



EXPLORE TOGETHER

Resource Book



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How to... Explore Together

Within our faith communities there is a rich diversity of God's people, all at different stages in their faith development and spiritual experience, and all with different learning needs and preferences. We are a beautiful collection of artists, scholars, reflectors, dancers, data collectors, fact finders, readers, sculptors, writers, musicians, actors, talkers and listeners.

Explore Together places the Bible at the centre of this diversity. It is a new and practical tool for helping people to explore God's Word and hear his voice in a way that embraces their natural preferences. It encourages the community to come together to share their thoughts, questions and revelations with each other. Any and all are welcome and there are no barriers to participation.

At the heart of Explore Together is a desire to see people hear from God and learn more of his love for them. It works with big groups, small groups, mixed-age groups, single-age groups, older people, young people, children, families, house groups, church congregations, youth groups, school groups... In fact, Explore Together can be used in any environment with any group dynamic. It is grounded in years of research and tried and tested in a multitude of contexts.

This resource book is designed to equip you and your community as you adventure, journey and grow with God. On this page and the next we have a few suggestions on how to get the most out of the 12 sessions in this resource and how to use the accompanying resources on the Explore Together website (www.explorettogether.org).

Three more Explore Together resource books are also available, each with 12 sessions on a variety of themes.

The six steps

There are six essential steps to an Explore Together session, each of which can be tailored to slot into any existing structure and space:

- 1 Prepare**
- 2 Presenting the Bible**
- 3 Pray**
- 4 Explore**
- 5 Share**
- 6 Giving thanks**

These steps are explained in detail in each session outline.

Step 4 provides an opportunity for people to engage with God's Word using the Explore Together questions and the six Explore Together zones. Each zone has been carefully designed to cater for particular learning needs and preferences:



Colour Zone –
for those who learn by seeing



Listening Zone –
for those who learn by hearing



Chat Zone –
for those who learn by thinking aloud



Word Zone –
for those who learn by reading



Busy Zone –
for those who learn by doing



Quiet Zone –
for those who learn by reflecting

Individuals can choose to spend all of their exploring time in one zone, but may also choose to visit several zones, depending upon their preferences. There is no right or wrong

amount of time to spend in a zone.

It is quite deliberate that no specific instructions are provided for each zone. Individuals are free to engage however they like with the resources provided in each area as they consider the Explore Together questions for the session.

Basic kit

Although every Explore Together session is different, there are some common elements that are always included. We will refer to these as the 'basic kit' for Explore Together. Before running your first session we advise that you acquire the following items, and top them up as required:

- Explore Together zone signs (available from www.exploretogether.org)
- Explore Together background soundtrack (available from www.exploretogether.org)
- MP3 players (or the means to play downloaded MP3 tracks – eg CDs and CD player)
- plasticine, play dough or clay
- plastic building bricks
- junk modelling items
- pipe cleaners
- pens, pencils and paper
- coloured pencils/pens
- coloured chalk sticks
- pastels/crayons
- glue, sticky tape
- scissors (child-safe)
- masking tape
- white paper
- black paper
- paper of different sorts, sizes and colours
- manuscript paper
- squared paper
- lined paper
- sticky notes
- a selection of Bible commentaries
- a selection of Bibles (different translations)
- children's Bibles and Bible story books, eg *The Big Bible Storybook* (Scripture Union, 2007)
- chairs/cushions/beanbags
- a separate area where people can be quiet

Each session will need a selection of other resources, detailed in Step 1. Many multimedia

resources for each session are available for free from www.exploretogether.org/downloads (using the code from the bottom of page 32).

Gathering a team

Although it is entirely possible to lead an Explore Together session alone, it is much more effective when there is a team of people working together to share the responsibility and to model involvement. Strategically placed active participants will encourage others to participate.

The colour, word and busy zones benefit from having a carefully placed team member present to keep the focus on the questions, to engage in the zone activity and to draw people into the questions without dominating. The chat zone requires an experienced host to keep everyone focused.

For detailed team member role descriptions visit www.exploretogether.org.

FAQs

If you have any further questions, it's likely we've answered them in our FAQ section on pages 30 to 32 at the back of this book. If not, please don't hesitate to get in touch via the Scripture Union website: www.scriptureunion.org.uk.

