



MODULE 3 | **The Real Jesus**

# Leader's Guide



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# Course Overview

## What is Ripple Effect?

Ripple Effect is a Christian discipleship course for evangelism. Ripple Effect is an accessible and comprehensive course that will help you:

- Better understand the good news about Jesus yourself
- Love family and friends who don't know Jesus by praying for them regularly
- Develop skills in talking about Jesus
- Learn how to live a life always 'on mission' and ready to serve God
- Hear what God is doing in and through others as you pray for them

## Who is Ripple Effect for?

This course is for you if you want to 'dive' into evangelism or just want to dip your toe in the water. Expect God to create ripples that impact others in ways you never would have imagined.

Depending where you are on your Christian journey, you should begin with Module 1 and/or 2 to establish gospel themes and learn frameworks used in later modules.

## Why does Ripple Effect work?

The course is built around small groups of people meeting weekly to engage with the brief session video and session guide. These weekly meetings are where discipleship happens and are crucial to the momentum of Ripple Effect. For each session, the group will:

### SHARE

Share stories of evangelistic opportunities since the last session to encourage and seek wisdom from others in the group. God is always working.

### PRAY

Praise God for his love, salvation, and the privilege of evangelism. Ask God to save our family and friends and use us to help them come to know and trust Jesus.

### TRAIN

Improve confidence and competence in evangelism by learning, practicing, and reviewing skills that enable us to speak about Jesus in a natural and unforced manner.

## **What does Ripple Effect cover?**

The Ripple Effect course is made up of 6 modules. You will find the modules cohesive as they build on gospel themes and frameworks. Each module contains 8 sessions.

### **MODULE 1 | Jesus & Me**

Talking about Jesus and His impact on me

### **MODULE 2 | Jesus & Conversation**

Talking about the gospel in everyday conversations

### **MODULE 3 | The Real Jesus (This Module)**

Reading a Gospel with someone investigating Jesus

### **MODULE 4 | Apologetics**

Answering the questions people have about Jesus and Christianity

### **MODULE 5 | Knowing Jesus**

Discipling a new Christian

### **MODULE 6 | Jesus & Mission**

Sharing the gospel with everyone

## **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the AFES's generosity in allowing material that was developed by their staff to be turned into Ripple Effect.

We would also like to thank SOMA, Rebecca Manley Pippert, Tim Keller and Sam Chan for their work on evangelism training. They have helped shape our thinking and inspired us.

# Module Overview

## MODULE 3 | The Real Jesus

**This module is designed to help you read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus and Christianity.**

1. Why read Luke's Gospel?
2. Reading Luke's Gospel with three questions
3. Inviting people to read Luke's Gospel
4. Loving your neighbour
5. Which passages in Luke's Gospel?
6. How we are forgiven
7. Inviting people to follow Jesus
8. The costs and benefits of following Jesus

### **Each session includes these components:**

1. INTRO. Each session starts with a short training video.
2. SHARE. Talk through evangelistic opportunities in the past week.
3. PRAY. Praise God for Jesus and his forgiveness. Ask God to save our family and friends and speak through us to them.
4. TRAIN. Learn to read Luke's Gospel with people investigating Jesus and Christianity.
5. REVISE. Revisit session content at home to consolidate our learning.

### **Module Goals**

- Learn to read Luke's Gospel with someone who is investigating Jesus.
- Pray regularly for our family and friends who don't know Jesus yet.
- Develop a heart for evangelism by reflecting on Jesus' forgiveness.

# Tips for Leading

*Tips for leading will be in italics in this Leader's Guide. There will be suggestions about group dynamics, possible trajectories for answers and ideas about how you could particularise the session for your group.*

## **General tips for effective Ripple Effect sessions**

1. *Remember that Ripple Effect is about peer-to-peer encouragement. The leader doesn't need to be an expert at evangelism. You just need to prayerfully trust God and share honestly – just like in evangelism.*
2. *This Leader's Guide is useful for preparation but try not to use it in your Ripple Effect session. Having prepared well, trust God to give you the words you need when you need them – just like in evangelism.*
3. *Set clear group expectations. For example, listening to and not interrupting others when they are speaking. Maintaining privacy. If there is disagreement, expressing it gently and respectfully with the aim of building each other up in the Lord. Keeping to the agreed start and finish time. Notifying the group if you are unable to attend a session. Etc*
4. *Lock in a regular meeting time and place and commit to it.*
5. *As you move through the material, you'll get an idea of where your group should spend more time or less time. Each of the Share Pray, and Train sections are important. Try not to always cut the same one short if you feel pressed for time.*
6. *Avoid running overtime because it discourages people from attending. It's okay not to cover all the session material every week.*



# Session 1

## Why read Luke's Gospel?

*Each session begins with a box containing the key idea, encouragement, challenge, and goals of the session. It will help you keep the group on track.*

**Key idea:** *Luke records eye-witness accounts of Jesus so that people might know Jesus and the forgiveness he brings, and choose to follow him.*

**Key encouragement:** *Trust God to speak about Jesus, through his word, as you invite people to read Luke's Gospel with you.*

**Practical challenge:** *Pray regularly for people to become Christian.*

**Session goals:**

- *Orientation to Ripple Effect 3.*
- *Consider who you could ask to read Luke with you and pray for them.*
- *Discuss reasons to read Luke with someone investigating Jesus.*
- *Know that God speaks through his word and Spirit about Jesus.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the Ripple Effect Module 3 introduction video.

In this Ripple Effect Module (RE3 – The Real Jesus) you will learn how to read Luke's Gospel with someone who is not yet a Christian. Why read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus? Because in the pages of Luke's biography of Jesus they will meet the 'real Jesus' and be able to make an informed decision about whether to trust and follow him.

### Share

*If there are more than four people in your group consider dividing into smaller groups for this part of the session so that everyone has a chance to share. You might keep the same groups for the entire module, or you could mix up the groups each session. Do whatever seems best for your group.*

This is our first session so we'll spend time getting to know each other. Since we are learning to invite people to read Luke's Gospel with us, we'll share our favourite gospel story with each other.

- Introduce yourself to the group.
- Why are you participating in RE3?
- What is your favourite story about Jesus or told by Jesus? Why is it your favourite?

*Listen carefully to people's answers. It will help you understand what they want from this module and any apprehension they have about reading the Bible with someone.*

*As the leader, you can set the tone for the group by being honest and vulnerable when you share.*

*Encourage people to stick to a couple of minutes of sharing each. It will be too much time for some people and not enough for others. We'll be sharing at the start of each RE3 session so there will be plenty of opportunity to get to know each other in future sessions.*

*Time constraints reflect the reality of evangelism. We often find ourselves with limited time, and unfinished conversations that we want to pick up again later. Embrace the 'feeling' of evangelism in RE3 sessions so that your group grows comfortable with it.*

Setting group expectations.

- How can we make our group a safe and comfortable place to Share, Pray and Train together?

*Set clear group expectations so that participants know what to expect when they come. It helps make the group a safe space. These might include:*

- *Listening to and not interrupting others when they are speaking.*
- *Maintaining privacy – what people share about themselves, and their family and friends, should not go outside the group.*
- *Keeping to the agreed start and finish time.*
- *Notifying the group if you are unable to attend a session.*
- *If there is disagreement, expressing it gently and respectfully with the aim of building each other up in the Lord.*

Many of these group expectations will also be important when reading Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus.

Pray.

*The group leader prays for God to be at work as we meet for the next eight sessions.*

## **Train**

*The Leader's Guide contains ideas for possible answers and trajectories. They are indicative not exhaustive, and you don't need to cover every point.*

*Encourage people to connect their responses to the Bible story that we read. When we read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus we can't expect them to have broader knowledge of the Bible than what we have just read with them.*

Watch the introduction video for Session 1.

In his introduction and conclusion, Luke tells us what to expect from his biography of Jesus.

