

Small Group Resources
Sunday 3 July 2016

Theme & Passage(s)	Good news that changes lives 1 Thessalonians 1
Trying something different...	Over the next five or six weeks we will be following a series on 1 Thessalonians. As we do so, we are going to try out a different approach to the small group materials. Each week the first part of the meeting will give an opportunity to reflect together on the Sunday that has past, including worship as well as the word (see below). Do take a good 20 to 30 minutes on this and feel free to move into prayer or ministry as seems right. This will be followed by a focus on the passage set for the Sunday ahead. In this way, you will be preparing towards the sermon to come. Don't panic! Give it go, and see how it works!
Welcome & Reflection on last Sunday	As a group, share your experiences of church last Sunday. The following prompts might help. What has stayed with you, and why? How did God speak to you, and how have you been responding to him? <i>If you were not in a service on Sunday, or were elsewhere, feel free to share from your weekend and join in any discussions that develop.</i>
Intro to series on 1 Thess.	Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Thessalonica around AD50 and it is the earliest writing of the New Testament. The church is young - 'barely through their first set of daily bread notes' (Anthony Billington, LICC). The church in Thessalonica was very dear to Paul, who planted the church and longed to return to them to encourage them (take a look at Acts 17:1-9). You will not help but notice the affection with which Paul writes to this fledgling church. It is a deeply encouraging letter that both affirms the church in its love, service and witness, and calls them to grow in grace more and more, giving a wealth of practical exhortations along the way.
Word/ Read & Reflect	Begin in silence, welcoming the Holy Spirit to guide you. Read the passage(s) and then be silent. Read again. Be silent once more, attentive to the Spirit. Share out of this experience... If time, consider some of the following questions... How would you describe the tone of letter, judging from its opening chapter? Consider Paul's words in verse 3 on faith, hope and love. What do you take from them? Paul writes of how the gospel had come to the Thessalonians. <i>If you haven't already taken a look at the story of Paul in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9) do so now.</i> How do you understand the term 'not simply in words but also with power...'? (see v 5). What is your experience of this, both in your own coming to faith and in the preaching of God's word at BBC? Do we see Word and Spirit in

	<p>good combination in our life together at BBC, including your small group?</p> <p>How has the gospel impacted the Thessalonians and with what results?</p>
Working it out	<p>How is your heart moved or challenged by what you have read and talked about?</p> <p>Decide on one way in which you will respond in the week ahead.</p>