

HOW TO USE THE COURSE

HOW MANY WEEKS DO YOU NEED TO RUN THE COURSE?

There are four parts to Freedom In Christ For Young People each containing a number of sessions which are usually run weekly. In total there are 13 main sessions plus an optional launch evening. In addition, the third part of the course includes The Steps To Freedom In Christ which are designed to be run on an Away Day or Weekend.

If you ran the whole course including the Launch Session on consecutive weeks, you would need 14 weeks plus the Away Day/Weekend. That, however, is too long for most people to do in one go so the course has been designed with other options, the shortest of which is seven weeks.

The Launch Session (which we have called Session '0') is optional. It is useful in attracting young people to the course, facilitating the building of relationships and building anticipation but its main objective is to help young people with very little Christian background understand why it is perfectly reasonable to believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Whether you run it or not depends largely on the make-up of your group. If it has people with very little Christian background or if it is a new group, you will want to include this session.

We strongly recommend running Sessions 1 - 10 (including The Steps To Freedom) in one consecutive block - these sessions form the key teaching. The final three sessions, however, can be used as a follow-up at a later date if desired.

If ten consecutive weekly sessions is still a little long for you, it is possible to run one or more of Sessions 8, 9 and 10 alongside The Steps To Freedom on your Away Day/Weekend. This means that you can, if desired, run the first ten sessions and Steps To Freedom in a seven week period, though ten weeks would be more comfortable.

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE?

0. Launch

The Launch Session is a largely social event and we recommend you make every effort to make it as special as possible. The guide contains some suggestions as to how to do this. It includes teaching material on why we rely on the authority of the Bible. Amongst an increasingly Biblically illiterate culture, it is necessary to explain why it is reasonable to believe that God's Word is truth and is the authority on who God is, who we are and how to live life.

PART A - KEY TRUTHS

Jesus said you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. The truth about who we are now we are Christians is amazing. This first section of the course contains three sessions. They focus not so much about how to act as a follower of Jesus but on who we are.

1. Who was I?

When Adam and Eve were created, they had life in all its fullness. God met all their needs. They were perfectly accepted, secure and significant and this is a picture of how our relationship with God is meant to be. When they disobeyed God and turned their back on him, they lost their relationship with God. The result for us is that we were born physically alive but spiritually dead and with a huge need for acceptance, security and significance. Jesus came to restore to us the very same life, acceptance, security and significance that Adam and Eve had originally.

2. Who am I now?

The Bible is clear that when we become Christians, who we are and the way God sees us totally changes. This session explains that we should no longer regard ourselves as sinners but as new creations, children of God, saints! Furthermore, the way we see ourselves really matters. It is important to know that we can approach God with confidence, knowing we are not guilty in his eyes.

3. Where do I put my faith?

We all have faith in something. It is where we put that faith that decides whether or not it will be effective. If we want our Christian life to be fruitful and effective, we need to put our faith totally in God and the truth of the Bible. Our faith grows by putting it into practice.

PART B – WHAT ARE WE UP AGAINST?

Having considered the basic truths, the second part of the course (four sessions) looks at the things that try to deflect us from that truth, our enemies. Knowing what we are up against and how to fight against it can help us immensely to stand firm and not be held back in our relationship with God.

4. Worldview

We live in a world full of choices and 'mix and match' spirituality. The way that we see reality - our worldview - can vary massively based on where and when we were brought up. The world also tells us that there is no absolute unchangeable truth. When we become Christians we need to learn that, if we want to see reality as it is, we need to adopt the Biblical worldview.

5. Big choices

This session introduces something that the Bible calls 'the flesh', the unhelpful ways of thinking and coping that we developed as we grew up. These ways can still really affect us and hold us back, but we don't need to give in. We can choose every day and moment to live either according to our selfish 'flesh' or according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

6. Strongholds

The environment we grew up in, traumatic experiences and giving into temptation may have led to the development of what the Bible calls 'strongholds'. These are deeply-ingrained lies that we believe that affect the way we live. When we become a Christian, these lies were not deleted and we have to 'renew our minds' with the truth in the Bible.

