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CHAPTER 3

SETTING UP THE COURSE

The *Christianity Explored* course consists of Bible studies, talks or DVDs, and group discussions. You, as course leader, are responsible for “hosting” the evening. In other words, you will do everything that requires “leading from the front.”

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

	GROUP DISCUSSION 1	TALK / DVD	GROUP DISCUSSION 2	HOME STUDY
WEEK 1	Welcome	Introduction	Discuss Talk/DVD	Mark 1:1–3:6
WEEK 2	Mark 2:1–12	Jesus – Who Was He?	Discuss Talk/DVD	Mark 3:7–5:43
WEEK 3	Mark 4:35–41	Jesus – Why Did He Come?	Discuss Talk/DVD	Mark 6:1–8:29
WEEK 4	Mark 8:17–29	Jesus – His Death	Discuss Talk/DVD	Mark 8:30–10:52
WEEK 5	Mark 10:17–22	What is Grace?	Discuss Talk/DVD	Mark 11:1–13:37
WEEK 6	Mark 12:1–11	Jesus – His Resurrection	Discuss Talk/DVD	Mark 14:1–16:8
EXPLORING CHRISTIAN LIFE		The Church	Discuss Talk/DVD	
		The Holy Spirit	Discuss Talk/DVD	
		Prayer	Discuss Talk/DVD	
		The Bible	Discuss Talk/DVD	
WEEK 7	Mark 14:1–11	What is a Christian?	Discuss Talk/DVD	Ephesians 2:1–22
WEEK 8	Ephesians 2:1–10	Continuing as a Christian	Discuss Talk/DVD	Mark 3:1–4:41
WEEK 9	Mark 4:3–20	Choices – King Herod	Discuss Talk/DVD	Any questions?
WEEK 10	Any questions?	Choices – James, John & Bartimaeus	Discuss Talk/DVD	

The first six weeks focus on who Jesus is and why he came. In particular, course participants explore the problem of sin and the wonder of forgiveness. Then, during a weekend or day away, participants discover the importance of the church, the Holy Spirit, prayer and the Bible. The objective in the final weeks is to emphasize Christ’s call in Mark 8:34: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

STRUCTURE OF THE EVENING

Below is the suggested structure for the evening. See Session 5 of the training notes in the *Study Guide – Leader’s Edition* for a fuller description of each component. Of course, depending on your circumstances, you might want to change the exact times. Equally, you might want to run the course during the day if that is a more suitable time for those you’re trying to reach.

6:30 p.m.	Leaders’ prayer meeting
7:00 p.m.	Participants arrive for the meal
7:45 p.m.	GROUP DISCUSSION 1
8:05 p.m.	Talk / DVD
8:30 p.m.	GROUP DISCUSSION 2
9:00 p.m.	End of the evening – “One-to-One”

Note: All times are approximate. You can make certain sessions shorter or longer depending on your circumstances.

You can run ***Christianity Explored*** with the DVDs or with talks presented by the course leader.

If you decide to run the course with the DVDs, see the *Guide to Using the DVDs* (included with the DVD SERIES). Please note that because the DVDs features on-screen Bible text, it is inadvisable to use them with large groups unless you have access to a projection screen and projector.

If you decide to run the course with the talks, see the section entitled “The Talks” in this book. Delivering the talks yourself will lead to a more personal, more intimate experience for the participants.

SETTING UP YOUR VENUE

It is important to make participants feel relaxed and welcome, and the way you set up your venue will help you achieve that.

If there are a large number of leaders and participants, set up a number of tables around which different groups can sit. Because each group will be engaged in separate discussions, remember to leave plenty of space between tables so that participants and leaders can hear each other easily.

- You will need a way of displaying visual aids (PowerPoint, overhead projector or flipchart).
- Ensure that everyone can see. TVs, screens and any visual aids (not to mention the person giving the talk) should be visible from anywhere in the room.
- Make sure that facilities and exits are clearly marked.
- You may like to set aside a table with a selection of books for participants and leaders to buy or borrow.¹

Everyone involved in the course – leaders, participants and the course leader – will need a Bible. It is important that everyone use the same version and edition so that page numbers will be the same. (The version used throughout the course material is the New International Version.)