1. Read Luke 1:1-4. Why did Luke write this book?
  - *So that readers can learn the truth about Jesus from people who were eyewitnesses to Jesus.*
2. Read Luke 24:13-35.
  - a. 'What things' (v19) had Cleopas and his friend learnt or heard about Jesus?
    - *Jesus was a prophet who did and said amazing things. People hoped that Jesus was the one who would redeem (free) Israel as promised in the Old Testament. Jesus was killed by the Jewish authorities but three days later his tomb was empty. Angels said that he was alive.*
  - b. How did Cleopas and his friend recognise that they were speaking to Jesus?
    - *Jesus did and said familiar things. He explained the Scriptures to them in a way that caused their hearts to burn within them, and he broke bread with them as he had done many times before. Their eyes were opened — a work of the Spirit.*
    - *Their experience was confirmed when they returned to the Jerusalem and heard that others also had seen Jesus alive.*
3. What encouragement do these passages give us to read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus?
  - *These are real events in the real world. They are historically grounded and reliable. Luke was not an eyewitness but he cared about truth so he investigated eyewitness accounts.*
  - *God has always worked through his word and Spirit to help people see the truth about Jesus. That was even true for the apostles and first Christians.*

- *Conversion is God's work not our work. He is the one who opens people's eyes to see Jesus and stirs their hearts to love Jesus.*
4. What additional reasons to read Luke's Gospel can you think of that would encourage someone to read it? Be creative.
- *The influence of Jesus and the Bible on Western culture, art, literature, values, etc.*
  - *Have an informed opinion from the source documents.*
  - *The themes in Luke's Gospel still resonate powerfully today. Love, hope, joy, suffering, betrayal, evil, transformation, forgiveness, etc.*
  - *Jesus has changed my life for the better and I think that knowing him could change yours too.*
5. Who would you like to invite to read Luke with you?
- a. Why them? (As you share, please remember to respect people's privacy.)
    - *As a group, decide how much information about your family and friends to share with each other. Will you use their full names or just an initial? Consider how much detail about a conversation or their life circumstances to share. What you share may depend on how many people are in your RE3 group or whether your RE3 group know or might meet your family and friends.*
  - b. How do you feel about inviting this person? What are you excited or hesitant about?

Jesus is still a recognisable name today. Millions of people love and follow him. People die for him. Whether or not people believe in him, they feel the influence of his life and teaching in many cultural values and institutions. The themes Luke addresses—love, hope, joy, suffering, betrayal, evil, transformation, forgiveness (just to name a few!)—still resonate with us today. There are all sorts of reasons for someone to read Luke's Gospel.

We invite people to read Luke's Gospel so that they can see Jesus through the eyes of people who knew him. As they read Luke, we pray that God will open their eyes to see and stir their hearts to love Jesus, just as God has graciously done for us.

## Pray

*Aim for some things to thank God for and to ask God for.*

*Sound out how comfortable people are with praying out loud in a group. If people are nervous about this, suggest they write down a sentence or two and read it out during the prayer time. Work out a way to make it a safe space for even the nervous to pray out loud. Prayer is a key part of RE3.*

What thanksgiving and prayer points flow out of:

- | our Luke passages?
- | our time of sharing?

Some members of the group may feel more comfortable praying out loud than others. Please remember that a one-sentence prayer written down and read out is just as authentic as a five-minute prayer prayed spontaneously.

## Revise

*Discuss why revising session content between sessions is important and how much time people should spend on it. Approximately 60mins? Revise activities are designed to consolidate learning and to keep evangelism on our agenda throughout the week.*

*Read through the activities so that if people have any questions they can ask them.*

After each session there will be review activities to complete at home. They are designed to consolidate learning and to keep evangelism on our agenda throughout the week.

- Complete the Relationship Network Worksheet attached to this session.
- Start reading Luke's Gospel. Each week we'll read through a section of Luke's Gospel so that by the end of the module we have read the whole book.

This week, read Luke 1:1-4:13 in one sitting. In these passages Luke tells us about Jesus' birth and his life before he began his public ministry. After you have read it answer the following questions about:

- a. Jesus: what do we learn about Jesus?

- b. People around Jesus: how did Jesus impact the lives of those around him?
- c. Me: what particularly stood out for me in this story?

→ Connect with other group members during the week. Share with each other your response to the Me question. When someone else shares spend a few minutes praying for them.

*Set up a group chat on a messaging app so that you can communicate prayer points and encouragements to each other during the week. If social media is not a helpful tool for your group then find another way to encourage each between sessions.*

*Initiate conversation between sessions by sharing your own responses to the Me question. Do this early in the week so that it also acts as a reminder to others to look at the Review activities. If anyone else shares, make sure you pray for them and respond to them.*

*We are discussing the Me question because people tend to find it easier to talk about Jesus if they are learning and growing in their own relationship with Jesus.*

### **After Session Reflection**

- *How comfortable are people sharing and praying?*
- *How competent are people at reading the Bible?*
- *What went smoothly and what do I need to rethink?*
- *Did we miss anything important?*
- *What can I do or change to make the sessions run more smoothly?*

*Don't panic if things feel clunky at the start. People will get to know each other and grow to understand how to use the material.*

*As you move through the material, you'll get an idea of where your group should spend more time or less time. Each of the Share, Pray, Train sections are important. Be careful not to always cut the same one short if you are under time pressures.*

*You'll also work out which person speaks first or longest or most authoritatively, etc. As you learn more about the people in your group, consider the best way to handle group dynamics so that everyone is encouraged to share.*

*Avoid running overtime because it discourages people from attending. Set a timer for various sections if you need to and don't feel the need to cover all the material every session.*

*Pray for yourself and the people in your group.*

# Relationship Network Worksheet

Unless we pause and reflect, we may not realise the opportunities that God has given us to proclaim the gospel to others.

Use the following diagram to:

- | identify the different relationship networks in your life.
- | list the names of people who aren't Christian that you know in your network.

As you look at your relationship network, ask yourself 'Is my list broad enough?'

Here are some ideas to broaden your list:

- | someone who catches the train at the same time you do.
- | an old school friend you saw at a wedding.
- | someone who walks the dog at the same park.
- | a 'blast from the past' whose name appeared in your Facebook feed.
- | a person at the gym.

As you look at your relationship network:

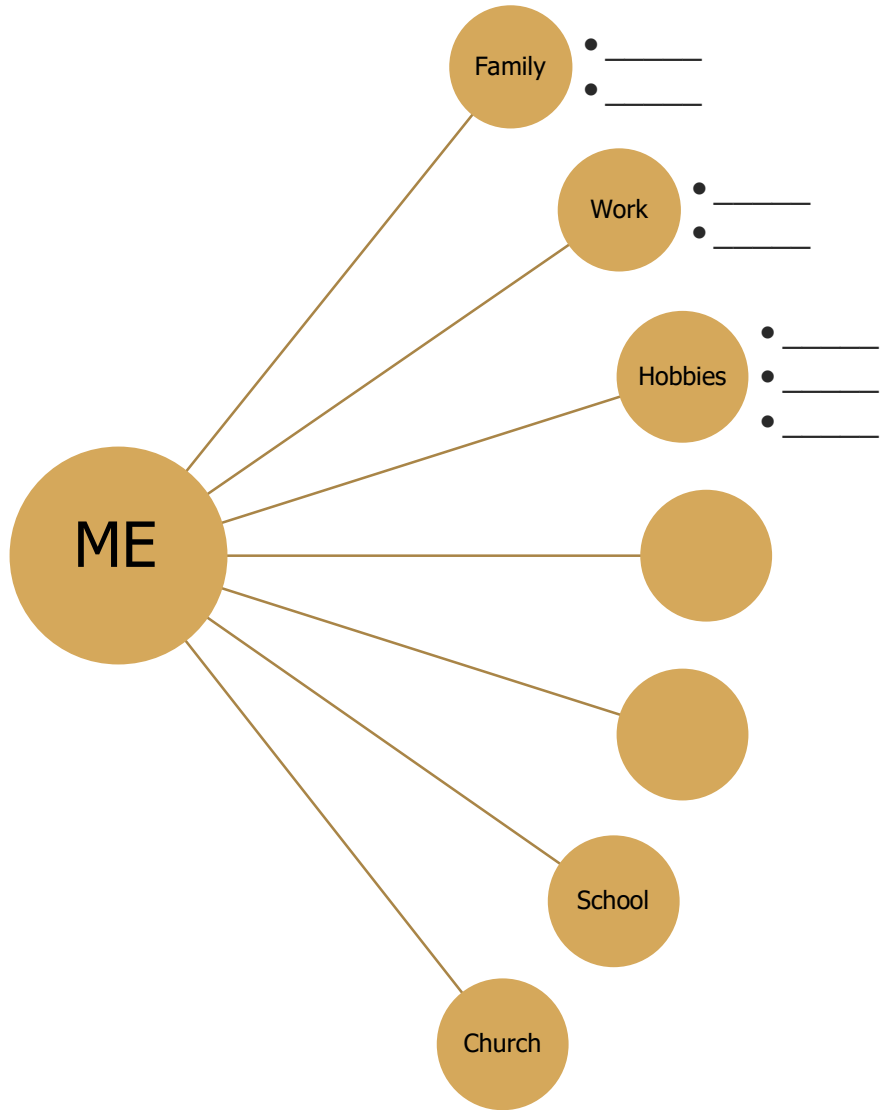
- | underline the names of people you see regularly, even if you don't know them very well yet.
- | circle the names of people you expect to see next week.

→ Choose 5 of the people you see or speak with regularly to pray for throughout RE3.

- | Include the person you shared about in Session 1.
- | These are the people we will be seeking to invite to read Luke's Gospel with us.