If you'd like to know more about the ideas that underpin Explore Together and hear about our experiences of Explore Together in action, please read our companion book:

Explore Together: The Journey



God our provider

Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7

Themes: meeting needs, prayer, following, gratefulness, glory, obedience, questioning, trust

Sometimes it's hard to trust in God to provide for our every need. The Israelites experienced this, too, when they were hungry and thirsty in the desert. But God did provide – will you trust that he will provide for you, too?

Prepare

Resources required

- 'God our provider' prayer
- 'Living in the desert' audio recording (from *The Big Bible Storybook* audio book)
- 'Living in the desert' story text (from *The Big Bible Storybook*)
- 'God our provider' image collection
- 'God our provider' word collection
- Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7 (CEV)
- 'God our provider' Explore Together questions (PDF and PowerPoint)

All available from www.exploretgether.org/downloads (using the code from the bottom of page 32).

You will also need to gather:

- lengths of coloured ribbon or string
- audio versions of different translations of Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7
- someone to share a short testimony about how they have seen God's provision in their life
- dictionaries
- disposable cups
- palm-sized smooth pebbles
- items from the Explore Together basic kit (see page 5)

Presenting the Bible

With the community gathered together, begin by sharing the words from Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7. Consider carefully which version of the Bible you choose to read from.

Alternatively or in addition you may choose to use a video re-telling of this story, such as 'Moses in the Wilderness' by Saddleback Kids (<https://youtu.be/ogfVBP35U-U>).

Without being tempted to answer them, introduce the following questions to your community for them to consider:

- **What does this story teach you about God?**
- **How can you trust God more?**
- **How do you think the Israelites felt in this story?**
- **What do you want to say to God today?**

Pray

Pray for and with your community, asking God to help you hear from him. This time of prayer can be creative, interactive, responsive, meditative or sung. It could also include Communion and intercession. Ensure that there is a place set aside where people can go if they feel that they need someone to pray with them specifically. Have a small team of people available to offer prayer if required. Prayer ministry should be available throughout an Explore Together session.

You might like to use the 'God our provider' prayer with your community at this point in your gathering.

Explore

Read out your questions from Step 2 again or display them on a screen. Remind your community to consider these questions as they separate into their explore zones. Some may choose to consider all the questions while others may focus on just one. Some may completely ignore the questions and just open themselves up to God.

Invite your community to separate into small groups, around the zone(s) of their preference. Explain that individuals are welcome to spend as much or as little time in each zone as they wish, engaging at whatever level they feel comfortable. Depending upon where your quiet zone is located, you may wish to provide directions and remind people not to disturb one another when using this space.

Colour Zone

- coloured pens
- white paper
- lengths of coloured ribbon or string
- 'God our provider' image collection
- copies of the 'God our provider' ET questions



Word Zone

- pens, pencils, paper
- biblical commentaries relating to Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7
- 'God our provider' word collection
- 'Living in the desert' story text
- children's Bibles and Bible story books containing a version of Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7
- copies of Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7 (CEV) or Bibles
- dictionaries
- copies of the 'God our provider' ET questions



Listening Zone

- MP3 players or other suitable equipment for playing audio files
- 'Living in the desert' audio recording (from *The Big Bible Storybook* audio book)
- audio versions of different translations of Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7
- someone to share a short testimony about how they have seen God's provision in their life
- copies of the 'God our provider' ET questions



Busy Zone

- items for junk modelling
- disposable cups
- fresh bread and drinking water (be aware of any allergies and hygiene issues)
- copies of the 'God our provider' ET questions



Chat Zone

- a separate area with chairs, cushions or beanbags
- a chat zone host who is willing to read the passage again and then lead a discussion around the questions
- copies of Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7 (CEV) or Bibles
- copies of the 'God our provider' ET questions



Quiet Zone

- a separate area where people can be alone with their thoughts and God
- palm-sized smooth pebbles
- 'God our provider' image collection (optional)
- copies of Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7 (CEV) or Bibles
- copies of the 'God our provider' ET questions



Share

As your time for exploring together draws to a close, invite your community to come back together into small groups of three to five. Suggest that they share their responses to the questions posed at the beginning.

Giving thanks

Invite the explorers to share their reflections with the wider community, drawing together their responses and noting any common themes that emerge. Conclude by reading Exodus 16:1–36; 17:1–7 again (from the same Bible version used earlier). Then lead your community in a prayer, thanking God for all that he has revealed through this story. Alternatively, use the closing activity from the website. Encourage your community to continue their conversations about this story as they leave, and to take with them any artwork/writings/thoughts from the session.