7. Spiritual reality

It is important to realise that we are in a spiritual battle and the devil does exist and that he tells lies to us to affect what we believe and therefore how we live. Every day this battle between truth and lies takes place in our minds. This session looks at how the devil works and how to win the battle.

PART C – FREEDOM FROM THE PAST

Many young people have been hurt or affected by people or events that really affect their relationships with each other and with God. This third part of the course consists of two sessions plus the Steps To Freedom Away Day/Weekend. It is about resolving the negative effects of the past and dumping harmful spiritual 'baggage' that can hold us back.

8. Handling our emotions

Our emotions tell us if something is wrong and needs to be dealt with. Choosing to believe the truth about who we are and who God is makes sure that our feelings reflect reality. The best way to handle our emotions is to be totally honest with God.

9. Forgiveness

Nothing holds young people back more than an unwillingness to forgive. Forgiveness is not about setting the person who has hurt you free but about you being set free. Learning to forgive from the heart sets us free from the past and opens the door for God to heal our emotional pain.

The Steps to Freedom in Christ Away Day/Weekend

The Steps to Freedom in Christ is a key part of the course. It is a gentle repentance process, where young people look at seven different areas of their life, ask the Holy Spirit to bring to their mind stuff they need to deal with and then say sorry and turn their back on it. It is about reconnecting with God's love and getting back on track in our relationship with him.

PART D – GROWING AS CHRISTIANS

Having taken hold of our freedom In Christ, we need to keep learning, following and growing as a Christian. This final part of the Course looks at how to stand firm, relate to others and aim to become more like Jesus. It contains four sessions; Session 10 contains crucial teaching on how to renew our minds and should not be separated from the previous nine sessions. However, sessions 11 to 13 can stand on their own as a follow-up for those who do not want to run the whole Course in one go.

10. Truth = freedom

If we dealt honestly with everything the Holy Spirit showed us in the Steps to Freedom, we have taken hold of the freedom Jesus won for us. The key to growth now is staying free. This session looks at how we make truth part of our lives every day and regularly resist the devil and renew our mind.

11. Loving others

Jesus said that the most important command was to love God with all that we have and love our neighbour as ourselves. This session looks at the fact that relationships go wrong because people focus on their rights in a relationship rather than on their responsibilities. If we focus on how we are to treat others rather than what we feel we deserve our friendships will be stronger, more fruitful and reflect God more.

12. Where are you going?

It is important that we understand God's goal for our lives and bring our own goals into line with it. God's goal for us is that we become more like Jesus. We have all kinds of desires that other people or events can get in the way of but no one can stop us becoming more like Jesus.

13. Keeping going

The world tells us that we will only have real satisfaction, fulfilment and success if we achieve certain things and look the right way. This session looks at a number of aspects of our lives and how faith works in each of these areas as we aim to become more like Jesus.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE MYSELF TO LEAD?

We recommend that you start by watching the Leader's Introduction session on the enclosed DVD which will give you some excellent background understanding and advice.

The very best way of preparing yourself to lead Freedom In Christ For Young People is to attend the main Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course, ideally in your own church (Note: in the USA this is known as The Freedom In Christ Small Group Bible Study).

Failing that, we recommend that you read The Freedom In Christ Discipleship Series of books by Steve Goss which were specifically written to accompany the course and correspond to the four course sections. Details are on page 319. Alternatively, read The Bondage Breaker and Victory Over The Darkness, the foundational books written by Neil Anderson, founder of Freedom In Christ Ministries.

Freedom In Christ Ministries runs regular training days called "Making Fruitful Disciples - Getting Started With The Freedom In Christ Approach" which are designed to equip leaders to run the course. The day covers the main Biblical principles behind the course as well as hints and tips on how to run it. It is also available on DVD. Details of these can be found at www.ficm.org.uk.

A critical part of your own preparation is to experience The Steps To Freedom In Christ for yourself. You will get an opportunity to do this as part of the main course. Alternatively, you can simply go through it with a mature Christian in your own church.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO FREEDOM IN CHRIST?