→ Reflect on and pray over these questions:

1. How might their lives be better if they knew Jesus?
2. Where and when do you see them?
3. What do you talk about?
4. How can you be more intentional in the way you share Jesus and your life with them?





## Session 2

# Reading Luke's Gospel with three questions

**Key idea:** *As we read Luke's Gospel, we will focus on Jesus and how people responded to him.*

**Key encouragement:** *You don't need to be an expert Bible teacher to read Luke's Gospel with others.*

**Practical challenge:** *Familiarise yourself with three questions that will help us read Luke's Gospel well.*

**Session goals:**

- *Learn to use three questions to read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus: Jesus. People. Me.*
- *Gain confidence that Jesus is willing and able to meet our needs, the most important of which is our need for forgiveness.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 2.

In each session we will read one passage in Luke's Gospel and discuss it using three questions. The stories we've chosen draw attention to Jesus' offer of forgiveness. By the end of the module, we'll have eight passages ready to read with a person investigating Jesus.

### Share

From the Relationship Network Worksheet, share about two more of the five people you hope to invite to read Luke's Gospel with you.

- Share a little bit about your relationship with them and the conversations, if any, that you have had about Jesus and Christianity.

*What do they think about Jesus and Christians? What are their opinions based on? People's opinions about Jesus might be different from their opinions about Christians and the church.*

*Start where your group members are at and encourage them to take a small step forward. If they need to make friends with people who aren't Christian—then pray for that. If they need an opportunity or courage to tell someone that they are Christian—then pray for that. etc.*

**Pray**

The first few chapters of Luke are filled with people singing with joy about the birth of Jesus. Zechariah sings of his son John's privileged role in pointing people to Jesus.

you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,  
to give his people the knowledge of salvation  
through the forgiveness of their sins,  
because of the tender mercy of our God

Luke 1:76-78 (NIV)

- | Thank God for Jesus and the mercy and forgiveness he offers to all who trust him.
- | Pray for your family and friends. Ask God to help them receive and rejoice in Jesus' offer of mercy and forgiveness.
- | Ask God to use us in this process, in any way he chooses, including by inviting them to read Luke's Gospel with us.

**Train*****Skill: Three questions***

Our three questions are about Jesus, the people who encountered him, and how Jesus relates to us 2,000 years later. They can be used for discussing almost any passage in any Gospel. The questions, in their most general form, are:

**Jesus:** What do we learn about Jesus in this story?

**People:** What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?

**Me:** What is my response to Jesus and this story?

These questions keep us focused on Jesus and how he affected the people around him. They start with the primary historical documents about Jesus, not secondary or personal opinions. They challenge us to consider the relevance of Jesus to us personally today.

***Luke's Gospel***

In Luke 4-9 we meet all sorts of people with all sorts of needs coming to Jesus for help. We will read one of their stories today.

1. Read Luke 5:17-31 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *What does he say and do? Why?*
    - *How does he treat people?*
    - *What do we learn about his relationship with God?*
    - *What does Jesus want people to understand about himself, themselves and God.*

- b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
  - *What are we told about them and why might this matter?*
  - *What do people think about Jesus? Why?*
  - *What do they want from Jesus? Why?*
  
- c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
  - *What stood out for me?*
  - *Who am I most like?*
  - *What questions do I have about Jesus and this story?*
  - *Do I agree with Jesus?*

*Under each of the three questions are expansion questions. You can find more examples in the document attached to this session. These expansion questions help discussion keep moving and stay focused on Jesus. Over time you'll discover which ones work best for you and your group.*

*We do not need to discuss every detail of the passage, either in RE3 sessions or when we are reading Luke with someone investigating Jesus.*

2. Review your discussion.

*This section is designed to help group members 'notice' how the discussion evolved and where it got stuck or distracted.*

*When you are leading, it is easy to be intimidated by this process. Remember that RE3 is about ordinary Christians prayerfully trusting God to use us as we read Luke's Gospel with others. It is not about running the 'perfect' Bible study. If you model being relaxed about this process, including the things you would do differently if you had your time again, you'll help your group members be more relaxed when they are reading Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus.*

In each session we will review our discussion so that we notice how it evolved and what questions or comments moved it forward or deeper. We might also notice questions and comments which distracted us or took attention away from Jesus. Noticing these things will help us become better skilled at reading Luke's Gospel with others.

- a. Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?

- b. What does this story teach us about forgiveness?
- *Jesus thinks forgiveness is our greatest need, even if it is not our only need.*
  - *Jesus is willing and able to forgive.*
  - *Jesus has authority to forgive because he is God.*
- c. What aspects of the story would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

*We can't discuss every question every time and we are always making decisions about what to leave out or what to return to later. It's the same with evangelism.*

Attached to today's session is a resource titled Expansion Questions. These questions can help keep discussion flowing and help people think more deeply about the passage. Which and how many of these we use depends on the passage, people's reading comprehension, their familiarity with Jesus and the Bible, whether they are an internal or external processor, how much time you have, etc. We're aiming for our discussion to feel more like a peer-to-peer conversation than a teacher-student conversation.

3. Pray. Thank God that Jesus is willing and able to forgive us. Ask God to help our family and friends see their need for forgiveness too.

*You could do this all together, or break up into pairs, or ask one person to pray for the group.*

RE3 is about ordinary Christians prayerfully trusting God to use us as we read Luke's Gospel with others. It is not about running the 'perfect' Bible study. If God has given us an opportunity to read Luke's Gospel with someone, then it's been a good day, even if it didn't go exactly the way we hoped it would.

### **Revise**

Read Luke 4:14-7:35 in one sitting. In these chapters we hear Jesus' teaching and see some of his miracles. Both give us glimpses of what life is like in God's kingdom. After you have read these chapters answer the three questions.

- Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus?
- People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
- Me: What is my response to Jesus and these stories?

Read the Expansion Questions attachment.

- For each of the three questions, choose one expansion question that you find interesting. Use it to add to your answers above.

Connect with other group members during the week.

- Share with each other your response to the Me question. When someone else shares spend a few minutes praying for them.

### ***After Session Reflection***

- *How comfortable are people sharing and praying?*
- *How competent are people at reading the Bible?*
- *What went smoothly and what do I need to rethink?*
- *Did we miss anything important?*
- *What can I do or change to make the sessions run more smoothly?*

*Again, set the tone by posting to the group chat earlier rather than later in the week.*

*Pray for yourself, your group, and the people they are praying for.*



# Expansion Questions

RE3 uses three questions to structure discussion on Luke's Gospel. They focus on Jesus and how he affected the people around him. The last question encourages us to see how Jesus could affect us. For some people and groups these questions by themselves will be enough for fruitful discussion. Other people or groups might need more prompting. That's where expansion questions come in.

This resource contains examples of expansion questions that help keep discussion flowing and encourage us to think more deeply about the passage. Which and how many of these we use depends on the passage, people's reading comprehension, their familiarity with Jesus and the Bible, whether they are an internal or external processor, how much time you have, etc. We're aiming for discussion to feel more like a peer-to-peer conversation than a teacher-student conversation.

## **Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?**

- | What does Jesus say and do? Why does he say and do these things?
- | Who does Jesus think he is? What evidence does he offer?
- | What do we learn about Jesus' character and motives?
- | What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with God? His relationship with people?
- | What does Jesus want people to understand about himself, themselves, God, and their world?

## **People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?**

- | Who are the people in the story? (Don't forget the crowd who watch and assess Jesus but have not committed to following him.)
- | What do they say and do? Why?
- | What do they think and feel about Jesus? Why?
- | What are we told about them and why might this be important?
- | What do we learn about their circumstances, character, values and motives?
- | What is their relationship with God like? With Jesus? With other people?

## **Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?**

- | What stood out for me in this story?
- | Who do I connect with in the story? Who am I most like or least like? Why?
- | What questions do I have about Jesus and this story?
- | How do I feel about this story?
- | What do I think about Jesus? Do I agree with Jesus? Why?
- | What does this tell me about trusting and following Jesus?

When preparing to read Luke's Gospel with someone it can be helpful to think through the Me question not only from your own perspective but also from their perspective. This helps you to love them well as you seek to view life from their perspective and better understand their joys, fears, hopes and griefs. God-willing, it will give you an opportunity to share with them how knowing Jesus could meet their deepest needs.



## Session 3

# Inviting people to read Luke's Gospel

**Key idea:** *Our response to Jesus depends on whether we think we need forgiveness.*

**Key encouragement:** *Nourish your own love for Jesus by reflecting on the magnitude of his forgiveness.*

**Practical challenge:** *Invite someone to read Luke's Gospel with you.*

**Session goals:**

- *Grow increasingly familiar with the three questions: Jesus. People. Me.*
- *Practice inviting someone to read Luke's Gospel with you.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*

### Session Introduction

*As you wait for people to arrive, you could fill the time with casual conversation about how people found the Review exercises, whether they have seen any of the people we are praying for, etc. This doesn't have to wait until we 'officially' begin.*

Watch the introduction video for Session 3.

