

## Using *Facing the Challenge* with a group

*Facing the Challenge* is designed to be used by churches, home groups, Christian Unions and organisations as well as by individuals. These notes will help you to run *Facing the Challenge* with any kind of group.

### Flexible Approach

You know better than anyone else does how you will use *Facing The Challenge*. It is designed to be as flexible as possible, so you can adapt it to your own situation. In whatever way you use it, the important point is that it equips participants to respond more Biblically and effectively to the challenge of our times. Some possibilities are:

- Use all six sessions over six weeks, one evening a week
- Run a one-day seminar
- Use the material over two or three half-days

Some of the sessions may be more relevant to your situation than others, and you may want to select some and leave out others. If you do select some, sessions 1 and 2 are essential to understanding the others.

If you use *Facing the Challenge* for a one-day seminar, there is too much material to cover all six sessions. We recommend covering only four sessions in a day – for example the first four sessions.

The more preparation you can give to the material, the more your participants will get out of it. You may want to find your own illustrations – perhaps known to participants, perhaps more up-to-the-moment than those included in the core material. Or you may want to adjust the material to your local situation. Appendix A contains the resources for an additional session on how the challenge of our times affects the Church; it would be particularly relevant to customise this to your own church situation.

*Facing the Challenge* is about how to respond to what is happening around us *now*. The web site [www.facingthechallenge.org](http://www.facingthechallenge.org) contains updated examples, illustrations, and background articles. Check it regularly to make the most of the material.

## **Outline of a session**

Each session is designed to last one hour.

- Introduction (10 minutes)
- Main teaching presentation (10 minutes)
- Group discussion and reflection (20 minutes)
- Feedback from the group work (10 minutes)
- ‘Try this at home’ and recommended resources (5 minutes)
- Pray in groups and close (5 minutes)

(All timings are approximate)

### **Introduction (about 10 minutes)**

- Welcome the participants
- Pray
- Briefly review the course so far
- Go over the ‘try this at home’ exercise from the previous session
- Explain the purpose of this session

### **Purpose**

The beginning of each session describes the purpose of that session.

### **Main teaching presentation (about 10 minutes)**

This handbook contains detailed scripts for the main teaching presentations. The presentation comes at the beginning of all the sessions apart from session 1, where it comes *after* the group discussion exercise. There are three ways to present this material:

1. Using an overhead projector. The CDROM contains colour master overhead projector slides, which you can find in the ‘printable resources’ section. Overhead projector transparency film for inkjet printers is available from a wide range of office and computer suppliers, and you can use an inkjet printer to print out the overhead projector slides in colour. Alternatively, a complete set of black and white masters for the overhead projector slides is included at the back of this handbook, and these can be photocopied onto suitable overhead projector film.
2. If you have access to a multimedia PC and video projector, you can also run *Facing the Challenge* using the six MS PowerPoint® presentations on the accompanying CDROM (one for each session of the course). These cover the same points as the OHP slides, but the PowerPoint® shows can help to make the presentation more interesting. Please check that the presentations will run properly on your computer before using them in public! Focus Radio does not

guarantee that the presentations will run on any particular combination of equipment.

3. If you do not have access to either a multimedia PC and video projector, or to an overhead projector (for example, if you are running the course in a home group), it is still possible to run the course effectively, by the group leader going through the main teaching presentation with the group, without any visual aids at all.

### **Group Work (about 20 minutes)**

The purpose of the group work is to get the participants thinking for themselves about the material. This group work is an essential part of *Facing the Challenge*. If participants only listen to the teaching, they are not likely to internalise the material effectively. If they talk through the material with others, they will absorb it more thoroughly and learn to apply it more effectively.

Break the participants into small groups for the group work. The ideal size is five or six people. Fewer than this, and the group may not be able to keep a discussion going. More, and some people may feel that they cannot contribute. Participants should stay in the same groups for the whole course, if possible.

The most effective way of choosing groups is to put people into the natural groupings in which they will continue at the end of the course. (For example: if you are running the course in a church, and your church has home groups, the natural discussion groups for the course are the home groups into which the church normally breaks down.)

Each group needs a leader who can chair the discussion and then report in the feedback time. (The person reporting need not be the same as the person who chairs the discussion.) We recommend choosing group leaders before the start of the course, and briefing them on what they should be doing – perhaps even having a separate session introducing the course to the leaders before you start. It may be helpful to provide them with copies of this handbook.

### **Feedback from the group work (about 10 minutes)**

The purpose of the feedback time is for the groups to share what they have learned. It is important to allow enough time for feedback from the group discussions. However, it is also important not to allow this part of the session to drag on. In the session outline, we allow ten minutes for feedback.

Because the purpose of the group work is to get the participants thinking for themselves, it is important not to create an atmosphere that suggests there is only one 'right' answer, and dismisses other contributions. There will usually be some conclusion or conclusions at the end of the feedback time, and the notes in each chapter under 'Feedback' indicate the kind of conclusions to expect. However, it is important not to close in on these conclusions too quickly.

### **Prayer in groups (about 5 minutes)**

If *Facing the Challenge* is to make a real difference to participants' lives and equip them to share the Good News more Biblically and effectively, it is vital that prayer surrounds the study of the material. Without prayer, the course may do nothing more than tickle our minds. The course leader should pray at the beginning of each session, and there should be time for prayer in groups at the end of each session.

## **Beyond the Sessions**

A course like this can only scratch the surface of the important questions it raises. We have therefore included in each session four things that will help participants think and apply that session more widely:

- An exercise for participants to try at home
- A 'key points' sheet outlining the main points of the session
- A 'background briefing' sheet providing more in-depth material for participants who want to go further. This should be given out to participants at the *end* of the session.
- Recommended resources - books, web sites, and other resources for participants who want to read more widely about the subject of this session

Some of these resources are not easily available in the UK, but they may be ordered through the *Facing the Challenge* web site ([www.facingthechallenge.org](http://www.facingthechallenge.org))

## **Copyright information**

This course (including this handbook, the associated CDROM, and the web site) is copyright © 2002 Focus Radio. However, you may freely make as many copies as you wish of the group worksheets, key points sheets, background briefing sheets and ‘ten steps to make a difference’ sheets. You may also print out the overhead projector slide images from the CDROM.

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Further copies of this handbook and the associated CDROM are available from Focus Radio, and can be ordered from our web site ([www.facingthechallenge.org](http://www.facingthechallenge.org)).