**How to use the material**

These sessions are designed to be used in a small group setting – between 4 and 12 people – with a leader. **The leader** need not have experience of chaplaincy themselves, but should be able to:

* Spend time preparing for each session. This might mean making sure the necessary link to a video is available; preparing short prayers; gathering necessary equipment such as flip charts and pens.
* Facilitate discussion where it is called for
* Keep time. Ensuring that progress is made through the material so that it is completed within the time. The leader, as part of their preparation will need to decide how much time to spend on different sections.

Each person in the group needs a **coursebook.** This can be printed by the group – from a file provided by WCM UK – or copies can be sent at a small cost.

The leader needs a copy of the **Leader’s Notes**. This contains additional material to the short instructions in the coursebook, including a checklist of equipment and materials needed for each session, sources of additional information/videos etc.

For each session there is a Powerpoint presentation. Slides include a summary of the main points being discussed, and pictures and diagrams to illustrate these points. Not all of these images appear in the coursebook. The size of this file precludes this being downloaded. The necessary files are available on CD as part of the course material.

Each session includes:

1. A simple statement of the **aims of the session** – the leader should go through these with the group at the beginning.
2. ***Instructions to the group leader****. In the coursebook these appear in italics. More detailed notes appear in the separate ‘Leader’s Notes’ document.*
3. Times of **prayer and worship** at the beginning and end of each session. In some places a form of reflection and prayer is included. In other places the form of the prayers is left to the group and the leader to decide.
4. Sections where the text should be read out – by the leader or someone in the group. These sections in the course book appear between parallel lines, thus. . .
5. **Group exercises**. These appear in the coursebook in red print. Some preparation by the leader may be necessary before the session.

**Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy**

**Session 1: Why be a Workplace Chaplain?**

Aims of this session

* To find out what workplace chaplains do.
* To consider how and why this is mission.
* To begin to identify key tasks and skills of the chaplain.

*Begin by having everyone introduce themselves, saying who they are, why they have come on the course and what work they do themselves. (Later we will have the chance to talk in more depth about our own experience of work whether that be paid, in the home or as a volunteer)*

*Lead the group in prayer asking God’s guidance as the group learns together.*

What a Chaplain does. [*The video should be a short example of chaplains talking about their chaplaincy, and seen doing chaplaincy. The introduction to the Methodist Church’s ‘Chaplaincy Everywhere’ course, available on the Methodist Church website, is one example]*

Watch the brief video as an introduction to workplace chaplaincy. As you watch make a note of anything that particularly strikes you about what you see or what people say about being a chaplain.

Having watched the video discuss in the group the following, using a flip chart to make a record.

1. What did you learn about what a chaplain does?
2. What connects what a chaplain does with God?
3. What did the chaplains say about why they do chaplaincy?

Workplace Chaplaincy: engaging with people at work **Part 1: WORK**

At the heart of what a chaplain does is ‘engaging with people at work’. This last bit ( . . at work) is important. It is not just being in touch with people on a convenient occasion – the context, what work people are doing and what that does to them is important.

Why is this? It has been said that the workplace is as much God’s place as anywhere else. This is deeply rooted in God as the creator or originator of everything that is. A common prayer at the offertory in our worship quotes from 1 Chronicles 29 v 14. ‘All things come from you and of your own do we give you’. These words of King David are part of his praise of God for the generosity of the people in providing all that was needed to build the temple. If all things come from God, then there is no place, or activity, which is beyond God’s will, love and purpose.

With this starting point we see the workplace in a new light.

God, Creativity and our work

Firstly if our work is about creativity, imagination and doing something useful then that reflects the nature of God as creator and the source of all that is. ‘All things came into being through the Word of God who is God’, says John in the opening verses of his Gospel.

Of course not all work is particularly creative or life affirming. It doesn’t always allow us to use our imagination and gifts. But that does not mean that God is not involved in that work or experience. For God doesn’t just bring things to be. God wants them to be transformed, and renewed and given new life – which is what we see happening in Jesus and his work of saving the world.

We’ll think more about these connections between God and work later in this course. For now though consider this story.

Jan’s Story [*Ask one member of the group to read out this story*]

Alan, a chaplain to a large supermarket, was visiting very early one morning. The night shift were finishing up their work of restocking the shelves. It was the same each night. Stacking shelves has often been one of those jobs used as an example of work which was unskilled and undemanding. Anyone can do it, it was thought, and, ‘if you don’t look out, study hard and make something of yourself that’s what you’ll end up doing’, it is often said.

That morning Alan met Jan who had been working in the biscuit aisle for several hours. As usual Jan had found the place a mess the previous evening. Apart from all the gaps, customers had mixed things up, left damaged packets – the usual. Alan found Jan proudly surveying her handiwork. ‘Doesn’t look bad does it?’, said Jan, and Alan had to agree. Everything was neat and tidy and ready for the day ahead. That this neatness would not last long didn’t really matter. Jan felt, rightly, that she had done a good job. It was not as straightforward as some people seemed to think. There were dozens of varieties, and everything had to have the right shelf label, with the right information and price. Alan was not at all sure he could have done such a good job. He saw that Jan, in taking pride in what she did, was celebrating her God given gifts and drawing satisfaction from what she was able to do.

After congratulating her Alan went on his way, thinking how the simplest of tasks could reflect something of the creativity of God, and giving thanks to God for Jan.

Your Story

Working in pairs, think for a moment about work that you do or have done. Can you think of something which you were proud of doing? Can you see in this something of the presence and purpose of God?

Share with your neighbour.

Now can you think of work which you found particularly stressful, difficult or boring? How did your faith help you, and in what sense was God present with you in that experience?

Share with your neighbour.

*If there is time the leader could facilitate a broader sharing of some of the experiences shared.*

So . . in going, as a chaplain, to people at work we are firstly aware that they, and the work they do, are part of God’s world and experience God’s creative and redemptive love. As chaplains we need to be looking out for that and help others see it and acknowledge it for themselves.

Workplace Chaplaincy: engaging with people at work. **Part 2: ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE**

Going back to that basic statement of what a workplace Chaplain does, let’s consider the first part – ‘engaging with people’. That too has all sorts of connections with God.

In practice this means conversations, talking and listening and spending time – however brief – with people. Think back to the video and recall how those chaplains were with people.

This is a very human thing to do. But it is also a divine thing. God in Christ spends time with us. Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us. It is one of the most fundamental parts of the Christian faith that God is not apart from us, but comes to us in Jesus, what we call the Incarnation. And this is echoed in the way Jesus was with people. There are many examples of Jesus going out of his way to spend time with people.

These encounters were part of Jesus’ ministry and mission to see God’s kingdom come as people’s lives were transformed by his presence.

*The leader may decide there is not time to look at all the following passages. If not, choose two.*

Look up these texts and read them in the group.

Mary, Martha and Lazarus (John 11 v 17 – 37)

Eating with Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7 v 36 – 50)

The woman of Samaria. (John 4 v 5 – 29)

The feeding of the 5000. (Matthew 14 v 13 – 21)

Zacchaeus (Luke 19 v 1 – 10)

Consider these passages. Why and how were people’s lives changed by their encounter with Jesus? Notice, none of these passages is about Jesus healing people. Although that is an important aspect of his being with people it is not the only thing he did with them.

For the second half of this session, which looks at how Workplace Chaplaincy helps us join in with God’s mission in the world, and considers how a chaplain can be present with people in their work; and for details of the other sessions in the course, please contact WCM UK.