Jesus invited anyone and everyone to come to him and experience life-changing forgiveness. When you know you need it, Jesus' forgiveness inspires love for him and brings great joy, hope and peace. By inviting people to read Luke's Gospel with us, we are inviting them to meet Jesus and enjoy his forgiveness too.

*The opening paragraph summarises the 'forgiveness' theme running throughout RE3. It helps explain why RE3 uses the passages it does.*

### Share

From the Relationship Network Worksheet, share about two more of the five people you hope to invite to read Luke's Gospel with you.

- Share a little bit about your relationship with them. Is there anything we have read or discussed so far that might connect with them?

## Pray

In the synagogue at Nazareth, at the start of his public ministry, Jesus read from the Scriptures:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

Luke 4:18-19 (NIV)

- | Thank God for Jesus and freedom he offers to all who trust him.
- | Pray for your family and friends. Ask God to help them come to Jesus for the true freedom that only Jesus can give.

## Train

### *Luke’s Gospel*

*Let the group know that you will facilitate the Luke’s Gospel discussion (Question 1) until RE3 Session 4. After that each group member will have a turn at facilitating discussion on a passage from Luke’s Gospel. This is so that we all practice reading Luke’s Gospel others.*

In our story today Jesus is at a dinner party where he meets a woman who knows that she needs forgiveness and a man who thinks he doesn’t.

1. Read Luke 7:36-50 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *What does Jesus say to the woman and to Simon?*
    - *How does he treat them? What does he offer them?*
    - *What type of dinner guest is he?*
    - *How does Jesus define forgiveness?*
  - b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
    - *Who are the people in the story?*
    - *What are they like?*
    - *What do they think and feel about Jesus? About each other? About themselves?*
    - *Do they think they need forgiveness? Why?*
    - *Who or what do they have faith in?*

- c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
- *What stood out for me in the story?*
  - *Which person am I most like?*
  - *How do I define forgiveness?*
  - *Do I need forgiveness?*
  - *What does enjoying Jesus' forgiveness mean for me?*

2. Review your discussion.

- a. Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?
- b. What does this story teach us about forgiveness?
- *Jesus' forgiveness frees us to enjoy his love and to love him in return.*
  - *Forgiveness is like and feels like having all your debts cancelled.*
  - *Jesus offers forgiveness to anyone and everyone.*
  - *Denying your need for forgiveness risks judgmentalism.*
- c. What aspects of the story would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

3. What does enjoying Jesus' forgiveness mean for me?

*This question is designed to help us keep growing in our own knowledge of and love for Jesus. Evangelism always comes more naturally when we enjoy our relationship with Jesus.*

*Give people a few minutes to think about this and then invite them to share with the group.*

**Skill: Invitations**

We are seeking to ask people to read Luke's Gospel with us so that they will meet the 'real Jesus' and be able to make an informed decision about whether he is worth trusting and following.

Picture one of the people you are praying for. Now imagine asking this person whether they would be interested in reading Luke's biography of Jesus with you.

*Be ready with a worked example for one the five people you are praying for to demonstrate this to your group.*

1. What is the best thing that could happen?
2. What is the worst thing that could happen? How likely is this to happen?

*In Australia, for most people most of the time, the worst that will happen when you ask a person to read Luke's Gospel with you is an uncomfortable 'No, thank you. I'm not interested.' But, be sensitive to people in your group who may have had bad experiences in evangelism.*

3. Imagine a direct invitation to read Luke's Gospel with you. For example:
  - I'm doing a course at church where we are learning how to read Luke's biography of Jesus with people because ... Would you be up for it?
  - I read a story about Jesus yesterday and thought you might be interested in it because ...

Write down a sentence or two that reflects a direct approach in your own words and with your own reasons.

4. Imagine a more organic invitation to read Luke's biography of Jesus with you.
  - Is there a topic that you talk about with them that relates to forgiveness? For example: guilt, regrets, cancel-culture, justice, painful relationships, etc.
  - Is there a topic that you talk about with them regularly?

Write down a sentence or two that could help you move from this topic to an invitation to read Luke's biography of Jesus with you.

*After giving your group members time to think about this and write something down, ask people to share their ideas.*

*If your group has completed RE1 or RE2 refer to them here. This is what these modules are designed to do. If you have not completed these modules and people find an organic approach difficult, consider whether these modules might be helpful for your group in the future.*

5. Pray. Thank God for the way Jesus' forgiveness transforms us and our lives. Ask God to help us enjoy our forgiveness. Ask God for an opportunity to invite someone to read Luke's Gospel with us.

### **Revise**

Read Luke 8-10 in one sitting. In these chapters the disciples grow in their understanding of who Jesus is and what being his disciple means. After you have read it, answer the three questions:

- Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus?
- People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
- Me: What is my response to Jesus and these stories?

Consider the five people you are praying for. For each person:

- Which of the stories we have read would best connect with them?
- Which would be the most surprising?
- Ask God for an opportunity to share one of these stories with them.

Invite one of the people you are praying for to read Luke's biography of Jesus with you.

- Pray for an opportunity. Plan for an opportunity. Take a deep breath and invite them.
- If asking one of these people to read Luke's Gospel with you feels like a bridge too far at the moment, consider asking a Christian friend to read a story in Luke with you to help you practice.

Connect with other group members during the week.

- Tell each other which Bible story you would like to share with your friend and why you chose that one, or, how God has been answering our prayers.

### ***After Session Reflection***

- *How easy or difficult did people find this session?*

- *What part of the session did you focus on? What did you gloss over?*
- *What does this mean for the next session?*

*Pray for yourself, your group, and the people they are praying for.*

## Session 4

# Loving your neighbour

**Key idea:** *We all need forgiveness because we all fail to be the people Jesus challenges us to be.*

**Key encouragement:** *Having been loved and forgiven by Jesus, ask God to help you love like Jesus.*

**Practical challenge:** *Identify and respond to a need experienced by one of the people you are praying for.*

**Session goals:**

- *Grow increasingly familiar with the three questions: Jesus. People. Me.*
- *Accept Jesus' challenge to love our neighbours by deepening our relationships and conversations.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*

*As you wait for people to arrive, you could fill the time with casual conversation about how people found the Review exercises, whether they have seen any of the people we are praying for, etc. This doesn't have to wait until we 'officially' begin.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 4.

Jesus thinks we need forgiveness. Our response to Jesus depends on whether we think we need forgiveness. But what if your family and friends don't want or think they need forgiveness?

### Share

*Not everyone will have evangelistic opportunities every week. By sharing stories with each other, we can all celebrate, learn from, be encouraged by and pray for God's work through other members of the group.*

- How did inviting someone to read Luke's Gospel with you go?

*Encourage honesty here. Celebrate 'wins' however small. Grieve when things didn't go the way people hoped they would. Discuss whether they will try to ask the same person again or whether they will try someone different this week.*

*If inviting someone to read Luke's Gospel is just too big of a step for someone, perhaps try to break it down into smaller steps. Eg: This week plan to tell someone that you go to church.*

- Today we'll share stories about the evangelistic opportunities God gave us this week. These might be conversations you are grateful for or ones that didn't go as you hoped. They might be interesting conversations with potential or clear answers to our prayers.

*This helps group members think about evangelism more generally—not just about the five people they are praying for. Encourage people to think broadly about opportunities. God might surprise us with who he is working in.*

*Cast the net wide here. 'Conversations with potential' might not even mention Jesus ... yet. But conversations such as these can help develop a relationship of trust or they involve a topic that Jesus speaks into.*

## **Pray**

This is the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

'Father,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.  
And lead us not into temptation.'"

Luke 11:2-4 (NIV)

- | Use this passage and the sharing time to guide your prayers for yourself, each other, and your friends.

## **Train**

### ***Luke's Gospel***

*Let the group know that from Session 5, each group member will have a turn at facilitating the Luke's Gospel discussion (Question 1). This is so that we all practice reading Luke's Gospel with others.*

In our passage today Jesus tells a story that has become very famous – The Parable of the Good Samaritan.

1. Read Luke 10:25-37 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *Who is Jesus speaking to?*
    - *Why does he tell this story? What point is he making?*



- *What standards do Jesus (and God) set for people?*
  - *What does love for God and love for neighbour involve?*
  - *How does Jesus love God and his neighbour?*
- b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
- *Who is questioning Jesus?*
  - *What does he want from Jesus?*
  - *What does he get from Jesus?*
  
  - *Who are the characters in the story?*
  - *What do they do? Why do they do it?*
  - *How are they related to the man questioning Jesus?*
  - *Samaritan: What costs does he bear to care for the injured traveler?*
- c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
- *What stands out for me in this story*
  - *Who do I resonate with most in the passage?*
  - *What standards of love do I set for myself or for others?*
  - *How do I respond to my failure to love as I should?*
  - *How do I feel about this story?*
  - *When have I experienced love like this?*
  - *What does following Jesus involve?*

2. Review your discussion.

- a. Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?
- b. How did discussing a parable change the way the three questions operated?
- *There may be another layer of expansion questions. eg People:*
    - *Who are the people Jesus is speaking to?*
    - *How do they relate to the characters in the story.*
  - *Why might Jesus choose to tell this story to these people? Its setting, its main point, etc*
- c. What information does this passage add to our discussion about forgiveness?

