

Evangelism Pathway

Helping people decide to become dynamic disciples of Jesus

Workbook



The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory

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Overview

Background

In 2010, The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga launched an extension to the Territorial Strategic Mission Plan (TSMP) referred to as TSMP: The Next Chapter, containing four updated goals.

Jesus' last instruction to his disciples was to:

'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising [immersing] them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.' (Matthew 28:19-20)

This is the basis for the first goal – 'make dynamic disciples of Jesus'.

Purpose

This document is designed to help corps and centres ensure they have a robust plan for helping people decide to follow Jesus (evangelism). It can be used to develop a plan from scratch, or to check an existing plan for completeness.

A separate *Discipleship Pathway* document is available that considers helping people who have already decided to follow Jesus grow as dynamic disciples.

Approach

The more you discuss and grapple with the task, the more your plan will be owned and so succeed. Therefore, the document is designed intentionally as a series of questions and exercises, interspersed with theory and ideas.

With some preparation, it is anticipated that a leadership team could work through the document in a couple of hours (corps might also consider combining this with the separate *Discipleship Pathway* as content for a weekend leadership team retreat).

Your discussion will be more productive if everyone has pre-read this booklet and considered answers to the various questions.

The document is split into three parts:

1. What is an evangelism pathway and why would you want one?
2. What do we know about how people decide to follow Jesus?
3. Your turn – developing your pathway for helping make disciples.

SECTION 1

The Need for an Evangelism Pathway

What is an Evangelism Pathway?

According to the Collins English Dictionary, a pathway is a route to or way of achieving something. In our context, we are referring to our process of helping people decide to follow Jesus.

We're not talking about a conveyor belt. There is no process or formula to push on someone so they'll come out a Christian. However, it is helpful to consider what steps people tend to progress through to ensure we are making it as easy as possible for them.

Why an Evangelism Pathway?

The Salvation Army is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Bringing people to faith (salvation) is in our name. Moving people along the pathway is ultimately God's work but we are called to do our part. Otherwise, why did He command us to 'go and make disciples'? It is expected that every Salvation Army context is involved in evangelism.

Does this mean that as people visit your centre asking for food, that you say 'not until you've heard me preach to you'? Definitely not! But it is just as inappropriate to have no intent to expose the gospel to people who are open.

Taking the time to put into words what happens is of great benefit to a centre. Often, it is only when you attempt to write it down that you discover a whole range of misunderstandings and disparate views. It also helps you identify gaps and become more intentional.

Questions to consider:

1. How do you feel about the expectation that your centre helps people come to faith in Jesus?
2. Do you think there are any steps that are typical of how people come to faith in Jesus? If so, what are they?
3. What is your response going to be when you enter heaven and Jesus asks 'who did you bring with you?'

SECTION 2

The Basis for an Evangelism Pathway

The first two practices described in the book *7 Practices of Effective Ministry* provide a great basis for developing our evangelism pathway:

1. **Clarify the win** – make sure everyone understands what we’re aiming for
2. **Think steps not programmes** – think of it as a process. What are the steps we want *most* people to take? What part in the overall process does each programme and event provide? Are there any gaps?

Clarify the Win – What are we aiming for?

Many people see evangelism only in terms of people deciding to follow Jesus, yet we all know that there is an awful lot that happens before that!

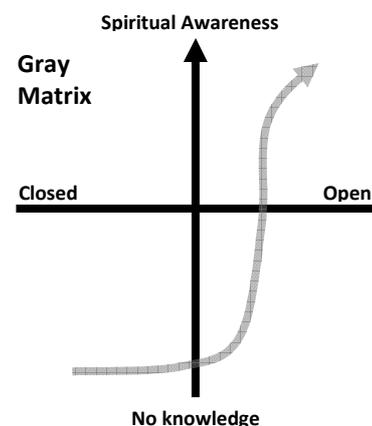
In the 1970s, James Engel, in his book *What’s Gone Wrong With the Harvest* proposed that there is a way in which most people who become followers of Jesus progress, as they become increasingly aware of the gospel and its implication for their lives. His chart is well-known as the Engel Scale and is used on many training courses to help people tailor their Christian message to where a person is on the scale.

These ideas have been expanded by Frank Gray who recognised that in addition to **spiritual awareness**, a person must also be **open** to learning more about faith. For most people, there is no point telling them about Jesus if they are not interested. How does someone become open? **Relationships** with praying Christians who care!

Putting these together, he developed the Gray Matrix, suggesting that coming to faith in Jesus requires two elements:

1. **Openness:** an open attitude to the gospel and toward God
2. **Spiritual awareness:** a person cannot come to faith without a basic understanding of the gospel.

