



BREAKING THROUGH
transforming lives through prayer

SMALL GROUP LEADERS GUIDE



crossover

Helping Australian Baptists Share Jesus

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This guide is designed to be used by the small group leader.
Relevant pages can be photocopied if desired, to hand to group members.



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS BREAKING THROUGH?

Often when we think of evangelism we think of strategies, programs, leading people to Jesus courses, massive outdoor events, preaching the gospel. But how often do we think of prayer in that mix? We pray for our family, our church, our work, our health but how often do we focus on and spend extended periods of time in prayer for those who are not yet Christians? There are those who don't know Jesus in our workplace, in our family, those who are mere acquaintances, those who hover around the fringes of our church, and those who we bump into from time to time.

How often do we pray as a church that God will soften our hearts to pray for those who are not yet Christians? How often do we pray that God will give us opportunities to connect with those who don't know him? If the ruler of this world has blinded peoples' eyes with a veil of darkness so they resist the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4) then surely the only way to lift that veil is through our spiritual weapon of prayer. If the word of God says that our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh but ... against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12) then surely we must fight with our spiritual weapon of prayer.

In offering Breaking Through to your church we are hoping that as you undertake it, it will increase the activity of prayer in your church for those who are not yet Christians. We believe that prayer precedes, works alongside and covers evangelistic strategies, programs and events in a crucial way. It is a fundamental and often overlooked or minimised component in our programs. If we truly want to be effective in bringing more people into the kingdom of God we must bring people in through prayer! We believe that it's through prayer that we will experience break through in people's lives, seeing the darkness lifted and we will watch them walk into God's marvelous light!

When we sat down to talk about this idea that we had of putting together a resource that integrates prayer and evangelism, we tried to avoid using the word 'campaign'. The word 'campaign' sometimes can imply that you blitz the church with an idea for a couple of weeks then when it's over you can get back to 'normal' life! What we pray and hope that you will experience in your church as you do Breaking Through is a culture change. Many Christians in churches have lost focus of what is truly important in the Kingdom of God - getting people into the Kingdom! We know as leaders that culture change happens very slowly in churches but we believe that by undertaking Breaking Through, by God's Spirit He will begin and continue to transform your church.

So we pray that during these 10 weeks, God's Spirit will transform your church from being 'me' focused to 'others' focused, from being 'inward' focused to 'outward' focused, from being 'lacking in passion about prayer' to being 'fervent prayers', from being too 'timid' to experiment with new ideas to boldly trying 'new things'. We realise that not all this will happen during or immediately after undertaking Breaking Through but we do believe Breaking Through will propel your church in this direction and instigate change which we pray will grow into something bigger in the future of your church. In short, we pray that Breaking Through will sow seeds into your congregation that God will continue to make grow so that the house of God is built up with the right materials - one of them being prayer.

THE SMALL GROUP MATERIAL

The following material is designed for your use and it's up to you the leader to decide on what you would like photocopied for the group members. Take your time to work through the material as the studies are interactive workshop style rather than a lecture format.

The sessions each week are aimed at raising the level of prayer for unsaved people, so that a momentum of evangelistic prayer is created, and hopefully maintained in your church.

Each week it would also be good to incorporate a time of sharing how group members are going in praying for their three (or more) friends that they have written down on their 'Impact Card' given to them as the first message was preached on the first Sunday of Breaking Through .

Join us in praying that these studies will empower God's people in local churches to engage in evangelistic activities that are thoroughly birthed and covered in prayer, and aimed at building the local church body!

WEEK ONE: BREAKING THROUGH

Breaking Through will be launched in your church this Sunday.

Spend some time in your small group this week introducing Breaking Through. You may like to play the promotional clip from the Breaking Through DVD.

You may also like to gather around a meal and spend time in fellowship to deepen relationships, particularly if your group is new or has recently formed.

