



HIGHER SESSIONS

LEADERS' GUIDE

Higher Sessions are an all-new media-based discipleship resource aimed at young people who have just started their journey as a Christian. Using the latest technology and integrating music and video, Higher Sessions seek to establish strong foundations of faith in young people's lives.

Higher Sessions have been developed in partnership between Light, The Message Trust and Youth for Christ, with the hope that young people who have no idea about God could be discipled into a relationship with him by the local church that can stand the test of time.

Disciples, not just decisions

The Higher Tour – an initiative of The Message Trust – is focused on sharing the gospel with thousands of young people through work in schools and large evangelistic events. But we're not just looking for decisions to follow Jesus, we want young people to become sold-out, whole-of-life disciples who are serious about following Jesus for the rest of their lives.

Higher Sessions are designed to be run by a youth leader, engaging with young people on the foundations of the decision they've made to follow Jesus. Youth leaders are best placed to engage with the young person and start helping them on their first steps of relationship with God. **Higher Sessions** groups go through the six-week plan, following on from a response to the gospel at a Higher event.

HOW CAN YOU USE HIGHER SESSIONS?

Higher Sessions have been designed to be used as part of a follow up strategy for large scale events and tours that preach the gospel.

It is important to understand where these session fit into the journey of a young person as they make their first steps into a relationship with God.

Most young people who are going to be with you in these sessions will be either new Christians, or seekers, so it is early stages for them and nothing is a given when it comes to understanding what we are talking about. These sessions are also meant to be enjoyable and fun. They are designed to point the young person in the direction they will be heading for the rest of their lives.

Where do Higher Sessions fit?

Gig Night, Tour or Outreach Event → **Higher Sessions** → **Life in church**

Young person makes a decision and makes their way to a member of the first response team after hearing the gospel preached.

Partnered church youth leaders are present at the event and actively involved to invite them along to these sessions. Starting the journey towards church the moment they make a decision.

We have written these plans to take the time out of planning for you and to provide a framework that is aimed at giving you the best topics and contents to communicate the foundations for living as a Christian.

It is so important that you make time for you and your team during and around the sessions to make connections, and try to build make some relationships of trust with the young people who attend these sessions. The resource in and of itself will not keep anyone coming, but a real connection with a youth leader will.

One final thing to think about is making sure that these sessions are safe spaces. Some sessions and groups work best with a formal set of rules and expectations, others don't. Do whatever you think will work best for your group, but remember most young people won't have experienced this level of conversation and will need your guidance and protection.

HOW TO...

How do you use the session plan and this resource to get the most out of it?

There are six session plans designed to walk young people relevantly through six foundational teachings that prepare them to take their first steps in the journey of following God.

We have tried to make this applicable for all people who are involved in youth work, veterans, or newbies. Use this as a foundation, add some of your own thoughts, or use it as your notes. It is up to you.

Each Higher session is designed for a minimum of 45 minutes in total. However each can be tailored to be shorter or longer depending on group length. Simply put, change or alter the session plan, we have tried to use different learning styles and methods to communicate the points. In other words, there are plenty of options available for you!

The Higher session plans have different modules that make up each session. These are have time times attached to them and allow for the session to be personalised if needed.

Here is a brief overview of what the elements of each module are:



Intro

Quick intro to the session theme



Opener

Something designed to be used at the start of the session to grab attention and lead into the theme.



Media

A short clip, image or Youtube video designed to enhance the session and provoke discussion. We would massively encourage you to use all of these in your sessions.



Chat

Some questions to get the group discussing the theme of the session.



Teaching

Front led by a leader to communicate the theme of the session.



Explore

To help the group explore the theme of the session on their own or as groups using other learning styles.



Game

Fun game to keep the group moving and raise the energy in the room. Hopefully linking the madness back to the session where possible.



Do

A chance to respond to the theme and try to apply something by the next session. There will also be feedback times in each session to see how people got on.



Prayer

A creative or simple time slot to create a place for prayer in the sessions.



Conclusion

A brief and punchy conclusion to the session.

TOP TIPS

Here are some top tips that might help your follow up and use of Higher Sessions to run more smoothly.

Contacts and practical stuff

1. Contact details – It is really important you collect details, of the young people. We have put a contact sheet in the appendix if you need one, otherwise use the one you have designed for your youth work.
2. Attendance register – We suggest you keep a register of who attends each session. This is primarily because it is good practice, but also so you can track who might have dropped off and not attended for a few weeks.
3. Photos – If you want to take photos, make sure you consult your safeguarding policy first.
4. Safeguarding – Make sure you have an up to date safeguarding strategy. If you need any advice, CCPAS is a great organisation that can help you. www.ccpas.co.uk
5. Risk Assessment – Your church or youth organisation should have someone who is in charge of liability, make sure you have spoken to them and completed any necessary risk assessment forms before running Higher Sessions.
6. Online safety – Online safety is vital. CEOP is a great organisation and can advise you in this area if you need any help to make sure you have the best practice. www.ceop.police.uk

If this all looks a little daunting and a lot of work, don't worry! It's not as scary as it first appears. Ask for help where you need it – and remember that most things will already be in place if you are working for or operating as part of a charity like a church or youth organisation.

