

for prayer. Journeying on sets up the opening conversation for the following session.

The **concluding prayers** can be enriched as appropriate by prayers for the group and by singing or an open prayer time as seems right and helpful. The **wisdom for the journey quotations** for reflection are for the group to ponder in the coming days.

No small group meeting ever goes to plan so you should anticipate that this structure and your timetable are flexible. However, it is the leader's role to keep on bringing the group back to theme and ensuring that (at least approximately) you stick to time.

Review and discernment

It will be important that those leading the group are supported within the wider church and that there are opportunities for the leaders to review and reflect on the life of the group at least a couple of times during the six sessions of the course.

Helpful questions to ask of each session might be:

- What did we expect to happen?
- What did happen and what were the reasons for this?
- How might we plan differently for the next sessions?

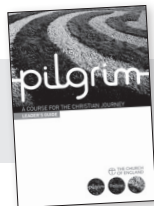
In any group of this kind, the Holy Spirit is at work. You may want to explore what the Spirit is doing in the life of the group and how you can better support people in their own discipleship and journey. You may want to encourage particular gifts that you see emerging. It will also be important to ask 'What next?' for this group at the mid-point of the course. Will you go on to another of the *Pilgrim* Grow courses or perhaps use some different material?

Mission and Practical Tasks

If the group goes well, it will begin to form into a community. The bonds of community can be strengthened by undertaking together a common task. This might be organizing a community meal. It might be a piece of service to others in the church or neighbourhood, perhaps following up the gifts and calling of one or two members of the group, and perhaps linked to the theme of the course.

And finally...

Leading a group for Christians who are exploring discipleship can be demanding but is also immensely rewarding. Make sure the leaders look after one another and pray for one another during the life of the group. Thank you for the service you are offering to your fellow Christians through the life of this small group.

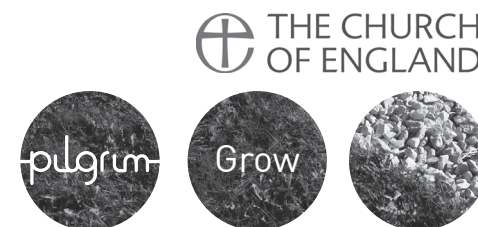


A full *Leader's Guide* (978 0 7151 4378 0) is available. For more details about this, other supporting materials and updates, please visit www.pilgrimcourse.org.

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The full *Pilgrim Leader's Guide* (ISBN 978 0 7151 4378 0) has lots of helpful material for those who are leading any *Pilgrim* Group. This short leaflet is a useful checklist for those who are preparing to lead one of the Grow Stage courses.

‘Jesus appointed twelve, whom he named apostles, to be with him and to be sent out...’

MARK 3.14

What is the Grow stage for?

The aim is to help people to learn the essentials for a life of discipleship. A disciple is to be called to live in a rhythm of being with Jesus in community and to be sent out to live out the Christian faith in the whole of his or her life.

Disciples need the support of other Christians and to be part of a community. We need opportunities to reflect and pray together and to explore the riches of our faith. The Grow stage supports that process both for new Christians and for those who have been Christians for many years.

Some groups who use this material will be moving on from the Follow stage of *Pilgrim*. Some will be specially convened for a short course. Others may be established small groups of different kinds.

How is Grow different from Follow?

Grow revisits the same four areas as Follow but in greater depth and covering more material. We assume the group are Christians, serious about their discipleship. We have written the material so that it can be led by the members of the group rather than by specially trained leaders. The short films in the Grow stage are part of the teaching rather than conversation starters. The opening and closing sections of each session are designed to support reflection on the whole life of the disciple.

How is Grow similar to Follow?

Reading the Bible together slowly, carefully and prayerfully remains at the heart of this part of *Pilgrim*. The sessions begin and end with prayers. There is a similar structure to the session. There is the same use of quotations from the Christian tradition.

Are there other ways of using the material?

We envisage that most people will use the Grow material as part of a small group which meets weekly. However, you could also use the material as part of a whole church away-day or parish weekend or Sunday by Sunday with the whole congregation.

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Planning and preparation

Good groups flow from thorough preparation and prayer. Decide well in advance when and where you will meet. If this is a new group, who will be invited and how will you gather the group together? How will you make the group known? If it is an ongoing group, will you invite new members at this point? What arrangements will you make for childcare support, transport, refreshments and keeping in touch? How can you share out the tasks of hosting the meeting, prayers and leading the different sessions to use the gifts of group members? How will the group leaders share and reflect on what is happening and reflect back to those who are supporting them? You will need a copy of *Pilgrim* for each member of the group.

It will be important to decide how you will use the short films and the sound files of the reflections in each session. You can download them and watch them in advance at www.pilgrimcourse.org. You might want to give some thought to the approximate timings of the different parts of the session.

Leading the session

Welcome everyone clearly at the beginning of the gathering and introduce the **theme** for this session. If it is the first meeting, you will want to give a brief introduction to the overall theme and why it is important. Then lead the **opening prayers** (or invite someone else to do so providing you have given them notice). In the Grow stage it may well be helpful to expand the opening and closing prayers with other appropriate material. This can give space for individual gifts and creativity.

You may want to allow longer for the opening **conversation** than in the Follow part of *Pilgrim*. Some of the questions invite people to share something of themselves to open up the subject. Others invite people to reflect on their lives over the last week in the light of the theme of the course (except for Session 1 of each course). This is one of the most important habits for a disciple to learn and cannot be rushed. Most groups will be helped by breaking into smaller groups of two or three at this point.

Draw the group back together for the **reading from the Bible** in the normal ‘*Lectio Divina*’ pattern. This is exactly the same as in the Follow stage. Then move from here to the **reflection** on the theme (using the sound file or reading aloud) and the **questions** together (again exactly as in the Follow stage). Most groups will want to work as one group for this part of the session. It will be important to allow more difficult questions to surface. As those leading may not have all the answers, it may be necessary to offer to do some research on hard questions and report back next week.

The short film can be used at different points in the session (and varied from week to week). Some weeks it will be a helpful introduction to the theme and used after the opening prayers. Other weeks it may be better after the discussion questions. Some films focus in on particular aspects of the theme.

Journeying on is important though it will not take much time. This is an invitation to carry the theme of this session into the coming week: to watch out for patterns and themes; to put something into practice; to take a question to think about or a pattern