- *Everyone needs forgiveness for failing to love God and others.*
  - *Jesus does not compromise God's good standards because we fail meet them. Instead, he offers us forgiveness.*
  - *Jesus is the only one who doesn't need forgiveness. He is the ultimate Good Samaritan.*
- d. What aspects of the story would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

***Skill: Loving your neighbour***

The following tables invite you to think through ways you can deliberately and intentionally love your neighbour. The top table is about spending time with people, and the bottom table is about conversations with people. In real life though, the two tables overlap.

1. Work through the tables with one of the people you have been praying for in mind. Try to come up with specific ideas for deepening your relationship and conversations with them, including ways of inviting them into your Christian community. Then, share your ideas with the rest of the group.

While loving people can sometimes feel costly it is great privilege to share your life with someone else. Real love is costly but it is also beautiful. Ask Jesus, who loved us so much that he died for us, to help you.

*Come with a worked example for one of the five people you are praying for to help your group know what to do.*

*These tables will be formatted as an infographic in the Training Guide.*

<b>Spending Time with People</b>			
	<b>Love:</b> Acts of service.	<b>Social:</b> Casual and fun hangout.	<b>Community:</b> Connecting them.
	How can I show love to them in practical ways that they appreciate?	How can I spend time with them in everyday ways?	How could I help them get to know my Christian friends?
<b>Me Individually</b>	<i>Meal? An encouraging message? Drive them to the airport? Ask about their family?</i>	<i>Things we have in common or new things that you are willing to try? Exercise? Dog park? Movies? Children at the same school?</i>	<i>Dinner with a mix of Christian friends and those who are not?</i>
<b>My Christian Community</b>	<i>Is there a church program they might be interested in? Mainly Music? Food hampers?</i>	<i>Who might they connect with that I could introduce them to? Other single parents, retirees, photographers etc?</i>	<i>Social event?</i>
<b>Conversations with People</b>			
	<b>Questions:</b> Answering questions.	<b>Jesus:</b> Talking about Jesus.	<b>Bible:</b> Reading the Bible
	How can I answer the questions they have about Jesus?	How can I introduce them to the life and teachings of Jesus?	How can I encourage them to read the Bible?
<b>Me Individually</b>	<i>Research the question and talk about it with them? Recommend a book and read it with them? Podcast? Website?</i>	<i>Explain how Jesus gives me hope or meaning or joy or ... ? Tell them I am praying for them?</i>	<i>Invite them to read Luke's Gospel with me? Share a gospel story with them?</i>
<b>My Christian Community</b>	<i>Alpha or Christianity Explored? A Christian friend with similar questions or in similar circumstances?</i>	<i>Evangelistic event or course?</i>	<i>Invite them to church/Bible Study Group/etc</i>

2. Pray. Thank Jesus for loving us enough to die for us so that we could be forgiven. Having been loved and forgiven by Jesus, ask God to help us love like Jesus.

*For Session 5: Ask a group member to lead discussion on Luke 18:1-14 using the three questions. Ask them to spend 20 minutes preparing using the three questions and the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2. Share the Leaders Guide for Session 5 with them so that they have access to the expansion question ideas for Luke 18:1-14.*

*Even though they are only leading Luke's Gospel Question 1, encourage them to read the whole session so that they see how the passage connects to the 'forgiveness' theme and the Skill.*

### **Revise**

Read Luke 11-14 in one sitting. In these chapters Jesus continues teaching his disciples as they head towards Jerusalem. Choose one short passage from within Luke 11-14 and answer the three questions. Include three or four relevant expansion questions for each of the three questions:

- Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus?
- People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
- Me: What is my response to Jesus and these stories?

Work through the Loving your Neighbour tables for each of the five people you are praying for.

- Act on at least one of these ideas this week.

Connect with other group members during the week.

- Share with each other one of your ideas for loving your neighbour, or, how God has been answering our prayers.

### **After Session Reflection**

- *Contact the person facilitating the discussion next session on Luke 18:1-14 and check that they understand their role.*
- *Send them a copy of the Leader's Guide for Session 5 to help their preparation.*
- *Offer to chat through the passage and the three questions.*
- *Remind them to use the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2.*
- *Pray with them.*

## Session 5

# Which passages in Luke's Gospel?

**Key idea:** *Jesus' teaching on forgiveness is rich and nuanced. He also teaches on justice, judgement and repentance. Forgiveness is only one possible theme we could trace through Luke's Gospel.*

**Key encouragement:** *Jesus has an encouragement or challenge for everyone. If one story doesn't easily connect with someone, there will be another story that does.*

**Practical challenge:** *Think through which particular passage(s) you would like to read with each of the five people you are praying for.*

**Session goals:**

- *Discuss different aspects of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness.*
- *Recognise that there are many different paths you could take through Luke's Gospel.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 5.

We are taking a forgiveness-themed journey through Luke's Gospel. Jesus' teaching on forgiveness is rich and nuanced. He also teaches on justice, judgement and repentance. While everyone needs to hear all that Jesus says about forgiveness, people might start their journey in different places because of their life experiences and worldviews.

### Share

Choose one of the following to share about:

- Which passage from Luke 11-14 did you choose for an in-depth read? Why did you choose this one?
- Share stories of evangelistic opportunities God gave you this week. These might be conversations you are grateful for or ones that didn't go as you hoped. They might be interesting conversations with potential or clear answers to our prayers.
- How did inviting someone to read Luke's Gospel with you go? Who will you see or speak with this week that you would also like to invite?

*The question about Luke 11-14 allows everyone to say something even if they feel like they have made no progress with evangelistic conversations or invitations to read Luke's Gospel.*

*If some group members are struggling to have conversations, encourage them to persevere in prayer. God's timeline might be longer than we imagine. God's Spirit might be working in ways we can't see yet. God might be working in someone other than the five people we chose to pray for.*

## **Pray**

As you read Luke's Gospel you discover that Jesus meets people where they are at and relates to them individually. He doesn't take a 'one size fits all' approach.

- | Thank God that Jesus knows us by name.
- | Ask God to help us know and love the people he has placed in our life.
- | Pray these things for yourself, each other and your friends.

## **Train**

### ***Luke's Gospel***

*This is where you hand over to the group member who is leading the discussion on Luke 18:1-14. Invite everyone in the group to make life easier for the facilitator by offering answers, asking questions, and helping the discussion move forward. Everyone is going to take a turn at this, so invite people to make it a positive experience for everyone.*

From this session forward, different people will be facilitating our discussion on Luke's Gospel. This will give each of us practice at doing it.

1. Read Luke 18:1-14 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *What does Jesus say and who does he say it to?*
    - *What is the main point of each story?*
    - *What does Jesus promise?*
    - *How do the stories relate to each other? What do they have in common?*
  - b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
    - *Who is Jesus speaking to? How do they relate to the characters in the stories Jesus tells?*

- *What does Jesus want people to recognise about God, themselves and life in this world?*
  - *What or who does he want them to hope and trust in?*
  - *How does he want them to relate to God and others?*
- c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
- *Which of the people or characters do I most relate to?*
  - *How do I feel about these stories?*
  - *What questions do I have with these stories?*
  - *Do I think justice is possible in this life?*
  - *How do I approach God?*

2. Review your discussion.

*Thank your group member for leading the discussion as you start the review section. Give them helpful encouragement and feedback in this section. We want all group members to have a positive experience at leading discussion so that they are willing to read Luke's Gospel with a non-Christian friend or family member.*

- a. Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?
- b. Did discussing a passage with multiple stories change the way the three questions operated? If so, how?
- *There may be another layer of expansion questions. eg*
    - *What is the main point of each story?*
    - *How do the stories relate to each other?*
    - *What do they have in common?*
- c. What does this passage add to our discussion about forgiveness?
- *Jesus doesn't just talk about forgiveness. He also recognises the importance of justice for those who have been wronged.*
  - *God promises justice for and mercy to everyone who trusts Jesus.*
  - *How can justice, mercy and forgiveness go together?*
- d. What aspects of the passage would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

***Skill: Which passages?***

Jesus' teaching on forgiveness and its related ideas is multifaceted, and the angle on forgiveness that he begins with when talking with a person seems to depend on a person's particular circumstances, values and/or griefs. While we all need all of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness, wisdom might lead us to begin conversation in one place rather than another.