The "Steps to Freedom In Christ" form the ministry component of the overall Freedom in Christ approach. They are simply a tool that provides an opportunity for the young person to put the whole of their life before God and deal with any rubbish that might be impeding their walk with him.

They start by asking God to show them any area in their life where an issue needs to be resolved. They then choose to repent of everything the Lord shows them which removes any ground the enemy may have had in their life. It is based on James 4:7, "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Very simple and gentle - but amazingly effective!

HOW PRACTICALLY SHOULD THE STEPS TO FREEDOM BE RUN?

We recommend that this element of the course takes place as an Away Day or Weekend. It fits between sessions 9 and 10. One or more of sessions 8 to 10 can even be incorporated into the day/weekend. If done as part of a weekend, fun social activities can also be included, making the time even more memorable. For a sample weekend schedule and sample consent form please see 'Additional Resources' on the website.

The Steps themselves are integral to the whole course. Please do not be tempted to miss them out and make every effort to encourage all of your young people to be there. There are different versions of the Steps for 11-14 and 15-18. They can be found in the corresponding Youth Guide.

There are also national Freedom In Christ for Young People weekends taking place where the Freedom In Christ for Young People team will lead the weekend with groups from around the country. Please keep your eyes open on the website (www.ficm.org.uk/youth) for details.

There is a lot more information on running your Steps To Freedom session later in this Leader's Guide.

HOW THE COURSE WORKS

WHAT MATERIALS DO I NEED?

Leader's Guide

This Leader's Guide is your comprehensive guide to hosting and running Freedom In Christ For Young People.

DVD Material

At the back of this Leader's Guide, you will find the course DVD which contains video material for each session. Use the same material for both age groups. There are around 8 to 10 minutes of DVD material per session broken down into three chapters that we recommend are played separately. You will need to make preparations for showing the DVD. Projecting it onto a large screen is recommended if possible.

Downloadable Material

Once you register with us (free of charge) at www.ficm.org.uk/youth, you will be given access to a range of downloadable material including PowerPoint slides to complement each session.

Youth Guides

Although this Leader's Guide includes material for both 11-14s and 15-18s, there is a separate Youth Guide for each age range. We strongly recommend that everyone in your group should have their own copy of the Youth Guide. These contain not only the Steps To Freedom In Christ but a load of additional material for each session of the course including summaries of the key points, Bible verses, challenges, games and an opportunity to journal how the course is impacting their lives. They are available for the 11-14s and 15-18s age streams.

Biblical Truths Postcards

The first three sessions contain core lists of truth from the Bible. It is great to encourage people to make real connections with these truths so they are available on a set of 3 postcards that your young people can stick on their wall, use as a bookmark or carry around with them. The postcards are available for both 11-14s and 15-18s age streams.

HOW IS EACH SESSION STRUCTURED?


In this Leader's Guide, you will see that each session has three distinct sections: The Core; 11-14; and 15-18.


The Core

This section is for you, the leader of the course. If you haven't first got your own mind around the principles being taught, you won't be able to pass them on to your young people.

That's an obvious point to make, we know, but you would be amazed how many mature Christian people who have been through the main adult course (including church leaders) tell us that, although they have been Christians for decades, they had never before really understood the key truths taught.

The Core is the heart of each session and contains the key teaching and questions to think about as you prepare. Take particular note of the objective of each session.





The Core is laid out in such a way that you can easily incorporate sections from it into the main session itself as you teach it.

Session Guides For 11-14 And 15-18 Age Ranges

Freedom In Christ for Young People is presented in two age streams, designed to meet the specific needs and tastes of younger and older teenagers. Communicating this message to a 12 year old is, of course, very different to communicating it to a 17 year old.

The other two sections in the Leader's Guide contain age appropriate material for 11-14s and 15-18s. You will see that there are different games, illustrations, worship activities etc. which are tailored to the general interests and learning styles of the different age groups.

WHAT DIFFERENCES ARE THERE IN LEADING THE DIFFERENT AGES?