WEEK TWO: SOVEREIGN FOUNDATIONS

PURPOSE

To get people talking and to start to focus the group on how God uses people in various ways to draw people to himself.

EXERCISE

Arrange the seating in your group to reflect the age each person came to know Christ in a real and powerful way. For example, a person who gave their life to Christ at age 10 would be seated next to the person who gave their life to Christ at age 12; the next in line would be the person at age 13 and so on.

Have each person share at what age they came to Christ and some very brief details.

Have each person identify someone that God used in an instrumental way in the early stages of their faith journey. Each person should share that with the group.

Pause for a time of prayer thanking God for those faithful people who were used by God in such instrumental ways.

The term 'Sovereign Foundations' has been used to describe the various events, situations, and people that God used in our lives at a time prior to us making a firm commitment to Him. They may be wonderful times or times of hardship and pain.

Have each group member make a list of the 'Sovereign Foundations' that they can identify in their own lives. For more creative groups this might be done by drawing an illustrated time line of that period of their life.

Now have the group break these into positive and negative experiences and share one of each. The Bible tells us that it is in some of the hard times that God does a maturing or developing work in our lives. The group might possibly like to take a time to thank God for both the good and the bad events in our lives that were used to draw us ultimately to Him.

Ask group members if they can identify a key person who prayed for their salvation. Share this with the wider group.

WEEK THREE: BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, it is to include a firm scriptural study component in this fairly topical study series. But also, it is to identify that the story of Jonah basically tells us of a person that has no desire for these people to be saved. Lack of desire or 'passion for the lost' is a major demotivating force for evangelism. However, it is better for the group to discover that truth for themselves rather than you as study leader to just present that fact.

Key desired learning outcome:

To recognise our own lack of desire for lost people to become saved.

To recognise God's heart for those same people.

To have group members pray that God would begin to implant His heart and desire within them.

STRUCTURE

The structure guides the group to the end desired outcome by:

Firstly, getting the group thinking about the fact that Jonah's situation is similar to their own experience of a different culture. This is done through the 'warm-up' nature of exercise one. Make sure each person has an opportunity to speak at this time. (But keep it fast paced and avoid people telling stories of their overseas adventures). It is important to have people think about a culture that they don't relate to. For this is the situation for Jonah.

In exercise two, read the introduction and then read through the entire book in one sitting! (You might divide the task up among a number of readers). By reading through the whole book, group members start to list aspects of Jonah's personality and character (so they are involved in learning through scripture).

Compile a list of the various characteristics identified (this creates a group owned picture of the man of Jonah).

The final aspect of this section causes group members to recognise that Jonah's struggles could also be their own.

- In exercise three, the group is guided to explore the relationship of the book of Jonah to evangelism. This is not the most obvious way to think of this book. Identifying barriers to evangelism that are present in Jonah opens up the possibility that there will be problems for us also, for we have already been recognising the connectedness of Jonah's story with our own situation.
- You may like to conclude this self reflection by leading the group in a time of confession and prayer for their own hearts.

EXERCISE ONE: GETTING THE BRAIN WORKING!

Think of an overseas country that you have visited.

- What was the best part of that culture that you enjoyed? (Not necessarily the country but rather the culture).
- What was the least enjoyable thing about that culture that you experienced?
- Think of a culture that you have not yet experienced, that you would like to experience in the future.
- Think of the culture that you would least like to experience.

EXERCISE TWO: IS JONAH LIKE US?

Introduction: The book of Jonah is the story of a rather reluctant servant of God who is called to be involved in a cross cultural ministry experience. Because it is a short book it is able to be read through entirely in a few minutes. And by doing so, we are able to capture the large picture, and the entire story. Even though Jonah was an accomplished preacher, which may be far from our experience, this is certainly a story of hesitation to be involved in something the Lord wanted to happen. The themes of predestination and freewill seem to both be present in this book without seeming contradiction.