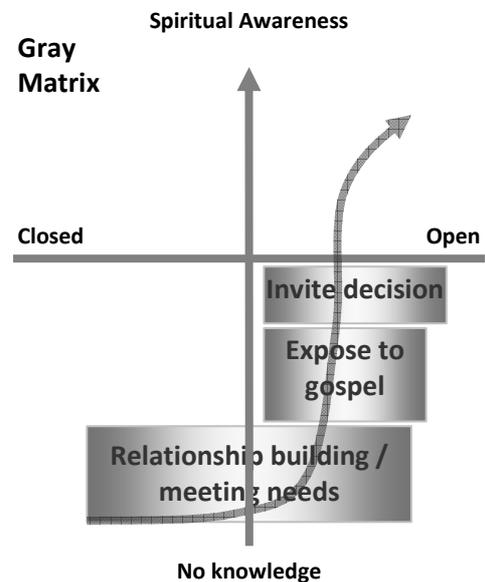
So what is our win? Ideally to see people decide to follow Jesus, but for this to happen will require many smaller wins along the way – helping people become more open to God and more spiritually aware.



Think Steps, Not Programmes

The Gray Matrix helps us identify three simple steps that we can use as the basis for our evangelism pathway.

1. It starts with **relationships**. As we serve people unconditionally and build our relationship, they may become more open to God.
2. If we identify that someone is open to God, we help them explore by **exposing them to the gospel** and providing a means for them to have their questions answered.
3. Finally, if we sense that they are open to deciding to follow Jesus, we need to **invite** them to do so.



Questions to consider:

1. If someone was interested in Jesus, how would your centre help them find out more and get answers to their questions?
2. How would someone in contact with your centre be encouraged to make a decision to follow Jesus?
3. Spiritual growth is achieved by the power of the Holy Spirit, so prayer must underlie everything you do. Do your prayer ministries reflect this?
4. Do your people have the skills to share their faith? How would they have learned these?

SECTION 3

Developing Your Evangelism Pathway

To develop your evangelism pathway, we are suggesting the following six steps:

1. Who are you targeting and what do they need?
2. What do you do now?
3. Map what you do to those you are targeting
4. Refine your pathway
5. Write it down
6. Do it
7. Review and adapt.

Step 1: Who are you targeting and what do they need?

When asked to consider the notion of a target demographic, many people find the whole concept offensive believing that the church should be a place for everyone and where people from all walks of life get along. Absolutely!

However, corps and centres have limited resources, so good stewardship suggests we channel these resources to have the biggest benefit.

The Gray Matrix suggests that our Evangelism Pathway starts with relationships. In general, we have two types:

1. **Friends:** building relationships with friends, caring about them and meeting their needs, then as appropriate, looking for opportunities to introduce them to God.
2. **Centre contacts:** people making use of services provided by the corps/centre. Using these contacts to build longer term relationships that in turn might lead to introducing the people to the corps family.

If friendship evangelism is important to your centre, or some of your community programmes are intended to be evangelistic, continue with Step 1A.

It is assumed that social service centres are primarily focused on meeting needs and already have a good handle on who they are trying to help. As the focus of this document is evangelism, not social service, please jump to Step 2.

Step 1A: Considering target demographics (Corps only)

1. If you were given \$50,000 and asked to use it in anyway you wanted to help 50 people decide to follow Jesus, what would you do?

Here are some ideas:

- Give every member of the corps \$200 worth of café vouchers and ask them to spend them over the next year building in-depth relationships with three key people in their lives
- Hire a children's worker to build relationships at the local schools; start a kid's club; hold a camp that includes a decision time
- Run an advertising campaign
- Start a chaplaincy service and visit the local hospitals and rest homes
- Run marriage and parenting seminars, followed by Alpha courses
- Hold a massive youth rally
- Buy a new sound system to beef up your Sunday church service
- Start a food bank
- Have a guest evangelist come to town for a series of weekends.

In each of these ideas, there is a target demographic. It may be that you decide to spend your money on a range of actions to cover a range of people. The point is that in making your decision, you would have considered different groups of people and their particular interests and needs.

The more groups you target, the more resources you will need to be effective. With limited resources, you need to make a choice. Choose the middle of the road, doing something hopefully acceptable to all (but probably not great for anyone), or place your energies for a time in a particular area.

Should you decide to have a particular focus, we are not intending for this to be exclusive. For example, if you are targeting young families and an older person comes, you wouldn't turn them away. However, you might choose to ignore them if they suggest you sing more hymns or stop the children running around after the service because they are too noisy.