Younger teens (11-14s) are often quite high energy and need lots of activities to keep them entertained and busy. Things may have to be done in a very creative way to hold their attention and keep them sitting still!

The 11-14s material is written with their energy and need to interact in mind. It is fast-paced, fun, but thought-provoking and filled with enough ideas to present and reinforce the teaching points from each session.

Older teens (15-18s) may find it easier to get involved when there is room for discussion. They will want to be engaged and challenged physically and mentally, but they may have their own opinions about things. Some may have already formed quite definite opinions while others may be just working things through, needing space to explore.

The 15-18s material is written for this age group's ability to discuss ideas and think them through in more depth. The sessions will challenge them on misconceptions and encourage them to put what they learn into practice.

FORMAT OF SESSIONS

Each session (apart from the Launch Session which is much shorter) follows the same basic framework:

PREPARATION

There is a section at the beginning for those leading. We strongly recommend that you have a team around you when delivering this course and that you pray together as a team before each session. There is a prayer to guide you and your team as you prepare spiritually before the meeting.

There is also a list of the resources you may need for the session. Some will need more preparation than others so do look at this list well in advance of the session.

PRAYER AND DECLARATION

We recommend that you start each session with a prayer and a declaration. You may well be wondering at this point what a 'declaration' actually is.... Whereas a prayer is directed to God specifically, a declaration is spoken out to the spiritual world generally. This may be something that you and your young people are unfamiliar with but it is a really powerful tool to clear the spiritual atmosphere and introduce young people to the authority they have in Christ as a child of God. Encourage them to make the declaration confidently, shouting it out - with appropriate actions perhaps - because they (not the enemy) are the ones who have power and authority in Christ. It can be a lot of fun as well as spiritually powerful.

The words for the prayer and declaration are available on the downloadable PowerPoint file and can be projected or printed out.

STARTING POINT

As you get underway with the teaching content of the each session, we suggest you start with a brief summary of what was covered in the previous session, especially if there are some young people who missed it. This is also your opportunity to ask for one or two thoughts on the closing question from the previous session. Keep it short, however, and use the responses to prepare people for the current session during which the answer to the question should emerge.

You will then start to break new ground. Sessions start gently, usually with an icebreaker such as a game that will help introduce the theme.

THE MAIN POINT

The session proceeds with a mix of activities designed to make delivery of the teaching as easy and effective as possible. You will find illustrations, stories, Bible references and, of course, the accompanying DVD. There are three DVD clips for each session and they are designed to be played one at a time with other material in between.

When you reach the banner saying "The Main Point", it is flagging up to you that you have reached the point where the main teaching point will be covered.

Do remember to use the Core section to supplement what is written in The Main Point as you lead. Also, do encourage the young people to bring their Bibles and get used to using them.

RESPONSE

At the end of each session there is time for the young people to respond. It will often be in an active, creative way that should leave the young people with a practical way of letting the subject affect their lives. There will be opportunity to get the young people talking about the issues raised in the session.

AND THERE'S MORE

The material in the Youth Guide is generally aimed at engaging the young people in the periods between sessions rather than in the sessions themselves. Towards the end of the session, the Leader's Guide will remind you to direct their attention to the material in the Youth Guide and encourage them to use it during the coming week.

CLOSING QUESTION

To continue a sense of journey, a question relating to the following week's topic is asked at the end of the Session. It is also in the Youth Guide.

There are various other elements that you will encounter. Just a note on a couple of them:

Soapbox (15-18s sessions)

Soapbox is the young people's opportunity to share what they think. There are generally a few discussion questions to get some of their reflections on the videos and the topics covered so far. Sometimes you as the leader are invited to 'get on your soapbox'. In some situations feedback and questions are invited. Sometimes it is just a moment to share. Use it as fits your group. The core material may be especially helpful to help you answer questions from the young people in this part of the session.

Movie Clip

Sometimes we may recommend a short clip from a movie to illustrate a truth from the session material. If you want to use it, you will need to get hold of a DVD of the movie and ensure you abide by any copyright restrictions.

