

Rediscovering Hope for Today...



... Exploring Hope for Tomorrow.

Providing hospitality — talking about life and faith

‘Rediscovering Hope’ is a resource which offers a five week program designed to help your congregation, faith community or fellowship group understand, experience and respond to the hope we have in God, through the hospitality of Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit.



Rediscovering Hope uses informal and interactive ways of talking about our life and faith experiences to explore the message of faith we possess.

The resource includes an outline for:

- A planning meal,
- Five worship events,
- An evaluation and celebration meal.

Each of the worship events provides a choice of activities, songs and exercises filling about a two hour timeslot. We recommend you consider replacing your normal worship service with these events for 5 weeks. Please don't be daunted by the 2 hours, you can adapt it to suit — but remember, relationships don't grow without investing time. The material is inter-generational, friendly, hands on, visually stimulating and interactive. We have gained copyright permission for supplying the large range of materials found in *Rediscovering Hope*, and we additionally recommend the use of a few carefully selected resources which would need to

be purchased. We hope to have a limited quantity of these resources which can be borrowed for a small fee instead of everyone having to purchase their own.

Learning from Rural Perspectives

Rediscovering Hope takes primary inspiration from the practice of hospitality which is a recognised rural trait as well as an essential characteristic of Jesus' ministry. We have developed this resource



out of the experiences and dreams of rural congregations and faith communities, and in the hope that those groups would become more

effective in serving God's mission in their communities. But we do not believe that the usefulness of this resource is limited to rural congregations. The hope which Christ offers to rural settings is equally good news to cities, suburbs and coastal regions.

We offer these ideas and resources from Rural Australia for all Christian gatherings across Australia.

Developing 'Rediscovering Hope'



This resource was developed by a group of people who first met in Orange in June 2009. The purpose was to enable rural congregations to become more

effective in serving God's mission in their communities. Congregations and faith communities are meant to be signs and instruments of God's reign of grace and hope. They are to model genuine community and serve God's purposes for the sake of the whole community. Jesus' disciples are called to be like salt and light in the world (Matt. 5:13-14).

The group was conscious of the major changes that are impacting rural churches and communities and wanted to assist Uniting Church people and congregations to respond with the hope that God can provide. Change does not happen easily or quickly. Nor should it for the writers' group was not interested in quick fixes but rather in helping people to grow in their understanding and discipleship. So a process was decided upon with an initial series of five sessions and possibilities suggested to follow on from these sessions. Participation was also regarded as imperative so it would not be a 'top down' approach or something that only a few people had the opportunity to benefit from. Hence there is a connection with worship but conducted deliberately with opportunity for sharing together



over food, having discussion and being a community of Christ's people in their location.

The goal is to enable people and congregations to see the necessary inter-relatedness of worship, witness and service as fellowships of the Spirit, as the Basis of Union describes congregations. We live in changing and challenging times especially in rural communities but God is a God of the new as well as the old. The group's desire and prayer is that as people journey together with this resource they will also experience God's Spirit providing guidance, comfort and hope for the future.

Our hope...



We trust that you will enjoy the times together and be enriched as you use these resources. Whatever your past experience, it is great that you are willing to

participate in these sessions of worship, sharing food and discussion. Enter into them and discuss as you are able but do not feel pressured to participate more than you can willingly. We want people to engage with the resources in ways that help them to consider Christian discipleship and what it means to be effective communities of faith in your context.

Order Form

Congregation or group name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Postcode: _____

We would like _____ copies of 'Rediscovering Hope'.

We would like to borrow a resource kit. Yes / No

Rediscovering Hope is being provided at no charge for the resource, but we ask congregations to donate \$25 per copy to cover the costs of postage and packaging.

Return this form to PO Box 70, Orange, NSW, 2800 or email bomrural@bigpond.net.au. Phone 02 6361 4224