

FAITH ON THE WAY

Worksheet 3B : Training Session(s) for Sponsors

This is an outline of a basic preparation for sponsors. People who are to be group leaders should also take part.

The material that follows will take two sessions to complete. It could be a Saturday morning and afternoon, for instance, or two evenings.

Preparation

Read *Faith on the Way* (or at least Chapters 1 to 4). As you read, be aware of and perhaps jot down in a notebook:

1. Bits of your own story that come to mind; the people and events that seem important to you.
2. Things in the book that excite you.
3. Things in the book that worry you or you don't agree with.

Task

1. The leader welcomes the members and invites them to say who they are and a little about themselves.
2. The leader introduces the session as a time for people to begin the work of accompanying someone on a journey of faith, making it clear that people are not under pressure to be more open than they feel is right for them and that the meeting is to be regarded as confidential.
3. Think for some minutes about why you are here, what you hope to get from the session(s), and what you think you have to offer to the session(s).
4. Depending on the number in the group, either share (3) with the whole group or split into more intimate small groups for this. Reflect on how this exercise feels (without moral judgement!).
5. Ask everyone to spend twenty minutes working in some way on their own story. Possible ways of doing this include:
 - (a) Draw a 'life line' which shows the ups and downs at various ages of your life as you think of events that have been important.
 - (b) List the people and the events that have mattered to you at different periods of your life. Note how you felt or feel about those periods. The 'Life Chart' on page 66 of *Faith on the Way* can be used as a model for this.
 - (c) Draw a picture or make a diagram of your life now. (No artistic skill is needed!)
 - (d) Make a cross dividing a page into four blocks and in the blocks list: what you enjoy, what gives you pleasure, what you dislike, what hurts you, what frightens you, what you hope for.
 - (e) Think about the past week and reflect on a high point, something that has been good, and a low point, something that has been bad, for you.

(This is a good point to make the break between sessions.)

6. Spend at least twenty minutes in pairs to share with each other the story you have been working on. Some pairs may want to divide the time in half, as listener and speaker and *vice versa*.
7. The whole group reviews the last two exercises. Look at questions like:
 - (a) How do you feel about what has happened in the last hour?
 - (b) What was it like to listen and to be listened to?
 - (c) What stories of faith were there among the life stories?
8. Which of the activities you have just done would be suitable to do in a group with the enquirers?
 - (a) Why or why not?
 - (b) What do you think would be similar or different with them?
 - (c) Look at the similarities and differences you expect. What skills and weaknesses have you seen in yourself and each other during this session?
9. Consider whether there is a need for further preparation sessions for sponsors or whether it is better for them to begin work and then come back for a reflection and 'in-service' training meeting.

Practicalities

1. Tell the sponsors who the enquirers are likely to be. See if they know them. Ask for prayers for them.
2. Consider how available people are to give time as sponsors, recognizing the commitment to meet with their enquirer and join in group sessions.
3. What are the practical arrangements that have to be made?
4. What are the important dates to be put into diaries for such events as first meeting of the group with enquirers, the Service of Welcome and planning meetings for that, and 'review sessions' for the sponsors?