It doesn't take long, of course, for clips to become outdated. Please check our website for fresh suggestions. Perhaps you have a great idea for a clip that would work - do let us know via the website and we will spread the word to others.

Worship Activity

Young people express their worship to God in different ways. In each session there is a creative way of focusing the group on God and praising, thanking Him for the freedom He brings and recognising who he is as we look at who we are in him. The activity will often be linked to the theme of the session and is a great way of setting God in the right place in our hearts.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LEADERS

USING THE MATERIAL EFFECTIVELY

Freedom In Christ for Young People helps you develop a place where young people feel secure to express what they are thinking. The resources provide many opportunities to challenge and increase their knowledge and experience. However, the sessions should not be regarded as simply 'ready to use' meetings.

You should:

- **Adapt the material for your group.** Groups of young people can vary greatly. We suggest that you look to adapt individual activities to suit the taste and setting of your group. Try to keep to the core teaching material, but use the material flexibly and creatively to make it appropriate for your own group. Think carefully about the age group you are working with. Some activities may need to be adapted so that everyone enjoys taking part. Let us know through the website what you find works and what doesn't.
- **Make it your own.** Rather than repeating the written talks word for word, each leader should present in his/her own unique style, using their own examples and personal experiences where appropriate. Elements such as extra gimmicks will go down well with your own group and help to keep the weekly meetings fresh.
- **Leave some stuff out.** We'd like to think that you'll be able to cram in all the items in each week's session, but this might not always be that beneficial. More often than not, there will be more material than you can fit in. This means you'll need to decide what you're going to include or leave out well in advance of the meeting.
- **Take time to prepare each session.** Especially make sure you are well acquainted with the Core section of each session.
- **Foster friendships.** Experience shows that developing positive friendships can be crucial to young people attending the whole course and getting the most from it.

VENUE

Think carefully about your venue, since this makes a big difference to the atmosphere. Consider size, acoustics, temperature, how it feels, and think about a place where everyone will feel comfortable and relaxed. If you have a good sitting room available, take up the offer. If you have a big group, think about whether you will need a video screen or sound system. If you don't have a huge choice of venue, remember you can always make it feel inviting, with relaxed seating and comfortable room temperature.

SET A DATE FOR THE STEPS TO FREEDOM IN CHRIST IN GOOD TIME

For most people, going through the Steps To Freedom is a life-changing experience. It would be such a shame for any of your young people to miss it. For that reason, plan how and where you are going to do it well ahead of time. Ideally let people know the date at the first meeting (if not before) and remind them every week after that.

REFRESHMENTS

In each weekly meeting plan we recommend setting aside around 10 minutes for refreshments before the session starts, which you should adapt according to your own needs. This will help to create a setting for the young people to relate informally. As has already been mentioned, young people meeting up with their friends will be a major factor in Freedom In Christ for Young People being a winner. The refreshments don't have to be elaborate, but there should be drinks and something to eat that everyone will enjoy.

FINANCE

Work out how much money you may need to buy refreshments and materials and to cover other expenses.

CHILD PROTECTION

Freedom In Christ For Young People is designed to be run in the context of a local church. Make sure you are well acquainted with the appropriate child protection guidelines that should already have been set up by your church. If you are in any doubt, ask your church leader, or contact Youth For Christ. We strongly recommend using a parental consent form for taking children through the Steps To Freedom - there is more information on this in the Steps To Freedom section and a downloadable sample consent form in the Additional Resources section of the website.

LEADERSHIP

'No no – not me! I don't do the talky bits!' Maybe that's how you are feeling right now about talking in front of a group. Alternatively, you may be longing for the chance to explore your alter ego as a public speaker! Here are some tips:

Keep it simple. Remember who you are communicating with. Avoid jargon, explain difficult terms and keep things simple, especially with young people who are new and may not understand.

Be confident. Don't be intimidated, and don't worry about the odd mistake (it shows you are human). Speaking with humour and authority will support what you say, so just jump on in.

Stay relevant... to the subject, and the audience. Spend time with the group, get to know what they're in to, what they struggle with, and recognise their individual gifts. If you're prone to going off at a tangent, keep yourself in check.

