorm these areas and consider what may be good indicators of “success” in each of these areas.

This is a good time to keep those superb encouraging and challenging words of Paul in mind...

*“I’m just scratching the surface; I’m miles off where I should be. But I’m working on it, like the Liberator Jesus us working on me. Guys, I’m not “there”, I’ve not “made it”, but I’m focussed forwards not backwards. Pushing through the pain barrier to hit the finishing tape and collect the medal God’s got up there with my name on it. Since the Liberator Jesus entered me into the race, God’s been “whooping” me on up the slope towards heaven.”* **Philippians 3v12-14, The Street Bible**

Maybe, however, you can start thinking about your cell members in some general types:

- Type 1 – actively growing Christian, capable of discipling others, would make an ideal 'intern', or they may be a cell leader taking a break.
- Type 2 - a Christian who is at the stage to be a 'cell mate' to someone else in the cell.
- Type 3 - a baby Christian or someone not yet a Christian who needs a lot of encouragement and support.

Each cell needs a good balance of people to make it effective. A cell with too many 'type 1' Christians will need more of a challenge where as a cell with more 'type 3' Christians will need a lot more care and attention. There may also be people in the cell with whom you have spent time but they don't seem to make progress. Others may be emotionally unstable, needing lots of attention, and you feel out of your depth. You will need the help and support of some more mature Christians at this stage, maybe parents or the person supporting your cell, who are able to get alongside these people and address the more complex issues in their lives.

Our aim is that each person is enabled to become a disciple of Jesus. When Jesus called people to follow him some would follow 'at a distance' while others would follow more closely. Jesus seemed content for people to follow at their own pace but



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it seems the closer people were to Jesus the more like him they became. There were three main aspects to Jesus' discipleship:

1. Formal - planned meeting or teaching. Like aspects of the organised cell meeting.
2. Informal - being in a more relaxed environment where Jesus would use everyday events to teach e.g. the woman bringing her offering to the temple.
3. Involvement - when the disciples had to step out and do something.

Cell is very like the model Jesus used with the 12 disciples - an outward looking community with Jesus at the centre, based on relationships that loved and supported one another. So on one level, discipleship is going on as we are living out the values and drawing others in. How can we disciple others effectively? As a cell leader you will be responsible to model discipleship in your cell. Using the model Jesus used we can gain some insight:

**Formal**> Ensure teaching input at the regular cell meeting or you may meet up with another cell member to work through some discipleship resource or Bible study.

**Informal**> Be looking for learning opportunities when you are out and about with members from you cell. How can you be an example when confronted with an irate driver? Or, are given too much change at McDonalds? Or, find an expensive watch in the swimming pool changing rooms? This all communicates. **Involvement**> This can start off by involving people in the cell meeting. You may then want to involve them in befriending a new Christian. Why not organise an outreach with your cell? Or, visit another youth group in the inner city? Or organise a missions trip overseas?

Discussion:

1. Assess where you think you are in your walk with God.
2. Ask others to consider where they are in their walk with God?
3. Think about ways to help move each one forward?
4. Is there anything more you can do to help people move forward?



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### E3. Caring for New Christians

One of the most exciting things that we can be involved with is helping new Christians grow in their understanding of and love for God.

#### **New Christians will need a lot of attention**

New Christians are like new born babies. They need a lot of time and care to help them through the first few stages of their growth. We need to be there for them when they feel vulnerable and unsure.

#### **New Christians will not change overnight**

God's intention for every believer is not that they are simply 'informed Christians' but are being 'formed' as 'disciples' of Jesus. God has a timed plan for each new Christian and you need to be able to know what God is highlighting for them now. There are obviously some issues that they will turn away from immediately but other issues are less black and white. You don't need to place heavy burdens on people that they are unable to carry. Be gentle and full of grace.

#### **Build solid foundations**

New Christians need to know they are loved by Father God, their sins are forgiven and they have been given a brand new start. They need to know these truths not just feel them. Use some appropriate discipleship resource to help.

#### **Encourage and Pray for them**

New Christians need constant encouragement and prayer. They can't get too much!

#### **Include them**

Make sure the rest of the cell are aware that these new Christians need to be included in the life of the cell. It is often hard for new Christians as they may only know one or two other Christians and need to know they are not on the outside looking in.

Discussion:

1. Are there new Christians in my cell? If so, how have we looked after them?
2. Are there ways we could improve our care of new Christians?



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### E4. Pastoral Issues

This generation has been described as many things but to any who are a part of this generation or have observed them it will not take long to discover the pain that is there. Sometimes it is near the surface and is obvious in a person's speech or behaviour but in others it is buried deep inside and isn't always clear. When we experience God's compassion it is natural for us to want to help others on their journey to wholeness. This is where, as a cell leader, you will need great wisdom and discernment. You will also need to ensure that you have adequate support from people who are more mature.