2. Different groups have different interests and needs. Take some time to discuss the different demographics in the table below, and brainstorm other ideas you have on how they could be reached.

Demographic	Examples of focused activities	Your ideas
Young families	<input type="checkbox"/> High quality children's programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Include children in worship services (e.g. children's story, items, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Meet needs: parenting courses, marriage course, baby-sitting service <input type="checkbox"/> Ante-natal class venue <input type="checkbox"/> Mother's and Father's Day services	
Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Halloween alternative <input type="checkbox"/> Kids social events <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday programme, out of school care <input type="checkbox"/> Values training (Sunday school)	
Youth	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth social events <input type="checkbox"/> Smaller youth interest groups (e.g. life groups, Fuel, Quest, Nooma, Youth Alpha, skateboarding, sports, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Youth music team and loud music <input type="checkbox"/> Involvement in schools	
Older people	<input type="checkbox"/> Companions club <input type="checkbox"/> Meals on wheels, home visitation <input type="checkbox"/> Day trips <input type="checkbox"/> Chapel services <input type="checkbox"/> Craft group <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent helpers	
Community needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Community ministries <input type="checkbox"/> Life skills courses <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting programmes <input type="checkbox"/> Community meal	
Ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaders familiar with the culture <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-lingual services <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural awareness programme	
Other?		

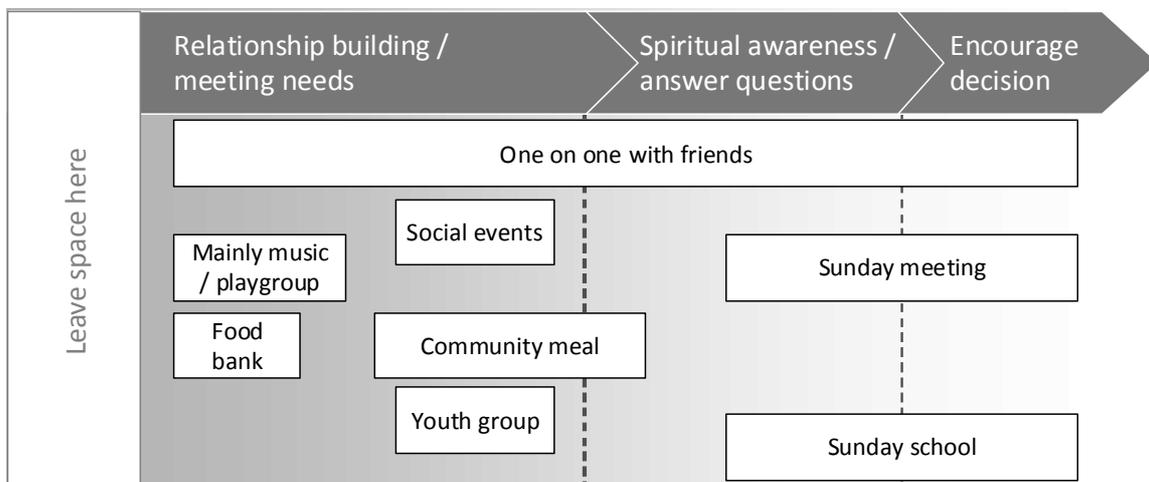
Step 2: What do you do now?

On a large sheet of paper, whiteboard, or computer, identify the activities you do now that fit under our three headings (see examples below):

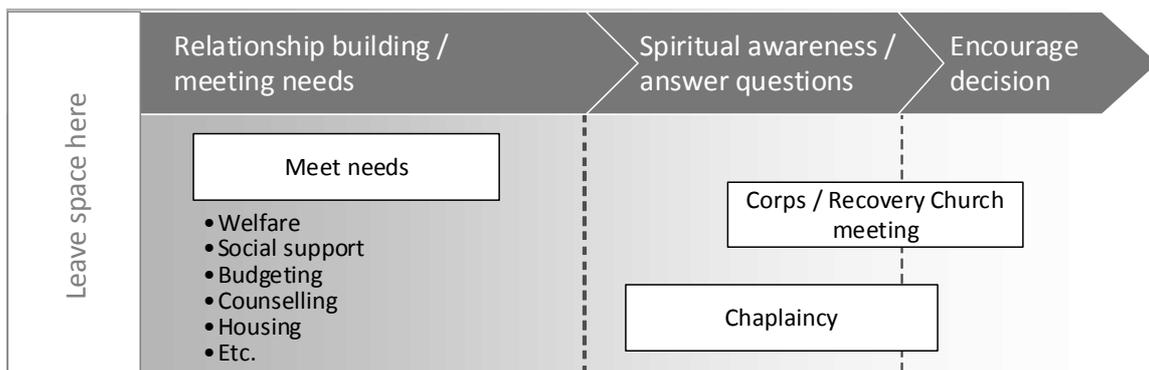
1. **Relationship building / meeting needs:** activities for which a major focus is meeting needs (e.g. food bank, counselling), relationship building (e.g. social events, playgroup) or both (e.g. community meals).
2. **Spiritual awareness / answering questions:** activities in which someone would have their spiritual awareness raised, or be offered the chance to ask questions about Christianity (e.g. Christianity explained, Journeys, community meal with God Spot, etc.)
3. **Encourage a decision:** how might someone who was ready, be asked to decide to follow Jesus (e.g. Alpha, Sunday church service, chaplain, etc.)?