Be creative. Each session should have "light and shade" including quiet and noise, times of activity and times of reflection. Encourage these; they will allow different individuals time to share in their own way. Think through how to make what you say more interesting – use images, humour, stories and keep it interactive. Involve the group as much as possible in ideas, preparation and the sessions themselves. Encourage them to own the sessions.

Be yourself. No-one is expecting you to be up on the latest tunes if that's not your thing. (Trying too hard to be cool will inevitably backfire, so beware!) Remember, in this setting what they need most is for you to be a friend.

Be a model. You are trying to encourage your young people to show acceptance, respect and grace to each other, even if they hold different views. So make sure you demonstrate this in what you do and say.

Don't let your body language give you away. Remember, your words only communicate part of the message. How you hold your arms, how far or near you are from your group, whether you sit or stand, whether you fiddle about and look nervous – all these communicate how you feel about the subject and the young people you are working with. Think about what you are communicating, not just what you are saying.

Don't forget to look people in the eye. Eye contact shows you are interested, and that you care. And don't just focus on the one person who finds you funny. Engage with all members of your group. This involves them and draws them into the group dynamics and discussion.

Remember your own relationship with God. Get right with God before you speak. Ensure that you make extra time for your own personal reflection and prayer each week. Pray for the course, that God will use you and guide your heart in all you do to serve him.

Come only expecting that God will move. Our role as leaders is simply to make space so that God can move, touching hearts and minds. Do all you can to facilitate this.

And finally.... Keep it moving, keep it relevant and HAVE FUN!

LEADING A DISCUSSION GROUP

Many of the sessions have a few discussion questions. These are also listed on the downloadable PowerPoint slides so groups can see them as they talk. Discussion groups are great places for young people to learn from each other and express their views. They provide a fantastic opportunity for encouragement and fellowship. Your role in leading the small group is to facilitate this process. Here are some tips to help this happen:

- Don't preach at the group.
- Try to involve everyone, especially the quieter ones.
- Create an environment where young people feel safe to express themselves, and disagree with each other, without putting each other down.
- Avoid questions that are vague, manipulative, or only require one-word answers.
- Use the prepared list of questions, but don't be tied to this. Use answers from previous questions to spawn new questions.
- Keep to the subject.
- Keep it moving.
- Don't allow groups to sit in silence for too long!

DISCIPLINE MATTERS

Young people respect and look up to those leaders who set fair, acceptable standards of behaviour. They feel more secure when they have stated boundaries. So, it's important to deal with undesirable behaviour. However you choose to do this, there are some principles you should keep in mind:

- Don't make threats unless you can carry them out and are prepared to do so.
- Don't overreact.
- Set clear and definite boundaries and try to stick to them.
- Be consistent: fair but firm.
- Don't give unjust punishment.
- Don't shout – use a calm voice.
- Discipline should be positive (as much as possible) and not negative.
- Give praise often.
- Never use sarcasm.
- Show that you have a sense of humour.

USING TECHNOLOGY

DVDs, CDs or MP3s and other media are great to use as part of a session, but make sure you've set it all up beforehand. Even if you're a technical genius, preparation is important.

Before each session:

- Cue any DVD or music you're going to use to the right point, and set the volume.
- View any movie or other clip beforehand to check that it's relevant and that it doesn't contain any 'undesirable' content.
- Make sure everyone will be able to see the screen.
- Check that there is not too much light on the screen. Close curtains and turn lights off if necessary.

SUPPORT

Make sure that your church know what you are doing, and are supporting you throughout the course. Meet your church leader and ask for advice, support and prayer. If you get the opportunity, share with the congregation during a meeting or service: inspire them with your work and ask them to pray for your group.

Find others around you who will pray for you, your team and your young people, before, during and after the Freedom In Christ for Young People course. You could communicate by email, text or a regular phone call to update those who are supporting you in prayer.

It is the heart of the partnership that we support you in whatever way we can. Please do get in touch with us if there is anything we can do.