1. Think of one of the five people you are praying for. Spend a few minutes considering which one of the following questions might be helpful for them to wrestle with as they investigate Jesus. Share with the group which question you chose and why.

Please note that these questions are often complex, nuanced and emotional. The answers below are brief and incomplete, and don't do anything more than suggest a possible trajectory for conversation. For further reading on the challenges of forgiveness read *Forgive: Why Should I and How Can I?* by Tim Keller.

- a. Do I really need forgiveness?

Yes. No one loves God and their neighbour with all their heart, soul, strength and mind. People enjoy God's gifts without honouring the God who gives them life. Luke 10:25-37, 12:13-21.

- b. Am I too bad to be forgiven?

No one is too bad for forgiveness. Jesus forgave anyone who was willing to receive it. Luke 7:36-50, 15:11-32.

- c. Does forgiveness mean that God doesn't care about justice?

The cross demonstrates God's justice and mercy. Sin is punished and forgiveness is offered. The risen Jesus will return and judge. He calls his followers to care for and protect vulnerable people while we wait for him to return. Luke 10:25-37, 18:15-17, 35-43.

- d. Is suffering evidence that God has not forgiven someone and is punishing them instead?

The relationship between sin, judgement and suffering is complex. Jesus recognises the existence of unjust suffering and warns his followers not to assume that if someone is suffering then it is their own fault. Luke 13:1-9, 18:1-8.



- e. Does receiving God's forgiveness really change anything?

When Jesus forgives people they are welcomed into God's family. This gives them the freedom of a genuinely new start. Luke 7:36-50, 19:1-10.

*Give people a few minutes to read through and choose the one that is most relevant for their friend.*

*It is possible that some people in the group are wrestling with these questions personally. If this is the case, suggest they read the passages during the week and share what they learnt next session.*

*Google Tim Keller's talks on forgiveness and send the link to them.*

2. Forgiveness is not the only theme we could trace through Luke's Gospel and other themes might be a better entry point towards Jesus for someone. Think of another of the five people you are praying for. Answer some of the following questions as you are able.

- a. What do they hope or long for?
- b. What do they value or fear?
- c. What misunderstandings about God, people, themselves or the world do they have?
- d. Given this, are there any passages in Luke's Gospel that you would like to ask God to give you an opportunity to share with them?

*Come with a worked example for one of your five people to show group members what this question is asking for.*

*Give people a few minutes to start thinking about these questions before they share.*

*Additional ways into this question if your group needs more help:*

- *What values does this person hold? Where do these come from?*
- *Are they confident in their own goodness, or burdened by failure, or concerned for justice?*
- *Are they anxious, fearful or lonely?*
- *Do they live for the moment and chase the next experience?*
- *Do they seek safety and identity in family, money, being a good person, or something else?*

- *Do they want to make the world a better place or reach their full potential?*
  - *What religious background do they come from?*
3. Pray. Thank God that Jesus recognises the complexity of our lives. Ask God to give us the sensitivity and wisdom we need to know which stories to share with our family and friends.

*For Session 6: Ask a group member to lead discussion on Luke 23:32-49 using the three questions. Ask them to spend 20 minutes preparing using the three questions and the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2. Share the Leader's Guide for Session 6 with them so that they have access to the expansion question ideas for Luke 23:32-49.*

*Even though they are only leading Luke's Gospel Question 1, encourage them to read the whole session so that they see how the passage connects to the 'forgiveness' theme and the Skill.*

### **Revise**

Read Luke 15:1-19:27 in one sitting. Here Luke records many of Jesus' parables and teachings. Choose one passage from Luke 15:1-19:27 that you think might be relevant to one of the five people you are praying for. For this passage answer the three questions:

- Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus?
- People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
- Me: What is my response to Jesus and these stories?

Answer the Me question from both your perspective and your friend or family member's perspective.

Invite another person to read Luke's Gospel with you.

- Look back at the Session 3 Skill: Questions 3-4. Choose another one of the five people you are praying for that you will either see or speak with this week and work through these questions.
- Pray for an opportunity. Plan for an opportunity. Take a deep breath and invite them to read Luke's Gospel with you.
- If asking someone to read Luke's Gospel with you feels like a bridge too far at the moment, consider asking a Christian friend to read a passage in Luke's Gospel with you to help you practice.

Connect with other group members during the week.

- Share with each other which passage you chose for an in-depth reading and why you chose it, or your plans to invite someone to read Luke with you, or how God has been answering our prayers.

### ***After Session Reflection***

- *Send encouraging feedback to the person who facilitated discussion this session.*
- *Follow-up any group members who were wrestling with the questions in Skill Question 1.*
- *Contact the person facilitating discussion on Luke 23:32-49 next session and check that they understand their role.*
- *Send them a copy of the Leader's Guide for Session 6 to help their preparation.*
- *Offer to chat through the passage and the three questions.*
- *Remind them to use the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2.*
- *Pray with them.*



## Session 6

# How we are forgiven

**Key idea:** *Jesus' death and resurrection is the event that secures our forgiveness. The innocent and powerful king dies in the place of, and at the hands of, guilty people so that we can be forgiven.*

**Key encouragement:** *There is a lot you already know about how to read Luke's Gospel well.*

**Practical challenge:** *Notice how many 'Christian' words you use and 'Christian' concepts you assume. Try to explain them in everyday language.*

**Session goals:**

- *Discuss how and why Jesus died.*
- *Consider how to explain Christian ideas in everyday language.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 6.

Jesus' death and resurrection is the event that secures our forgiveness. The innocent and powerful king dies in the place of, and at the hands of, guilty people so that we can be forgiven. Everything in Luke's Gospel, indeed, everything in the Old Testament, has been leading up to this.

### Share

Choose one of the following to share about:

- Which passage from Luke 15:1-19:27 did you choose for an in-depth read? Why did you choose this one?
- Share stories of evangelistic opportunities God gave you this week. These might be conversations you are grateful for or ones that didn't go as you hoped. They might be interesting conversations with potential or clear answers to our prayers.
- How did inviting someone to read Luke's Gospel with you go? Who will you see or speak with this week that you would also like to invite?

### Pray

Jesus knew that the cross was ahead of him when he set out for Jerusalem. This was why he came into the world.

Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.”

The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

Luke 18:31-34 (NIV)

- I Use this passage and the sharing time to guide your prayers for yourself, each other, and your friends.

## **Train**

### ***Luke’s Gospel***

*This is where you hand over to the group member who is leading the discussion on Luke 23:32-49. Invite everyone in the group to make life easier for the facilitator by offering answers, asking questions, and helping the discussion move forward. Everyone is going to take a turn at this, so invite people to make it a positive experience for everyone.*

Having been betrayed, tried and condemned to death despite his innocence, Jesus is executed.

1. Read Luke 23:32-49 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *What does Jesus say or do?*
    - *What happens to him or is said about him?*
    - *How does Jesus feel?*
    - *What do we learn about his identity and character?*
    - *What is his relationship with God and people like?*
  - b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
    - *Who is present at Jesus’ death?*
    - *How do they relate to Jesus?*
    - *What do we learn about their character and motives?*
    - *What do they think about Jesus’ relationship with God?*
    - *How does this help us understand why Jesus died?*
  - c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
    - *Who am I most like in the story?*
    - *How does the story make me feel?*
    - *What do I imagine when I picture these events?*

- *Why do I think Jesus died?*
- *Do I think this really happened?*

2. Review your discussion.

*Thank your group member for leading the discussion as you start the review section. Give them helpful encouragement and feedback in this section. We want all group members to have a positive experience at leading discussion so that they are willing to read Luke's Gospel with a non-Christian friend or family member.*

- a. Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?
- b. What does this story teach us about forgiveness?
  - *The innocent king saves guilty people instead of himself. He dies the death that we deserve so that we can be forgiven.*
  - *It shows how much our forgiveness cost Jesus and the extent of his love for us.*
- c. What aspects of the passage would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

3. Explain, in simple English and without 'Christian' technical language, how the death of Jesus brings people forgiveness.

*Help people get clearer and clearer about how to explain this. You could refer to the explanation that Jeri and Dave gave in the introduction video.*

**Skill: Giving context**

When we talk about Jesus and read the Bible with people, it's helpful to be aware of how many 'Christian' words and concepts we use without noticing it. For example, first century words and practices that are no longer current, Old Testament references, or theological words and ideas. Even everyday Christian words like grace, gospel and sin can fall into this category. It's useful to notice Christian words so that we can explain them in everyday language to people who are unfamiliar with the Bible, Jesus and Christianity.

1. Look back at Luke 23:32-49.
  - a. Make a list of words or ideas that might be unfamiliar, confusing, or missed by someone who was reading Luke for the first time.