If you need any more ideas about youth work or running **Higher Sessions**, we would recommend the YFC training wall. We have recorded some videos specifically for running this course and included some of YFC's great resources as well.

APPENDIX A: CONTACT FORM

CONTACT DETAILS



NAME

EMAIL

PHONE

SCHOOL YEAR

KNOWN ALLERGIES

EMERGENCY CONTACT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

DATE SIGNATURE

Printable version available as a separate file.

APPENDIX B: ICEBREAKERS

Sometimes it can be hard to break the ice and create a sense of energy in the room. Here are a range of different icebreakers that might help you as you lead your Higher Sessions. There is no specific theme to any of these activities, they are simply designed to be fun!

Skittles Roulette

This skittles game is good as a 'get to know you' – working best with smaller groups.

Pass a bowl of skittles around and have everyone take 3. Then, according to what they've picked, get them to share the following (as well as their name):

- Purple: an embarrassing story
- Green: something they like to do/hobby
- Yellow: a random fact about themselves
- Red: a dream of theirs eg. drive a race car, go to America etc.
- Orange: a song/book/film they like

n.b – these can be changed to other things to suit your groups needs

Tin foil jousting

Split the group into smaller teams and give each team a strip of tin foil and a tray. Explain to the group that they must fashion a lance from the tin foil that they have been given and select a champion to represent their team. One at a time the champions must then face each other in a tin foil joust, the two champions must stand a couple of meters apart in the jousting arena holding their lance in one hand and balancing their tray on the other- the tray should be sat on a flat palm. The joust should then begin with each player using their lance to try and dislodge the tray of the other player. The first to knock the opposite players tray to the floor wins. The champions should then continue to play each other until there is one reigning champion.

Jenga questions

For this game you need a jenga set, some sellotape, pens and paper. In preparation for this game you would attach a different statement or challenge to each of the jenga blocks for example 'if you could be friends with one famous person who would it be?'. You then play a normal game of jenga but every time a block is removed they must answer the question on it and tell the answer to the rest of the group.

Face the chocolate

This game is a two part challenge. (You will need a packet of After Eight mints for this game.)

- Lick and stick an after eight to forehead, work it down into mouth
- Try and fold the after eight wrapper inside out WITHOUT tearing the sides (possible but extremely tricky)

Sticky situation

Ask for two volunteers and wrap those young people up in sellotape, but sellotape facing sticky side outwards. Then scatter a number of balloons around the room and give the young people two minutes to roll around and pick up as many balloons as possible. The player with the most balloons stuck to them at the end of the two minutes wins.

The Water Game

Ask the group to sit in a circle and select someone to stand in the middle. The person in the middle has to come up with a category e.g Colours. They then whisper one colour to a leader or write it on a piece of paper. They then receive a cup with a very small amount of water in it. Those in the circle then take it in turns to announce a colour. If they hesitate for too long, give a repeat answer, give an incorrect answer or say the same colour as the person in the middle, the person in the middle can throw the cup of water over them.

The person who has been splashed then becomes the person in the middle and chooses a new category.

Ice breaker

Before the group starts put a few socks into tubs of water and freeze them. Split the group into smaller teams and give each one a block of ice with the sock in. Explain that the groups will need to get through the ice and to the sock before anyone else – the first team to put their sock on will then be the winners! However, the groups are only allowed to break the ice with the tools that you give them. You could either hand out the tools to the teams (eg a wooden spoon, chopsticks, a butter knife, a hammer) or place them in the middle of the room and provide them on a first come first serve basis.

Fill the Zone

Ask your group to sit in a circle on chairs with one empty chair left in the circle. Number each person 1 or 2 so that everyone knows if they are on team one or team two. Then get everyone to write their name onto a piece of paper and put it into a bowl, each young person should then pick a name out that is not their own, this is the name that they will then respond to for the rest of the game.

Once this is done, pick four chairs to be the ‘win zone’, these four chairs need to be next to each other and contain two people from team one and two people from team two.

The aim of the game is to fill the win zone with all of your team (i.e. all four chairs have only got members of team 1 sat on them).

The way that you do this is by calling people into the empty chair. The person sat to the right of the empty chair must say the name of a person in the group the person who has that name written on a piece of paper should then move to sit in the chair, therefore creating an empty chair somewhere else. This continues until the win zone is full with all of team one or two.

Human swing ball

Gather together a variety of empty plastic bottles and fill the bottoms with water to weight them. Now line up the bottles in single file (with around 5 in a line) and create a line for each team that you are wanting to play, then ask the team to stand in a line at one end of the row. Give each team a pair of tights with a tennis ball down one leg and ask the first person in the queue to pull the top of the tights over the top part of their heads. This first person should then go down the line swinging the tennis ball with their head to knock over each of the bottles, once a bottle has been knocked over you can then move to the next one. When they have all been knocked over the player should run back and give the tights to the next person and the process should be repeated. The leaders may need to be on hand to stand the bottles back up between rounds.