



### Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



### Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What would your place of work (paid or voluntary) look like if God was in charge?



### Understanding the information (20 minutes)

Read some or all of the three stories about how Christian disciples have transformed their places of work.

Discuss:

Which is your favourite story? Why?

Can you see yourself copying anything in them?

In the beginning God gave human beings the task of looking after His world. How are people obeying that original task in these stories?



### Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Genesis 1: 26-28 in which human beings receive their purpose for being alive.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:

What does this passage teach me about God?

What does this passage teach me about people?

How does this passage call me to obey God?

What might I do in response to this this week?



## Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

Watch the video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCl22sy0rsY&t=4s>

What struck you as important in the video?



## Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



## Group prayer (5 minutes)

God of grace and goodness,  
who made us body and spirit  
that our work and faith  
may be one.

May we through our life  
and our worship,  
join in your labour  
to bring forth a new creation  
in justice, love and truth;  
through Jesus, our redeemer  
(from the 'After Sunday' website [www.aftersunday.org.uk](http://www.aftersunday.org.uk))





## How can my faith be good news in my place of work?

These three stories, two real and one imagined, demonstrate how faith can be good news in the place of work. Alongside demonstrating personal qualities like prayer, witness, and kindness, they show how Christians can bring transformation in many ways - making the world look like God's kingdom - like He is in charge.

**John started working in his company three years ago.** The company made an ordinary but essential household object. John was given the opportunity to steer the direction of things in the company and to ensure the relationships among staff were what they should be.

Several people at his church had suggested that John should look into going into the ministry, but he knew that his full-time Christian work was actually found in the company. After all, it was here that he was able to use his gifts and he had contact with those outside the church whom if he'd been a vicar he might not have met.

For others, work may have been about paying the bills, getting ahead, being successful, justifying their existence. But John has a bigger cause than that. John started off by praying for his workplace and his fellow staff. It wasn't long before he noticed that relationships in the office were not what they could be.

For a start, some of the more junior staff were being made to work longer hours than they were contracted for and as a result there was pressure put on their personal lives. John prayed about it and was able to gently intervene and suggest that the staff might work much more fruitfully if they were actually given adequate time off. The management agreed.

In addition, John found himself in a position to pay attention to those in the office who had more menial jobs and at Christmas time he put on a thank you meal for them.

It was the first time this had been done and several people came up to him to thank him. Over the coming year finances were tight and the management was tempted to cut corners, shortchanging its customers by subtly making their product less than was advertised.

John believed that what they were doing was far bigger than just making a profit, and having prayed about it, was able to influence the company in grasping hold of its vision to be providing a good service - developing a product not just in order to make more money, but to create something of worth, that was good in itself.

John was also able to encourage the company to embrace partnerships with deprived areas of the city that they were based. As a result several of the employees became involved in hands-on work in the local community.





## How can my faith be good news in my place of work??

**The Walgreen Company is the largest drug retailing chain in the United States.** As of May 31, 2014, the company operated 8,217 stores in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

One of its employees named Julia Turner has Down's Syndrome and she loves her work! "I tell you what – I love this job!" she said. "I'm happy, I'm contented. I've got people all around me who are the best friends I've ever had in the whole world."

When asked by ABC News if it felt good to get a paycheck every week, Julia responded, "It sure does. And if anybody needs a big check, come over here and they'll give it to you." It is Julia's joy in her work that is so striking.

Good work has also brought her friendships and community. She was asked by the bus driver – "Did you have a good day?" she answered – "I had a wonderful day."

How come Julia has a job that brings her so much joy and fulfilment? It's all because a Christian man wanted to join in with God's mission at work. Randy Lewis was a senior Vice President at Walgreens in the USA. Lewis has an autistic son, Austin, and desperately wanted him to have a future and hold down a good job.

Previously Walgreens had employed differently-abled people to do "ancillary rather than mission-critical work"....cleaning toilets, sweeping floors etc.

For Lewis differently-abled people face a death by a thousand cuts when looking for work. Many are isolated, unemployed or have 'rubbish' jobs. He wanted to create meaningful and rewarding jobs for differently-abled people.

He stated, "We underestimate the abilities of people on the margins." He persuaded Walgreens to change the work place...to suit people of different abilities. Walgreens has now designed warehouses where 40% of the employees are differently-abled. These jobs pay an equal wage to the typically-abled workers and hold all employees to the same productivity standards.

So Julie Willard, a deaf woman, opined, "It's my dream to work here!" Angela Mackey, having qualified with an MA, couldn't get a job because of her cerebral palsy.