- *References to events, people or places that we are unfamiliar with.*
  - *Crucifixion. What happened? Why was it used? What crimes did it apply to?*
  - *Jews. Centurion.*
  - *The curtain of the temple being torn in two.*
- *Old Testament references which guide our interpretation of the passage.*
  - *Divided up clothes. Cf Psalm 22.*
  - *Numbered with transgressors. Cf Isaiah 53.*
  - *Messiah. Christ. King of the Jews.*
  - *Son of God.*
- *Theological words or links.*
  - *Righteous.*
  - *What is the connection between sin and death?*

- b. Try and explain, in everyday English, a couple of the words or ideas you identified in Question 1a.

*Choose a couple of the more significant words and ideas we identified.*

- c. How many of these words and ideas would it be helpful to explain when reading Luke's Gospel with someone?

*Explain the ones they ask about or which significantly impact interpretation. You don't want to explain so much that your discussion becomes a lecture, or that people leave thinking the Bible is super hard to understand. Different people and personalities might require more or less information.*

2. How could you help someone gain an overview of Luke's Gospel so that they better understand the context for the stories you read together?

*Encourage people to read through the whole of Luke, just as we are doing in RE3. Or listen to it via an Audio Bible in the car or on public transport.*

*Watch the Jesus Film together. This film is based on Luke's Gospel and is available in many languages. It has its limitations and it doesn't replace reading Luke, but it can give people a lot of helpful context in a short space of time.*

*Encourage them to use a Bible translation in their first language.*



3. Pray. Thank God for the grace and humility of Christ, that led him to die on the cross so that we might be forgiven. Ask God to help us be amazed and moved by Jesus' love for us.

*For Session 7: Ask a group member to lead discussion on Luke 24:36-53 using the three questions. Ask them to spend 20 minutes preparing using the three questions and the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2. Share the Leader's Guide for Session 7 with them so that they have access to the expansion question ideas for Luke 24:36-53.*

*Even though they are only leading Luke's Gospel Question 1, encourage them to read the whole session so that they see how the passage connects to the 'forgiveness' theme and the Skill.*

### **Revise**

Read Luke 19:28-23:49 in one sitting. Here Jesus talks about his coming death so that when it happens we know what it means. Choose one short passage from within these chapters and answer the three questions:

- Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus?
- People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
- Me: What is my response to Jesus and these stories?

Look back at the Loving your Neighbour tables in Session 4.

- Act on at least one of these ideas this week.

Connect with other group members during the week.

- Share with each other your plans to love your neighbour, or, how God has been answering our prayers.

### **After Session Reflection**

- *Send encouraging feedback to the person who facilitated discussion this session.*
- *Contact the person facilitating discussion on Luke 24:36-53 next session and check that they understand their role.*
- *Send them a copy of the Leader's Guide for Session 7 to help their preparation.*
- *Offer to chat through the passage and the three questions.*
- *Remind them to use the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2.*
- *Pray with them.*



## Session 7

# Inviting people to follow Jesus

**Key idea:** *Jesus' resurrection is true news and good news that people need to respond to. The risen Jesus offers people forgiveness and new life, which they can accept or reject.*

**Key encouragement:** *People become Christian from all sorts of backgrounds and beliefs when they meet the risen Jesus in the pages of the Bible with the help of God's Spirit.*

**Practical challenge:** *Ask people what they think about Jesus and where they stand with Jesus. Give them time and space to make an informed decision, but encourage them to make one.*

**Session goals:**

- *Discuss why Jesus' resurrection is true news and good news.*
- *Learn how to invite people to respond to Jesus.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 7.

Jesus' resurrection is true news and good news that people need to respond to. The risen Jesus offers people forgiveness and new life, which they can accept or reject. Some people decide quickly. Other people need more time or information to make an informed decision, though long-term indecision is itself a choice with consequences.

### Share

Choose one of the following to share about.

- Share stories of evangelistic opportunities God gave you this week. These might be conversations you are grateful for or ones that didn't go as you hoped. They might be interesting conversations with potential or clear answers to our prayers.
- How did your plans to love your neighbour go?

### Pray

Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. ...

Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Luke 5:27-28, 31-32 (NIV)

- | Use this passage and the sharing time to guide your prayers for yourself, each other, and your friends.

## **Train**

### ***Luke's Gospel***

*This is where you hand over to the group member who is leading the discussion on Luke 24:36-53. Invite everyone in the group to make life easier for the facilitator by offering answers, asking questions, and helping the discussion move forward. Everyone is going to take a turn at this, so invite people to make it a positive experience for everyone.*

Jesus, having risen from the dead, appears again to his disciples.

1. Read Luke 24:36-53 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *What does Jesus say and do? Why?*
    - *How does he persuade his followers that he is risen?*
    - *What does he promise them?*
    - *What does he command them to do?*
  - b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
    - *What are we told about Jesus' followers? Why might this be important?*
    - *What are they thinking and feeling?*
    - *How do they change throughout this passage?*
    - *Who or what changes them?*
  - c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
    - *How am I like or unlike Jesus' first followers?*
    - *Why do I believe/doubt that Jesus is risen? Why?*
    - *What do I believe about life after death more generally? Why?*
    - *How does Jesus' resurrection give me hope for the future?*

## 2. Review your discussion.

*Thank your group member for leading the discussion as you start the review section. Give them helpful encouragement and feedback in this section. We want all group members to have a positive experience at leading discussion so that they are willing to read Luke's Gospel with a non-Christian friend or family member.*

- a. Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?
  - b. What does this story teach us about forgiveness?
    - *Jesus needs to open people's mind so that they can respond to his offer of forgiveness.*
    - *Repentance is needed.*
    - *Forgiveness is for people from all nations.*
    - *Our new life with Jesus is characterised by peace and forgiveness.*
  - c. What aspects of the passage would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

## 3. Explain why you believe that Jesus rose from the dead and what difference this makes to your life.

*This important part of Christian belief is often a sticking point for people who aren't Christian so being able to articulate this matters. Reasons might include: eyewitness testimony of people who saw him, OT prophecy that this would happen, the transformation in the apostles, the empty tomb, you have met the risen Lord through his Spirit and know he is alive.*

**Skill: The Ask – inviting people to follow Jesus**

Giving people information about Jesus is important. It's also important to encourage people to respond to Jesus. To be saved, people need to repent, receive the forgiveness that Jesus offers, and follow him.

1. What types of things is it useful for someone to know about Jesus, and themselves, to become a Christian?
  - *Work on some dot points here. For example:*
    - *I am a sinner in need of forgiveness.*
    - *Jesus offers us forgiveness and life in God's kingdom through his death and resurrection.*

- *Jesus is risen and will return to save and to bring justice.*
  - *Following Jesus is a life-long commitment to trusting and obeying him.*
  - *Jesus gives us his Spirit to enable us to follow him while we wait for him to return. Etc.*
- *But note that some of the desperate people Jesus met didn't know much more than that they needed help and that Jesus was willing and able to help them. cf 5:27-28.*

2. If someone says to you, 'I want to become a Christian:'

- a. What questions could you ask to check that they knew what they were doing?
- *Questions that clarify what they understand about Jesus and following him. For example:*
    - *What has God taught you about Jesus?*
    - *Why do you think he died for you?*
    - *How do you think your life might change when you become Christian?*
    - *How do you feel about this?*
    - *What questions do you have about becoming a Christian?*
- b. What could you tell them about how to become a Christian? (Hint: You could formulate an answer around the words: Repent. Believe. Follow. Pray.)
- *Repent of your sin and ask for forgiveness.*
  - *Believe that Jesus' died, rose and will return. He did this because he loved you. He did this so that you could be forgiven and have new life with him.*
  - *Follow Jesus by thanking God for his love and forgiveness, and asking him to give you his Spirit so that you can love, trust and obey Jesus, forever.*
  - *Pray with them and for them. Help them know what to pray for and encourage them to pray.*
- c. If they did repent and believe, what could you advise them to do next?
- *Tell them that they are a child of God who is known, loved and forgiven. God lives in them through his Spirit and will always be with them.*

- *Invite them to come to your church with you.*
  - *Help them start to develop a regular Bible reading and prayer habit.*
  - *Offer to keep reading the Bible with them and praying for them while they discover what being a Christian means.*
  - *Encourage them to tell someone else — this can help make it real.*
3. How could you respond to someone who says that they didn't want to become a Christian?
- *Thank them for their honesty and the time they have invested in reading Luke's Gospel.*
  - *How did you come to that decision?*
  - *Who do you think Jesus is?*
  - *Reassure them that your friendship is not contingent on them becoming Christian. You will continue to care about them and you are ready to talk with them about Jesus if they change their mind.*
4. How could you help someone who 'needed more information' before making a decision?
- *Discuss their questions or concerns. Identify a next step that they can take with you or by themselves.*
  - *A relevant Bible passage, podcast, website or book?*
  - *A Christian with relevant experience for them to talk with?*
  - *A church they can join to keep learning about Jesus?*
  - *A table weighing up the pros and cons of becoming Christian that you can talk through together?*
5. As we practice inviting people to respond to Jesus, why is it important to remember that it is only through God's Spirit that people see their need for Jesus and respond to Jesus?
- *We learn to trust that while God uses our evangelism, he is the one who reveals himself to people.*
  - *We don't need to pressure people to respond or to respond now. We can trust God's timing, which may be different from our own.*
  - *God's work changing a person's heart might be slow and deep and not always visible to us immediately.*

Asking people where they stand with Jesus can be uncomfortable, but it is important. People don't need to pass a doctrine exam or holiness test to become a Christian, but they do need to know 'enough' to trust and follow Jesus. Some people already know that they need help and will trust Jesus quickly. Other people wrestle with understanding things like the Trinity and Substitutionary

Atonement before becoming Christians. For others, admitting that they are sinners who need to change will be a real challenge.

