

Theme & Passages	Losing & Finding 6: Losing your life Mark 8:34 – 9:1	Notes prepared Stephen Elmes
Welcome (10 mins)	Play a game of hide and seek – this could be looking for objects hidden before the session around the room, or you could go all out and hide around the house (1, 2, 3... 50 – I'm coming, ready or not!)	
Worship (20 mins)	Use the following song (video with lyrics) to know the invitation of God: to draw near to know his mercy, forgiveness and healing. The song runs into another one (What a beautiful name), and you might like to let it roll on in an extended time of worship. O come to the altar	
Working with God (20 mins): Evangelism Discipleship Compassion Justice Creation Care	This week our frontline story was brought by one of our young people, Oli. This can be found at 6:35 on the recording of our morning service (see HERE). It might be good to watch Oli's contribution to our service in your groups – to inspire prayer for our youth as they seek to follow Jesus in their daily living. Alternatively, if some in the group were there and heard Oli speak – ask them to share what they recall and let this lead into prayer.	
Word (20-25 mins)	Read Mark 8: 34 – 9:1 Jesus had been talking with his disciples about the suffering that lay before him (Mark 8:31-33): his rejection by the religious authorities, his killing and his resurrection. The disciples were thrown by this and tried to dissuade him from thinking this way – only to receive a stinging rebuke (v 33). This is important background to hearing the challenging words in our passage – for Jesus is essentially saying that those who follow him can expect the same. As Jesus suffers for obedience to God's way, so will we. The language he uses is vivid. All who follow this Messiah must ' deny themselves and take up their cross and follow,' and lose their life to save it. Steve explored what this might mean, beginning with what it doesn't mean. It is not about denying ourselves the good gifts of God, nor is it the wiping out of our personalities (the good gift that we are). Rather, it is about giving up on the life we might construct without God. Thomas Merton calls this the 'false self' – the attempt we make at our own survival and salvation, including the images we project and hide behind. <i>Do you find Merton's idea of the false-self helpful? What might it mean to deny or lose this to allow the true self to be found? Talk about this – sharing experiences to earth your discussion.</i> Steve shared a personal experience of 'losing and being found' – where his internal walls were unexpectedly breached and he came more fully into a knowledge of God's immense love. You might like to listen to it together on YouTube. <i>When have you experienced the love of God seeking you out?</i>	