As the whole book of Jonah is read in the group:

- Write down a list of things that strike you about Jonah as a person.
- As a group list the various items identified.
- In what areas do you most identify with Jonah?

EXERCISE THREE: THE RELUCTANT EVANGELIST

- What things in the story of Jonah were barriers to him sharing God's message of salvation/judgment with the people of Nineveh?
- How are these barriers also present in our lives today?
- What can we do to seek to obey God and overcome these barriers?

WEEK FOUR: IDENTIFYING PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR

PURPOSE

This session is aimed at getting people to identify and then pray for specific unsaved people. The homework is to have them pray and settle on three people that they feel God might be asking them to pray for. (You could have them write these names on the 'Impact Card' handed out at church in the first week of Breaking Through).

What will be required:

- Worksheet for each person.
- Guaranteed Salvation Voucher for each person.
- One pair of dice.
- Small post-it notes.
- Cardboard display of the Engel's scale.
- Pens for each person.

EXERCISE

Each person writes down the names of 12 unsaved people they know. (To get people identifying unsaved people that they know).

Group leader explains the Engel's scale. (To have the people understand how to use the Engel's scale in praying for 'One Step Growth' for unsaved people).

Each person rolls the dice and writes the name of the person on a post-it note. (The number on the dice corresponds with one of the 12 people's names they wrote down. The dice has chosen at random one of their people. They then access where they would place that person on the Engel's scale).

Each person gives a short description of their person and places the post-it note on the cardboard Engel's scale. (This helps people understand the process and gives the leader an opportunity to clarify any confusion).

Group leader explains the concept of praying for 'One Step Change' in people. That is, praying them one step to the right along the Engel's scale. (To have people commit to praying for others because the prayers are specific and more likely to see results in the short term).

Have each person fill out the 'Guaranteed Salvation Voucher'. (This gets people to identify the unsaved person that they care about the most. It engages the heart!)

Have group members share about who they have chosen. (The leader could explain that they have just identified the person they care about the most who will spend eternity separated from God unless something changes. Sharing makes it real and builds group dynamics).

Leader explains the homework on deepening friendships. (This helps to reinforce the fact that this study is not just about information but aimed to result in change in their prayer for others).

Have people break into smaller groups and pray for the people on their vouchers. (Prayer for people who are very important to us is very affirming and it also closes the night with a concrete example).

WORKSHEET

List the names of 12 unsaved people you know:

1. _____	7. _____
2. _____	8. _____
3. _____	9. _____
4. _____	10. _____
5. _____	11. _____
6. _____	12. _____

ENGEL'S SCALE

-12.....0.....+12

Engel's scale breakdown:

- 12: Hates Christians/Christianity with a passion.
- 10: Cold and dismissive toward Christianity, definitely doesn't want to talk about it.
- 8: Knows a few Christians they respect.
- 6: Thinks churches are good things but doesn't want any personal involvement.
- 4: Thinks Christianity is good and open to discussion at least at some levels. Has occasionally attended church events.
- 2: Believes most of the claims of Christianity, still some doubts.
- 1: Believes the truth of the Christian message but has not accepted Christ.
- 0: Salvation.

DEEPENING FRIENDSHIPS

Focusing on three people

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GUARANTEED SALVATION VOUCHER

**THIS VOUCHER ENTITLES THE PERSON NAMED BELOW TO
SPEND ETERNITY IN GOD'S HEAVEN.**

This gift is given to

WEEK FIVE: LEARNING NEW WAYS TO PRAY

PURPOSE

This session is meant to show how to pray specific and intentionally evangelistic prayers for the people whom they have identified as 'prayer targets'. The homework is aimed to have participants make their prayers for the people much more specific and less 'mood driven'.

What will be required:

- Worksheet for each person.
- Cardboard display of the Engel's scale.
- Pens for each person.

EXERCISE

Review last session. (Simply to refresh people's awareness).

Leader introduces the topic of prayer and uses the 'why do we pray' questions on the worksheet. (To set the guidelines and background for the following small group exercise).

