

MSM3-1 Our Culture

Developing a community of invitation, welcome and hospitality

Opening prayer



God of mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible



¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:14-19 (NIV)

Underline three things in Paul's prayer that you would like to see experienced in the life of your church.

MSM3-2

Getting started

Working in pairs, list three qualities of family life that you find attractive.

1

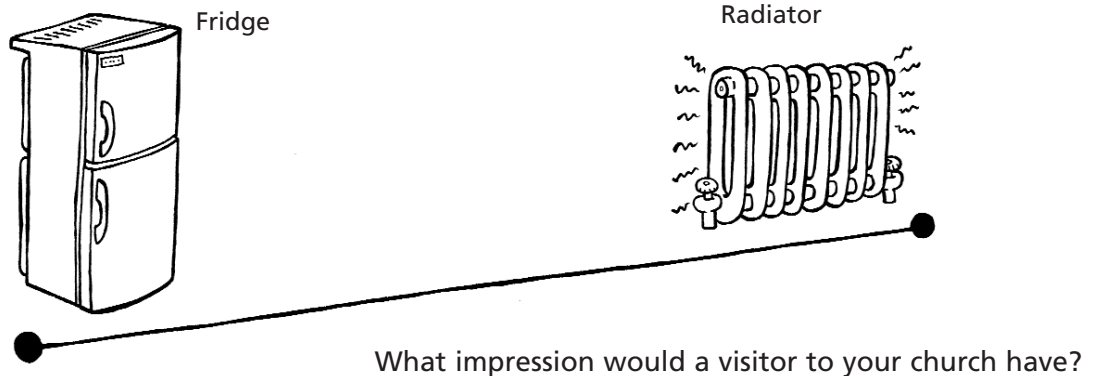
2

3

Exercise: Warm or cold



How do the relationships in your church feel to you? From your experience, does your church to you feel 'warm', 'cold' or 'medium'? Put a cross on the line to represent the 'temperature' in your church.

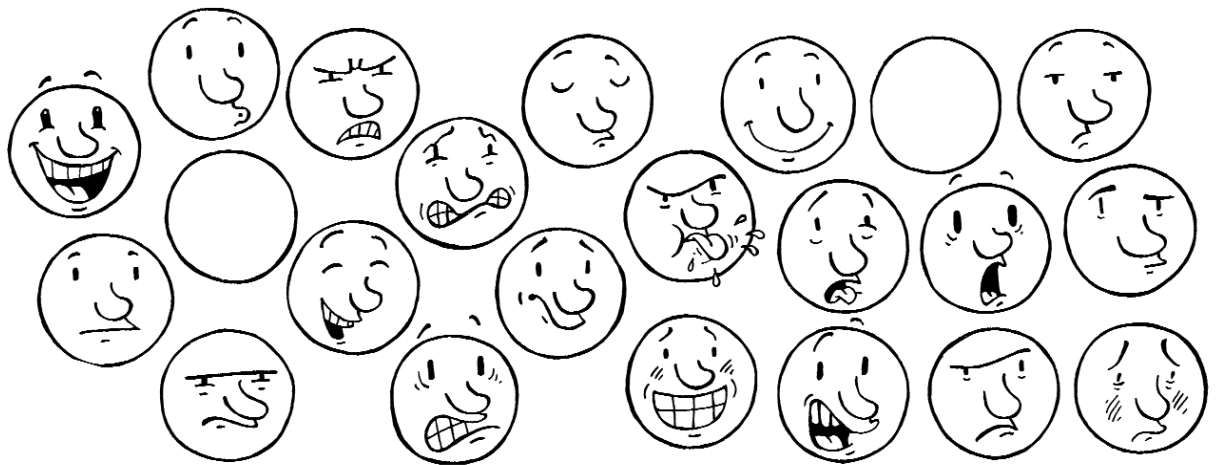


MSM3-3

Exercise: Mood faces



Which facial expressions best represent the relationships in your church (you can pick a maximum of three and you can use the blank faces to draw your own 'church' expression)? Share your ideas with a partner.



MSM3-4

Exercise: First time at church...



Discuss the following questions in threes.

- Who first invited you to church?
- What did it feel like?
- Have you ever thought of inviting someone to church?
- If you have invited someone, was it easy or difficult?
- Would an annual invitation target of 50 personal invites (for a smaller church) up to 250 (for a larger church) be realistic for your church?
- How do you react to the suggested target?

Exercise: Grand National



Famously, many horses fail to complete the Grand National every year. There are several fences, any of which might prevent a horse from reaching the finishing line. Likewise, there are many different hurdles that prevent people from fully belonging and contributing to the church community.

Not being able to:

1. Discover that the church exists, and finding out about what it does.
2. Meet church members.
3. Come through the door and finding a service that is comfortable for newcomers.
4. Receive a warm welcome and meeting people who actually engage with them as a person.
5. Establish genuine friendships within the church family.
6. Become involved in small groups and feeling that they belong there.
7. Make an active contribution to the life of the church.

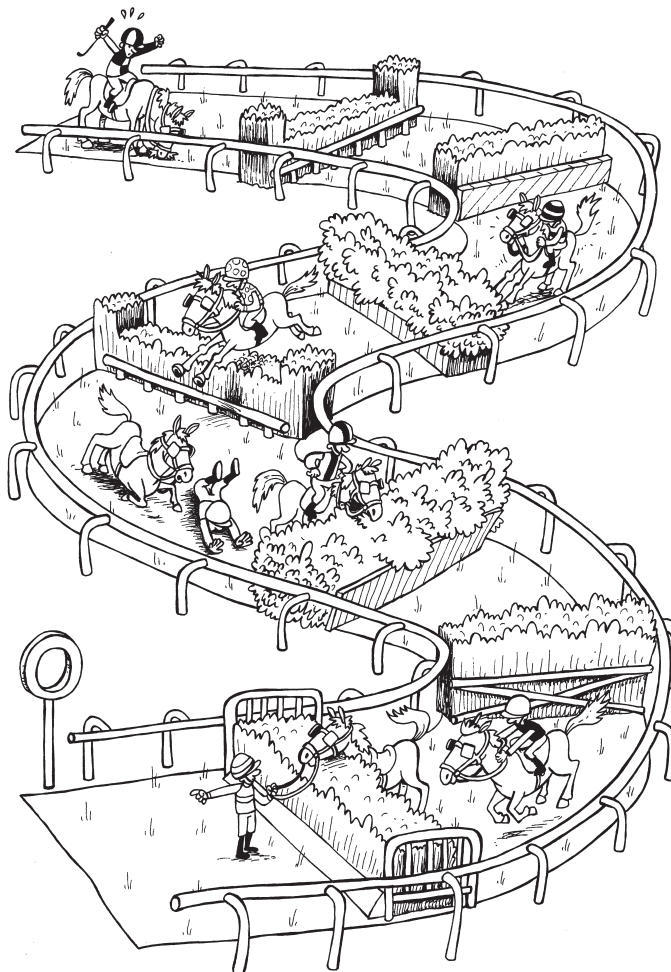
Exercise: MSM3-5

Which is your Becher's Brook?

The biggest, hardest hurdle in the Grand National is Becher's Brook.

Having considered all the hurdles facing someone trying to join your church community, the question is:

Which is your Becher's Brook?



MSM3-6

Response boxes

What things have struck you during this session?

- What should I be doing as an individual?

- What should we be doing as a church?

You might want to record your responses in the boxes above.

Your group leader may ask to collect responses from you so that some anonymous feedback can be given to your church leadership team.

Reflection and prayer



³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Mark 3:31-35 (NIV)