

Connect resources concept

1) Intro and Idea

This document is intended for the CYLN. As we approach the beginning of Connect I'm aware that we have discussed resourcing the Connect leadership teams only very briefly. As I've thought about it I'd like to suggest a bit of an experiment: ***I suggest we hardly resource the Connect teams at all, but we give them a framework they can easily use to create their own material for their peers and for themselves.***

I hope the outcome of this will be 4-fold

1. The Connect teams will have their relationship with God moulded more fully as they rely on him (and each other).
2. They will step into a rhythm of bible reading, prayer, and asking God what he wants to say to the group that week.
3. It gives the Connect team genuine responsibility.
4. It makes it sustainable and less of a burden on youth leaders (in actual fact, I'm acutely aware it might make it more of a burden...).
5. There's only 4 outcomes. Don't read this one.

2) How it will actually work

The young people/person who is leading the bible bit that week will watch five 1-2 minute videos which will guide them through a 5 stage process. This process will encourage them to:

1. Read the allocated passage (decided by us, probably from a series like parables, biblical heroes, gospel of Thomas etc...), pray and ask God to speak.
2. Scribble down anything he might have said, along with any questions they have and things that stick out to them.
3. Come up with an analogy from their lives or real life to unpack what they think the bible is trying to say.
4. Come up with a challenge to people in the room from what they've read.
5. Order and collate the above to create their session.

I've produced a PDF they can download to help them in the process. All of the above is conceptualised at <https://aylesburyvale.yfc.co.uk/concept-page>.

3) It's all based on the following assumptions

1. God wants to work through young people.

2. Young people are totally capable of hearing from God, understanding the bible and applying it to their lives and the lives of others.
3. Young people need guidance, but they don't need to be spoon fed because spoon feeding kills it. The life would be sucked out of the Connect groups if we centrally said "here's the resource for this week, children. Question number one..." There's more buy in and a more meaningful session if the young people themselves have prayed it through, thought it through and got ready to communicate it.
4. The avoidance of heresy is preferable, and can be managed by having a (mostly silent) youth leader or volunteer in the room.

4) If this sounds feasible, here's what we'll do next...

The concept page videos will be totally re-filmed. I'll do the "This is why we're doing it like this" stage and then invite members of the CYLN or nominated young people from Connect teams to introduce each subsequent stage. I'll write 6 scripts that we all agree on (I mean, that I'll edit until we're agreed...☺) and we'll refilm them before September.

We'll also keep a catalogue of sessions that young people write in case they can be shared or (ironically) reused. One day we'll probably publish a book called "*Connect: 3000 bible studies written for young people, by young people,*" be the spring board for the careers of the 21st century's greatest theologians, become the masters of opening up the bible for young people by young people and receive the man Booker prize for drastically overcooking the penultimate paragraphs in draft documents.

Anyway, please have a pray and let me know what you think. For my part I genuinely believe this is something we need to try that could really serve the church, grow our young people and bring new believers into the kingdom. I hope I'm not overcooking that part. Guys, thank you for doing all this with us. I hope and pray we can find the balance between releasing all the potential and everyone getting totally nackered.

Thanks.

Tom.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9