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ENCOUNTER JESUS [] BELONG [] LIVE [] PARTICIPATE [] LOVE

TRAININGMANUAL



YOUTH CELL | AN INTRODUCTION

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.



WEB CHECKS

WWW.SALVATIONARMY.ORG.UK/ALOVE

We've dotted 'web checks' throughout this manual to highlight the different resources that are available on our web site.

You can also download a fuller version of this training manual ... Enjoy!

WELCOME TO THE ALOVE YOUTH CELL TRAINING MANUAL



The ALOVE Cell Training Manual has been written by Adam Bonner. Adam is the Divisional Youth Officer for ALOVE London South East and has played a key role in shaping and developing a youth cell strategy at his local Salvation Army.

'We've been journeying and experimenting with cell for around five years now and are learning all the time. Cell is both the easiest and hardest thing to do, as it's all about relationships. For me, the key to cell is to have a holistic approach - allowing people to express their gifting and engage with worship, discipleship, mission and social action. When such things are in place, it's a recipe for growth, creativity and vibrancy. Everything the church should be.'



'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



'Cell is exciting as it enables people to be themselves and to form meaningful relationships that extend through the whole week. There is support for every eventuality in life and seeing scripture lived out is very exciting. The bible shows how the disciples shared property, so it's great to live this out in cell too. When I need to borrow something like a lawnmower, I can get this from someone in the cell group!'

Shawn, Anglia

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.



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'.



'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



'As we look into the word and encourage each other 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

CELL VISION AND MISSION

When forming a new cell group, the first thing to do is establish your vision and mission. They inspire and fuel all you do as a group. At the outset, write a mission statement to express them 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?

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.



WEB CHECK ...

WORSHIP

Get loads of creative worship ideas and downloadable prayer meditation movies.

DISCIPLESHIP

Download the full training manual and read more about what it means to delve deeper in community.

MISSION

Visit the web site for some creative cell-based mission ideas.

SOCIAL ACTION

Visit the Human Trafficking section of our web site for more information about the issue. Alternatively visit www.speak.org.uk for other campaign ideas.

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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 of 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.



'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!'

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

LEADING AND SUPPORTING CELL

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



'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



LEADING CELL



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 cell leader and assistant is therefore really important in identifying and releasing the different gifts expressed within the cell, as well as 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 ...

- 1] Why do you want to lead a cell group?
- 2] How can you be more open and transparent in your relationship with others?
- 3] Are you learning as much from others as you could?
- 4] In what ways could you serve the people in your group more?
- 5] How busy is your week? Can you afford the time to lead a cell?

LEADING AND SUPPORTING CELL



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. Aim to look out for 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?



'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



'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



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?

LEADING AND SUPPORTING CELL

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.

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.

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

'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.



'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

KEEPING CELL SAFE AND SOUND

GOOD CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICE

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.



Further help is available from your Divisional Youth Officer.

Alternatively contact the Territorial Child Protection Adviser:

dean.juster@salvationarmy.org.uk

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 a 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.



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

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 ...

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.



WEB CHECK ...

There may be many new Christians as a result of your cell strategy ... See the guidelines on caring for new Christians.

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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?

cell TRAINING MANUAL

RUNNING CELL

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.

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.

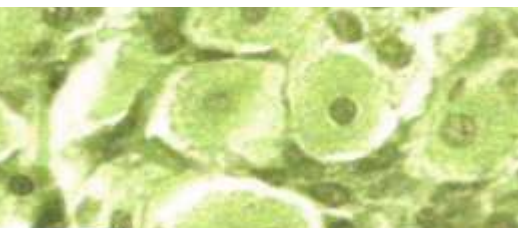
Method | One

- | 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.
- | 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 | Two

- | 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 Method number two?

EXAMPLE CELL OUTLINE

Theme:

Listening to God (What does listening have to do with worship?)

Kit List:

Paper, pens, Bibles, music and CD player.

Welcome:

Play a listening game that tests your ability to tune out distractions. Break into pairs, and designate one person as the reader, one as the listener. The reader is going to read out John 10:14-30 once at a normal talking speed, and the listener is going to try and write down what the reader says as accurately as possible. Everyone will do this in the same room, so there will be a lot of distracting noise. At the same time, play some music (with lyrics), and have the leader talking or reading out something totally different, to make it even more distracting. Maybe turn on the television as well.

Have the listener read back what they wrote down to see how good they were at listening.

Ask the group how easy or difficult the task was. Ask them how they feel when they are talking to someone who is distracted or not really listening to them. What distracts them in their life?

Worship:

How often do you listen to God as an act of worship? What part should listening play during worship? How do we listen?

Ask everyone to close their eyes, and read out (or have someone read out) John 10:14-30 again. Read it twice over. (You may want to put on some quiet music without lyrics to play underneath your reading as well.) Before you read it out, ask the group to listen carefully, and to try and hear what God may be saying to them, their cell, and the world through the reading. Once you have read the passage through twice, spend some time as a group in silence. Then ask everyone to write down what they heard Jesus saying. Pass the responses around, and read them out anonymously. Are you hearing good news from Jesus, or bad news?

Word:

In the passage in John 10:14-30, Jesus says that his sheep will know his voice. How do we know when it's Jesus talking, and not just a voice in our minds, the world, or another spirit? Does Jesus speak plainly to us, or is he difficult for us to hear? Why do some people seem to hear him so easily, and others do not? What distracts us from listening to and hearing the voice of God, especially in worship?

Witness:

Take a look again at what you felt God wanted to say to you, your cell, and the world through the passage in John 10:14-30. Think of one friend or family member you know who needs to hear that message. Share with the group, and pray for each other. Then share that message this week with your friend or family member. You can do this directly, or through email, text message, snail mail, etc. . .

Action points:

- 1] Spend 10 minutes at the beginning of every day in silence, listening to God in prayer.
- 2] Be silent during a worship service, not singing, to actually hear and listen to what God may be saying.
- 3] Fast from television for a day, or if you can, the week. Anytime you would normally turn on the TV, find some way to worship God instead.
- 4] Try a silent prayer walk, and see what God may be wanting to tell you through nature.

Useful resources:

Website: www.jesuit.ie/prayer/

Book: "The Practice of the Presence of God" - Brother Lawrence

Music: 24-7 Chill CD



WEB CHECK ...

There are loads of Cell Outlines online, ready made. Check out the Resource Zone.

WWW.SALVATIONARMY.ORG.UK/ALOVE



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

for more information visit:
www.salvationarmy.org.uk/alone



ALOVE . The Salvation Army . 21 Crown Lane
Morden . Surrey . SM4 5BY . United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 8288 1202 . **Email:** ALOVE@salvationarmy.org.uk



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