Common issues facing young people today:

- Poor self-image
- Eating disorders
- Depression and suicidal feelings
- Abuse - physical, sexual and emotional
- Gender confusion
- Promiscuity
- Occult involvement
- Drug/alcohol addictions
- Family tension - parents going through divorce, difficult home relationships

All these are serious but some have greater consequence than others. Don't be surprised if these emerge in your cell group. It is important not to dig around to find them but if someone shares information of a sensitive nature you need to know what to do.

1. Listen
2. Clarify the issue with sensitive questions
3. Explain that you would like to share this with the person who is supporting your cell
4. Pray for God's peace, comfort and healing
5. Talk with the person supporting your cell as soon as you can

Most churches and Christian organisations have clear guidelines when dealing with young people under the age of 18. Be sure that you are familiar with the guidelines that have been issued and you have completed any required training.

It is important to realise that God is able to heal people who have the deepest emotional needs. When someone shares information of a sensitive nature we often feel unsure as to what they expect of us. It is important to continue to love and encourage them. Sometimes people will just get healed in the context of worship or prayer but it is in loving community where people find wholeness.

#### Discussion:

1. Have you found yourself in any difficult situations where people have shared sensitive information with you?
2. How have you handled it?
3. What could you do to ensure the person receives the necessary help?



## F. Example Cell Outline

### Theme:

Listening to God (Taking action by hearing what is on God's heart)

### Kit List:

Long piece of paper rolled up from both ends (for a scroll), bibles, oil, list of charade items.

### Welcome:

Split into two teams, and play a game of charades (the game where actions speak louder than words). Have a list of movie, television, and book titles, famous people, and some local topics as well for the charade categories.

### Word:

Read through Luke 4:14-30.

What is Jesus' mission statement in this passage? Are we supposed to be living this out as his followers? If so, in what ways are we doing this?

The listeners in the synagogue have two different reactions to Jesus. At first they are amazed, later they try to kill him. What do you think caused both of these reactions?

Jesus talked about how in Israel's history God had used his prophets to perform miracles amongst foreigners. Why is Jesus reminding them of this? How does it apply to us today? Who are the "foreigners" (ie., people not on the "inside") who God may want us to reach out to today? (Remember, they may be more receptive to God's actions than people on the "inside")

The crowd listening to Jesus chose to respond to his words with violent action. How will we respond to this word from Jesus? Are these difficult words to hear?

### Worship:

Make a scroll. On it, write down the things that you think are on God's heart. What does God want to see happening in the world? You can write down verses, ideas, even draw pictures on the scroll. What are the desires of your heart? Pray in your group that the desires of your heart would be more aligned with the desires of God's heart.

Leave the scroll in the place where you meet for cell (or with someone who will be there every week) so that at the beginning of each cell meeting you can remind yourself of what is on God's heart by reading the scroll together.



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### Witness:

Look again at Luke 4:18-19. Consider where in your community there are people who are poor, prisoners, blind, oppressed. Commit to some joint action as a cell to preach good news, proclaim freedom, bring sight, release the oppressed, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. This could be a community service project, a visitation to a senior's facility, a door-to-door prayer mission, or a letter-writing campaign to your government in support of war orphans in the Sudan. Be creative, trying to express the heart of God through your actions as a cell.

Once you have decided on an action, take out the oil, and put some on the hands or forehead of each member, praying over them and anointing them to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, bring recovery of sight to the blind, release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

### Action Points:

1. Read through Luke 4:18-19 first thing each morning, and pray that it would be the basis of any and all action you take during the day.
2. Do a search on the internet for Christian communities that are actively trying to live out the mission statement of Jesus. See what they are doing, and what you maybe able to incorporate into your own life or cell or church.

### Useful Resources:

- Book: *Be A Hero* – Wesley Campbell and Stephen Court,  
Book: *Something Beautiful for God* – Malcolm Muggeridge (about Mother Teresa), Harper Collins.  
CD: *The Beautiful Letdown* – Switchfoot (particularly the song "Dare You to Move")



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## G. Ideas

### G1. Cell Icebreaker Ideas

**When running a cell group, a good way to get the group ready to engage with discussion, prayer and general chat, is to do an icebreaker. It helps everyone get to know each other and relax a bit more.**

**Listed are a few that have been tried and tested.**

- Board Games - always good when a cell has just formed.
- Try and get everyone to stand on one piece of newspaper.
- Guessing games, (What's in the box?!)
- Get everyone in the group to link hands with someone else, so that you are all jumbled up. Without letting go of your hands, make yourself into a circle. It *is* possible!
- Get everyone to bring a photo of themselves when they were a baby. Put them in a pile and then guess who's who!
- Stick Post It's on each others backs and then go and write something encouraging about each person.
- Learn more about each other - hear 'A Day In The Life' of someone in your group.
- Eat together.
- 'People might be surprised to learn that I...' - people are asked to make the statements.
- Write down the most embarrassing thing you've done. Read out all the answers, if permitted!
- Get everyone to write their names on the top of a piece of paper. Pass the papers round and get everyone to write something encouraging about that person.
- Share a highlight from the week you've just had.
- Ask: Where did you live between the ages of 7 - 10?
  - What was your favourite item of clothing during this period?
  - What colour was the kitchen floor during this period?
- Ask: If you were a car, what sort would you be and why?