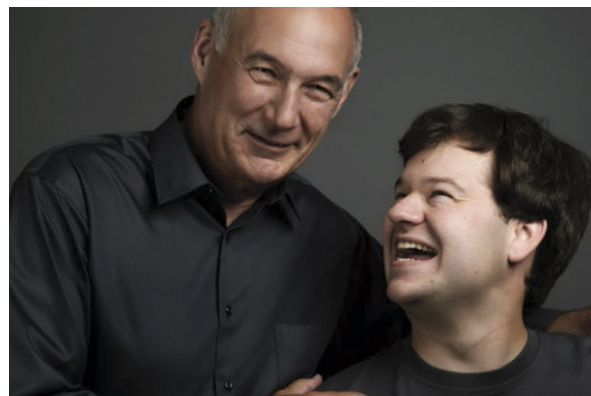
Her speech sounds slurred but what she says is very intelligent and insightful. She said that no one would employ her! She had applied for 250 jobs without success. At Walgreens she is in charge of the recruitment of differently-abled people.

Employing in this way has unleashed incredible creativity and imagination in typically-abled employees. They have designed new technologies that serve and bless everyone. In these 'warehouses of wonder' they use images rather than words which help people who struggle to read. So instead of an unimaginative Aisle 14 they will have a strawberry image. This helps people who cannot read numbers.

The HR department has changed many of its policies. When applying for a job a differently-abled person can bring a friend to fill in the application forms.

What is so exciting is that the company has discovered that differently-abled people can often outperform typically-abled people.

Not only was performance the same (Lewis called in statisticians who studied 400,000 hours of work and proved performance is similar for those with and without disabilities), but in the warehouse, staff turnover was 20% to 50% lower and absenteeism was also down. Safety costs were also lower for people with disabilities.





## How can my faith be good news in my place of work?

"Fears about more accidents had come up, but we found deaf forklift drivers - who many companies won't hire - are twice as safe as someone who can hear", says Lewis. "If I could give everyone a piece of advice, it would be to put plugs in the ears of their forklift truck drivers."

Randy Lewis' work for God has led to thousands of differently-abled people doing work they love and getting good wages as well.

**Finally, a fictionalised reimagining of life at Manchester United a few years ago...** Let's imagine that Sir Alex Ferguson, Roy Keane, Ryan Giggs and Wayne Rooney really begin to study the New Testament on a daily basis. They notice that Jesus had compassion on the most vulnerable people in that first century Jewish society. Somehow Jesus challenged the assumption that some people are terribly important (rich people) and that other people (lepers and shepherds) are unimportant.

Rooney makes the following suggestion: "Boss, why don't we pay our cleaners a better wage and start to treat them with real respect?" Sir Alex concurs enthusiastically. A few days later the cleaners at the club are enjoying some of the wonderful benefits of the good news of the kingdom of God.

Ryan Giggs spends several hours talking to Elsie about her lumbago and impulsively decides to pay her gas bill that month! Small acts of mercy and generosity flood the club and several players are deeply impressed by Christ's command to 'love your enemies' and they issue public apologies to players they have deliberately fouled. Gary Lineker and Alan Hansen are gob-smacked and discuss the Manchester United 'transformation' on Match of the Day.

Roy Keane delves ever deeper into the Word of God and begins to unpack the meaning of Jesus' commission 'to preach good news to the poor' and 'to release the oppressed'. (Luke 4:18). Over a coffee he raises the issue with the gaffer and dramatic events unfold.

Ticket prices are slashed in half and unemployed and differently-abled people are allowed into Old

Trafford for nothing! All the players agree to a wage reduction and Wayne Rooney writes an article in the Sun newspaper explaining how easy it is to get by on only ten thousand pounds a week!

Sir Alex Ferguson decides to adopt a football club in Mozambique and develops a charity which allows young African players to come and play football at Old Trafford. Paul Scholes is so impressed by these fine young players that he flies out to Mozambique, investigates the scenario and then sets up an orphanage for waifs and strays.

It's only chump change for a millionaire but he finds the experience so rewarding and moving that money is no longer an issue. He is simply grateful to God that he has the financial resources to be such a blessing to so many people.

Oh and when the players play football, they are full of grace and genial bonhomie. They laugh and smile continually and take great pleasure in the game. They play skilful, imaginative football to the glory of God! They are living out the task God gave them. They are full time Christian workers! (With thanks to Mark Roques from [www.thinkfaith.net](http://www.thinkfaith.net) for the Randy Lewis and Manchester United stories)