Break into smaller groups and take 10 minutes to discuss the three questions. (To have people recognize 1. There are some prayers that God will not answer e.g. "God kill that person", "Please force ... to accept you as Lord and Saviour"; 2. That there are still promises we can hold on to; 3. That our prayers are so often governed by our emotional state.

Share some of the answers in the larger group. (Don't discuss every answer, just get things flowing).

Individual exercise: To have people start to visualise what 'one step change' might look like for the person they are praying for. Also for people to realise that those changes might be able to occur in a number of different ways.

Leader introduces 'crafted prayer' concept. (To allow people to consider working on a prayer rather than just praying whatever takes their fancy at the time. To understand that we can wrestle with a prayer until we are convinced it is THE prayer that God would have us pray).

Read examples of crafted prayers. (To give some concrete examples of crafted prayers. Use the prayer supplied or even better if the leader has created a crafted prayer they can share from their own experience).

Group exercise: (To get people to practice applying this knowledge to specific people for whom some of them are praying. Also this shows that 'crafted prayers' are not necessarily an individual exercise).

Explain homework. (To get people to experiment with this concept and develop a conviction that their prayer is in line with God's heart for those people).

WORKSHEET

Who are the three people that you feel God might be calling you to pray for?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Where would you place them on the Engel's scale?

PRAYER

Why do we pray? God knows everything! He loves the person more than we do! He has the power to do whatever he likes for the person!

In groups of three or four discuss the following three questions (10 minutes):

- What are some of the limitations that God places on prayer?
- What are some of the promises that God makes regarding prayer?
- To what extent does your emotional state govern your prayer for others?

Moving people to the right:

As we pray for people to be saved we are consciously praying them along the 'Engel's Scale'.

In your groups again:

- Choose one person from your list of three.
- What change of attitude would show that the person had moved along one step?
- Think of three different things that might possibly cause such a move to the right for that person...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

CRAFTED PRAYER

Crafted prayer is simply a written prayer that has been prayed over until you are absolutely convinced that it is the prayer that God would have you pray in that situation. It is not spontaneous, it is not short term, and it is not emotion driven.

Example: Sample prayer written for daughter's non-Christian fiancé.

Lord, Thank you for Andy.

I acknowledge that it is your will and desire for Andy to surrender his life to you.

I want to join myself with what you desire to do in his life.

I pray that he may gain a greater awareness and understanding of your love and grace.

I pray that he will start to see Christianity as a better way.

I ask you to start to place the seeds of desire (for you) into his life.

I choose to show him acceptance and love just as he is right now.

At the same time I long for him to experience the full joy of relationship with you.

Amen.

EXERCISE

Choose one person from your list and write a draft of a 'crafted prayer'.

Name _____

Begin by allowing God to raise two or three points about the person...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Next, by using these points, write a short prayer that includes these aspects.

HOMEWORK

- Whose salvation is it that you feel led to pray for?
- Develop a crafted prayer for that person.
- Pray about how often you think God might be leading you to pray for that person.

WEEK SIX: CREATIVE ACTION

This week we suggest your small group put prayer into action by participating in a creative prayer initiative of your choosing.

You could organise a prayer labyrinth or a prayer walk around your neighbourhood. The Breaking Through Leaders Guide has some ideas, but feel free to be as creative as you like!

WEEK SEVEN:

DEEPENING INTENTIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

PURPOSE

This session is aimed at enabling people (both individually and as a group) to start to engage in low-level bridge building activities specifically targeted to those people being prayed for.

What will be required:

- Worksheet for each person.
- Pens for each person.
- Copy of the activity chart for each person.

EXERCISE

Review. (This is simply revision).

Each person rates their three people on the Engel's scale. (This is to refresh people's thinking about the three people they have committed to pray for).

In pairs people share about their three people. (This builds a sense of accountability. It is also likely by this stage that at least some of the people being prayed for have made some movement along the Engel's scale).