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- If you could visit anywhere in the world, where would you visit?
- If you could swap roles with someone for a day, who would you choose?
- Play a word association game.
- Ask everyone to put an object / item into the middle of the floor that best describes their life right now.
- Describe what your perfect day would be.
- If you had an all-expenses paid trip to anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?



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## G2. Cell Mission Ideas

**ALOVE's take on mission is that it's all about pointing out what God is already doing in people's lives. If we believe that Jesus is a life-changing person to know and that he's involved in the world, sharing it with other people is an exciting mission to be part of.**

**Cell is an amazing way to engage with new people and help them learn more about the amazing story of Jesus and what he's done for them.**

**Here are some tips and ideas for how we can do this:**

- Take time to read local newspapers to get to know what the local issues are around your ALOVE / SA corps community. There may be stories leading to projects that you can get directly involved in.
- Hold a debate evening, to discuss a major issue of our world from a Christian perspective. Invite people from your local community to take part.
- Hold a 'Fair Trade Fair' and invite people from your school, college, university or neighbourhood to come along. It's a great way to get to know people and invest in fair trade too.
- Organise a social night and invite friends and family along.
- Organise a film night and discuss some of the issues it throws up. E.g. the Passion of the Christ.
- Organise your church to offer acts of service to your community. E.g. Does anyone need their lawn mowing? Could you help someone with their shopping? Be sure to do this accompanied by someone who is over 18, and ensure you have the proper identification and authorisation to do so.
- Leaflet your street inviting people to send prayer requests to your church.
- Ask people about issues of concern in the national or international news, maybe ask someone to act as newsreader each week to pick out key headlines for the group to pray about and maybe engage with somehow.
- Flick through the latest or back issues of Youth Work Magazine for further ideas, especially from their ready to use meeting guides.
- Make a list of groups or people that your cell could contact to reach out beyond your cell and corps / church. These may include writing to your MP, sending an encouragement card to the Police, offering to help do an assembly at a local school etc.
- Share your own personal stories of why, when or how you became Christians.



## G3. Cell Prayer Ideas

**Prayer is an essential element of a cell group. Here are loads of ideas for creative prayer.**

- Use a 'Prayer Model'. For example, pray the Lord's prayer - read one line. 'Our Father in heaven'. Pray around that, then the next line and so on. There are other 'prayer models' in Scripture or some that people have developed - use them, keep the pace moving, keep everyone involved.
- Draw or write your prayer on a sheet of wallpaper.
- Put a chair in the centre of the room. Write the names of people you want to pray for on 'post-its' and stick them to the chair. Pray for your them.
- Keep a prayer photo album.
- Keep a cell prayer journal - update it regularly.
- Do a prayer walk - around a school or neighbourhood. Ask God to speak clearly to you as you walk.
- Form a 'prayer scrum' shout out things to God.
- Turn to the N, S, E + W - pray over the different parts of your city or school.
- Light a candle for each person you are praying for.
- Bring along some newspaper clippings and pray over the issues: local, national and international.
- Using 'Operation World', pray for a nation. See: <http://www.24-7prayer.com/ow/>
- Approach the head teacher of your local school. Ask him/ her what you can pray for.
- Don't just leave prayer for the last 2 minutes when people may be tired! Why not start with prayer sometimes and end with the Welcome!



### G4. Cell Worship Ideas

**Cell is a superb opportunity to expand and broaden our understanding of what worship really is. Here are some suggestions and tips for keeping the worship element meaningful and varied:**