- Participants should each be given a Bible at the beginning of the course, preferably one they can keep when the course ends.
- They should also be given a copy of the *Study Guide*.
- Pens should be made available to allow participants to make notes or jot down questions.

¹ The *Christianity Explored* website lists a number of recommended books on various subjects. Visit the "Running a Course" section at www.christianityexplored.com

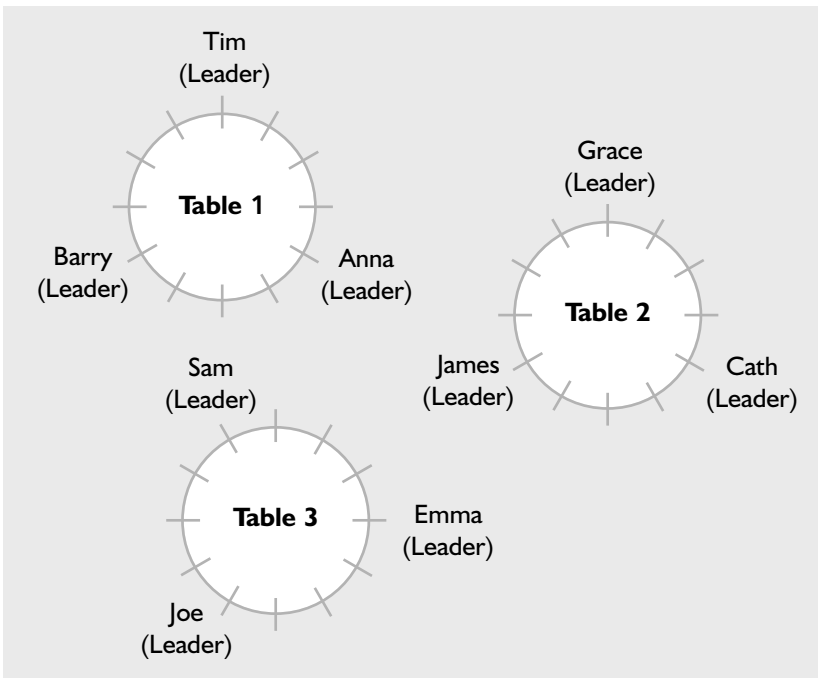
THE WELCOME TEAM

The hardest part of *Christianity Explored* for many participants is getting through the door on the first night. This will be especially true if you're running your course in a church building, which for many will seem an unfamiliar, unwelcoming place.

A team of “welcomers” should be given the task of greeting participants as they arrive. Choose welcomers who are not leaders: that way, leaders can concentrate on talking to participants who've already arrived.

When a participant arrives, welcomers should simply introduce themselves and find out the person's name. Asking for addresses or telephone numbers at this stage can make people feel uncomfortable.

If you're expecting a large number of participants, it's a good idea to prepare a seating plan like the one below.



Then, as each participant arrives, a welcomer assigns him or her to a table and adds the person's name to the plan. This ensures that participants are divided equally between the tables.

Numbering the tables "restaurant-style" will help participants to find their allocated table easily.

Leaders and welcomers should wear name tags so that they are immediately identifiable by participants.

> Write down the names of people you will ask to join "The Welcome Team."

THE CATERING TEAM

Sharing a meal together is a core component of **Christianity Explored**. It's an opportunity to socialize informally and, for many participants, it will be the only time during the week when someone takes a genuine, personal interest in their lives.

Organize a team of people who are willing and able to prepare and serve a meal. If necessary, you can ask participants for a small contribution to help defray the cost.

> Write down the names of people you will ask to join "The Catering Team."

THE PRAYER TEAM

Enlisting people to pray regularly for the course is a wonderful way of involving more people in **Christianity Explored**. Report back to your prayer team on a weekly basis so that they can pray for specific needs and be encouraged by answered prayer.

➤ Write down the names of people you will ask to join “The Prayer Team.”