Leader teaches/shares about friendships. (This is a break from constant group work, and also introduces the idea of different levels of friendships).

Participants give each of their three friendships a rating according to the definitions on the worksheet. Enter that rating alongside the people's names on page one of the worksheet. (This gets people to critically assess the friendship levels they are presently operating at with their 'prayer targets').

Leader introduces 'working together' section and distributes 'activity chart'. (The aim is to have people identify things that will build evangelistic friendships. Both personally and also what might be achieved if they worked at this as a group. The aim is to come up with some concrete suggestions that might be able to be undertaken by the individuals or as a group).

WORKSHEET

- We have identified three unsaved people that we feel God is calling us to pray for.
- We are praying 'one step' prayers for them (moving people to the right).
- We have developed a 'crafted prayer' for each of our three people.

ON YOUR OWN

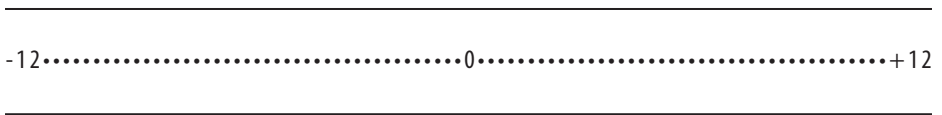
Think about each of the three people you are praying for. Locate each of them on the Engel's scale.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Engel's Scale



Pair up with one other person and tell them who is on your list.

LEVELS OF FRIENDSHIP

True Story: A young female university student shared a room with another student who happened to be a Christian. By the end of the year the first student had also become a Christian. When asked what happened she replied “my room-mate built a bridge of friendship with me and Jesus walked across”.

We cannot underestimate the power of friendships in evangelism. Obviously we are not operating on the same level of friendship with everyone we know. But often we don't think about the levels of friendship.

Using the definitions below, go back and rate your friendship level with each of your three people.

A - Acquaintance

- There are large areas of the persons' life that are unknown to you.
- You may not even know their surname. There is little or no relational commitment.

C - Casual Friendship

- Stable relationship but not deep.
- Mainly surface level, often has a 'polite' feel to it.
- Not hard work.

G - Growing Friendship

- These type of friendships feel like they are moving ahead.
- New discoveries are being made.
- Often you are meeting more of their acquaintances, family and friends.

D - Declining Friendship

- These are typified by declining amount of time spent together.
- Interests are often diverging.
- Has the feeling of having been closer in times gone by.

I - Intimate Friendship

- There is a real depth of intimacy and support.
- You are there for each other during the tough times in life.
- You readily put yourself out for the sake of this friend.

EXERCISE

Persons' name	Where are they on the Engel's scale?	At what friendship level are you operating with this person?

WORKING TOGETHER

Small groups are an ideal forum where we can encourage one another in our praying for unsaved people. But they also have the ability to easily help each other build and deepen friendships with those for whom we are praying.

Taking each of the people you are praying for one at a time, think of an activity that you, or your group or church, could do (or be part of) that would strengthen your friendship with that person, and at the same time have a positive influence for the Gospel.

Using the chart below may prove helpful. After you have filled in the chart, share your ideas with the rest of the group. Take note of any recurring ideas or any easily 'do-able' ideas.

Why not make a decision as a group to attempt to do at least one of the suggested group activities each term?

Persons' name	Activity that I could personally do	Activity that this group might be able to do	Activity that our church might be able to do

WEEK EIGHT TO TEN: FOLLOW UP

Week eight to ten of Breaking Through is an 'invitational phase' where your church may be organising an evangelistic sermon series or special outreach activities on Sundays or during the week.

No small group material has been prepared for these weeks to allow greater flexibility, however you may like to spend time reviewing or debriefing the material from the previous weeks or beginning to put the week seven 'working together' ideas into practice.

Encourage the group to continue praying for their own and group member's family and friends.