- Seriously study the Bible and look at how the various people and personality types worshipped God in different ways through their life.
- Reflect on how other religions worship, consider what we can learn or how we can adapt these for true Christian worship.
- Put on a track from your favourite worship CD or a tape. Sing along or simply 'be' with God. Become aware of his Presence and his love for you.
- Read a Psalm out loud slowly. Pause at particularly significant bits. Allow people to drink in what is being said or simply to use the words of the psalm to focus on God.
- Use the breaking of bread as a focus for worship.
- Construct a simple cross. Use this focus for worship. Plain children's building blocks make a good job of this!
- Write out the name 'Jesus' in bold block capitals. Put it on the mantelpiece or some other focal point. Again allow people to meditate on the name.
- Experiment with body posture! Kneel as a sign of penitence. Stand as you wait on God.
- Read a passage of Scripture or some other devotional passage as a starting point for a time for silent worship and / or mediation.
- Encourage people to write out their most heart-felt prayers to God as a preliminary to worship.
- Get a big sheet of paper and invite people to write down words that describe God. Then begin thanking God for who He is.
- Light a candle, play some music, think about Jesus – the light of the world!
- Bring some art materials and get everyone to draw or paint something that expresses worship to God.
- Use an excerpt from the Jesus video with a music track in the background.
- Trawl the web for more ideas on Christian worship... get members of the cell group involved in planning and suggesting various ways of worshipping God.
- Go out to a local park or place of beauty and consider God as creator.



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- Go to an art gallery; be inspired by the art – what does it make you think about God?



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## G5. Useful Links and Cell Resources

As well as the ALOVE cell outlines, you can also find other resources at the following web sites:

[www.celluk.org.uk](http://www.celluk.org.uk)  
[www.cellchurch.info](http://www.cellchurch.info)  
[www.touchusa.org](http://www.touchusa.org)  
[www.accn.org.uk](http://www.accn.org.uk)  
[www.deepimpact.org](http://www.deepimpact.org)

You can also find material, which isn't necessarily labelled as "cell church resources" but will still be really helpful. Check out:

[www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)  
[www.ngm.org.uk](http://www.ngm.org.uk)  
[www.xt-3.com](http://www.xt-3.com)  
[www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com)  
[www.jesuit.ie/prayer](http://www.jesuit.ie/prayer)  
[www.clubberstemple.com](http://www.clubberstemple.com)  
[www.ypnmagazine.com](http://www.ypnmagazine.com)  
[www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)  
[www.wearewhatwedo.org](http://www.wearewhatwedo.org)  
[www.gmi.org/ow](http://www.gmi.org/ow)



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### H. Quotes

**Here we feature some quotations from young people and youth workers involved with cell.**

*Cell helps us learn more about each other and grow in fellowship. It's great in enabling us to share our hopes and disappointments with one another.*

**Helen, Bedford**

*Cell is a chance for young people to come together and engage with their God, by talking about their issues in their own way. It enables them to get excited about their faith and really grow in their relationship with Jesus.*

**Carl, London**

*As we look into the word and encourage each other outside of the cell to become more Christ-like we see discipleship in action. Over recent years, a school has been promised for the local area, which has not materialised. We have spoken up for the parents of the area, who feel that they don't have a voice. Over time, the possibility of a school is looking more and more likely. To see that we make a difference in the community is very exciting. We keep looking to God for direction for other areas that we can shout about!*

**Shawn, Anglia**

*We often have prayer times or worship times at the beginning of cell and we make our conversation worship too. During our cell we have a time where we pray for people like friends and family who we want to become Christians. It's good because it means that every week we are praying for them, and it's really exciting when we see results (which we have done!!)*

**Hannah, Croydon**

*A couple of us from our cell group go out on the last Saturday of the month with another church group, to hand out free drinks to young people coming out of clubs and pubs at 1-3am. It is an awesome experience. We are also partnering with the Police and local businesses in order to tackle and clean up the problem of graffiti around Romford. The plan is just to get out into the community and let people know that the church is here to help and show Gods love in the community.*

**Laura, Romford**

*A challenging thing about cell is trying to keep the material original and fresh from week to week. I've noticed that my cell can often lose interest and start attending less regularly when things get a bit stale and predictable.*

**Carl, London**



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*A challenging aspect of cell is having time to prepare stuff I've been asked to do, or to motivate myself to go when I'm really tired. Also, having enough confidence to sit through silences till someone talks; it's a challenge to leave open spaces and enough chance for the group to chat through things. It's hard but it's definitely something that I'm learning from quickly!*

**Laura, Bedford**

*Being a cell leader, I find it really exciting to see how quickly you bond as a group and how easy it is to trust each other in a safe environment. I find it exciting that I can learn with others at my own pace and ask questions and really chat through issues with friends.'*

**Hannah, Croydon**

*'The thing that's challenging about cell is studying topics that would perhaps go unnoticed in meetings, such as sexuality & morality.'*

**Tim, Chelmsford**

*In cell, you can be more personal and have closer relationships with others. I also like how it's challenging and the questions make you think.*

**Rachel, Peterborough**

*Cell is exciting as you can be part of a small community that really helps its members to grow spiritually and is prepared to help practically too. Also seeing how people are involving their non-Christian friends in their church life; seeing some of these people become Christians and ultimately the church growing.*

**Mark, Anglia**



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