People become Christian from all sorts of backgrounds and beliefs when they meet the risen Jesus in the words of Scripture with the help of the Spirit. So, pray for people and invite them to read Luke's Gospel with you. Ask them what they think about Jesus and why. Give them time and space to make an informed decision, but encourage them to make a decision. And let them know that whatever they decide, you will continue to care about them – as does Jesus!

6. Pray. Thank God for opening your eyes and enabling you to repent and believe in Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to be at work in your friends to help them turn to Jesus in repentance and faith too.

*Remind people that the next session is our last one for RE3: The Real Jesus.*

*For Session 8: Ask a group member to lead discussion on Luke 9:18-27 using the three questions. Ask them to spend 20 minutes preparing using the three questions and the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2. Share the Leader's Guide for Session 8 with them so that they have access to the expansion question ideas for the three questions.*

*Even though they are only leading Luke's Gospel Question 1, encourage them to read the whole session so that they see how the passage connects to the 'forgiveness' theme and the Skill.*

## Revise

Consider two of the five people you are praying for.

- What do you think stops them from following Jesus? If you don't know, how could you find out?
- How could you start to address these barriers?
- Are there any parts of Luke's Gospel that might help?

Invite another person to read Luke's Gospel with you.

- Look back at the Session 3 Skill: Questions 3-4. Choose another one of the five people you are praying for that you will either see or speak with this week and work through these questions.



- Pray for an opportunity. Plan for an opportunity. Take a deep breath and invite them to read Luke's Gospel with you.

Look back at the Loving your Neighbour tables in Session 4.

- Act on another of these ideas this week.

Connect with other group members during the week.

- Share with each other your plans to love your neighbour, or invite someone to read Luke with you, or how God has been answering our prayers.

### ***After Session Reflection***

- *Send encouraging feedback to the person who facilitated discussion this session.*
- *Contact the person facilitating discussion on Luke 9:18-27 next session and check they understand their role.*
- *Send them a copy of the Leader's Guide for Session 8 to help their preparation.*
- *Offer to chat through the passage and the three questions.*
- *Remind them to use the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2.*
- *Do whatever you can to help them have a positive experience when they lead.*
- *Pray with them.*



## Session 8

# The costs and benefits of following Jesus

**Key idea:** *Jesus is the servant king who offers new life to everyone who follows him. Following Jesus also involves costly discipleship while we wait for him to return as king, saviour and judge.*

**Key encouragement:** *Following Jesus involves suffering before glory, but it is worth it.*

**Practical challenge:** *When inviting people to follow Jesus, and talking with people about Jesus, be honest with them about both the costs and the benefits.*

**Session goals:**

- *Discuss the costs and benefits of following Jesus while we wait for him to return.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*
- *Review RE3.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 8.

Jesus is the servant king who offers true life to everyone who follows him. But following Jesus means costly discipleship while we wait for Jesus to return. We need to be open and honest with people about this. Following Jesus is wonderful, and the benefits far outweigh the costs, but the costs are real.

### Share

Choose one of the following to share about.

- Share stories of evangelistic opportunities God gave you this week. These might be conversations you are grateful for or ones that didn't go as you hoped. They might be interesting conversations with potential or clear answers to our prayers.
- How did inviting someone to read Luke's Gospel with you go? Who will you see or speak with this week that you would also like to invite?

## Pray

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Luke 24:45-49 (NIV)

- | Use this passage and the sharing time to guide your prayers for yourself, each other, and your friends.

## Train

### *Luke's Gospel*

*This is where you hand over to the group member who is leading the discussion on Luke 9:18-27. Invite everyone in the group to make life easier for the facilitator by offering answers, asking questions, and helping the discussion move forward. Everyone is going to take a turn at this, so invite people to make it a positive experience for everyone.*

After Peter recognises that Jesus is God's promised king, Jesus teaches his disciples about what the future holds for Jesus and Jesus' followers.

1. Read Luke 9:18-27 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *What does Jesus promise his disciples? Try putting it in your own words.*
    - *Why might he be telling them this?*
    - *Who is Jesus?*
  - b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
    - *What might Jesus' disciples be thinking and feeling as this conversation unfolds?*
    - *How much do they understand about who Jesus is and what following Jesus looks like?*
    - *What would they have understood by 'take up your cross daily?'*
    - *What will their life be like before Jesus returns? After Jesus returns?*
    - *Would questions might they have had about what Jesus said?*

- c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
  - *What encourages me about Jesus and his words here? What is daunting?*
  - *Am I willing to be Jesus' disciple? Why? Why not?*
  - *What are the costs of following Jesus?*
  - *What are the benefits?*

2. Review your discussion.

*Thank your group member for leading the discussion as you start the review section. Give them helpful encouragement and feedback in this section. We want all group members to have a positive experience at leading discussion so that they are willing to read Luke's Gospel with a non-Christian friend or family member.*

- a. Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?
- b. What aspects of the passage would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

***Skill: Recognising the costs of following Jesus***

When inviting people to follow Jesus we need to be honest with them about both the costs and the benefits of being a Christian. The costs of following Jesus may not be the first thing we talk about, but they do need to be discussed.

1. Think of one of the people you are praying for.
  - a. What costs might they face if they become a Christian?
    - *How might becoming a Christian change their relationship with their family and friends?*
    - *What might self-sacrificial love for Jesus and others look like for them?*
    - *How might it affect their work, financial decisions and how they use their time?*
    - *What heart attitudes, desires and ambitions might it challenge?*
  - b. When and how could you talk with them about the costs of following Jesus?
    - *How aware of these costs are they?*

- *Ask candid questions: How do you think your life might change when you become Christian? How do you feel about this?*
  - *What fears have they expressed about becoming Christian?*
  - *What costs do they see you, their Christian friend, bearing? Are these the real costs from your perspective?*
2. What encourages you to keep following Jesus when it feels costly?
- *What costs have you borne for following Jesus? Why do you stay Christian given these costs?*
  - *What are the joys and blessings of being Christian? Why do they outweigh the costs?*
  - *Experiencing Jesus drawing near to us as we bear costs for him. He is our example and comfort. Jesus understands how costly our discipleship is. He walks with us through it and promises us glory with him when he returns.*
3. In Ripple Effect we focus on the joy and privilege of evangelism, but it can also be costly.
- a. When does evangelism feel costly?
- *Distance in or loss of relationships, or the fear of it.*
  - *Time and effort of loving people self-sacrificially.*
  - *Grief of a loved one rejecting Jesus.*
  - *Danger of it in some countries.*
- b. What encourages you to persevere with evangelism when you feel the costs?
- *Love for those around us. When Jesus returns we will join him in glory but not everyone will. Rejecting Jesus is serious. We must speak about him to others if we love them.*
  - *Love for Jesus. Jesus loved us and suffered for us. He deserves our worship. We should honour him and not be ashamed of him. So should everyone else.*
  - *What joys do you experience that keep you going?*

# Module Review

This is the final session of Ripple Effect **MODULE 3**: The Real Jesus.

Watch the final RE3 video.

1. What have you learnt about Jesus and yourself?
2. What aspect of reading Luke's biography of Jesus with unbelieving family and friends stood out for you?
3. What happens next is up to you. Here are some ideas. You could:
  - Move onto another module of Ripple Effect together. Check out the website for more information. <https://www.ripple-effect.net.au/>
  - Keep gathering each month to pray for your friends and family and to keep encouraging each other in evangelism.
  - Find a few other Christians and take them through RE3 so that there are more Christians equipped to read Luke's Gospel with their family and friends.
4. Pray. Thank God for the things you have been encouraged and challenged by throughout RE3: The Real Jesus. Ask God to bless you with the joy and privilege of reading a gospel with someone investigating Jesus.

Keep learning at  
[ripple-effect.net.au](http://ripple-effect.net.au)