Place each activity in its own box under the relevant heading. If it covers more than one heading, span the box across the headings accordingly. If it fits mainly under one heading but contributes to another, place the box in the main area with a small overlap into the secondary. Leave space to the left.

Corps example:



Social services example ('meet needs' used to make this generic – you may want to be more specific):



Step 3: Map what you do to those you are targeting

1. Make a list of all the people you are targeting.

For corps, this list will be your target demographics from Step 1B, plus the people attending your relationship building / meeting needs activities from Step 2 (e.g. child, youth, family; community meal client, marriage course attendee, etc.).

For social service centres, this will be the clients of each of your activities from Step 2 (e.g. learner, budgeting client, senior services client, etc.). If you have non-Christian staff and volunteers, you may want to add staff/volunteer to your list.

2. Write this list into the space on the left hand side of your picture.

3. For each person on the list, draw an arrow from them to the activity that they are most likely to attend first. Then ask what would be the next step. Hopefully, you will end up with a flow that takes them from initial contact, through exploring the gospel and ultimately to where they might be encouraged to make a decision.

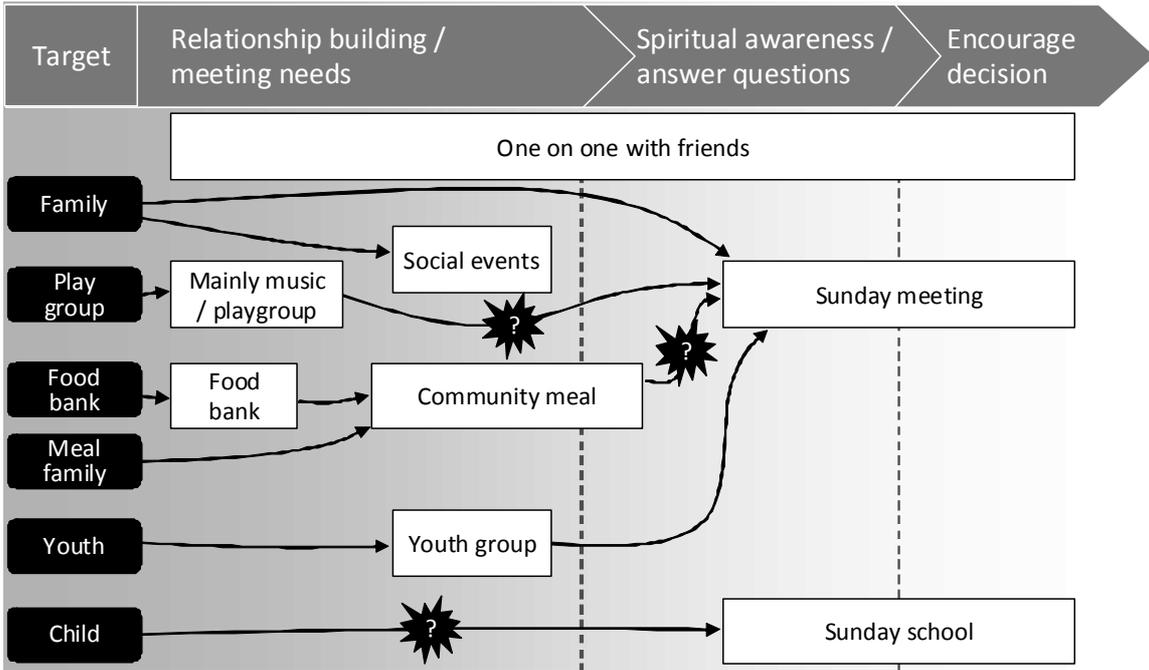
You may find that for some groups, you don't have a next step. Mark this on your diagram.

Similarly, ask yourself whether the link is realistic. Would someone realistically come directly from your food bank to a Sunday morning church service? Would parents allow their child to go directly to Sunday school, or would they want to know they could trust you first?

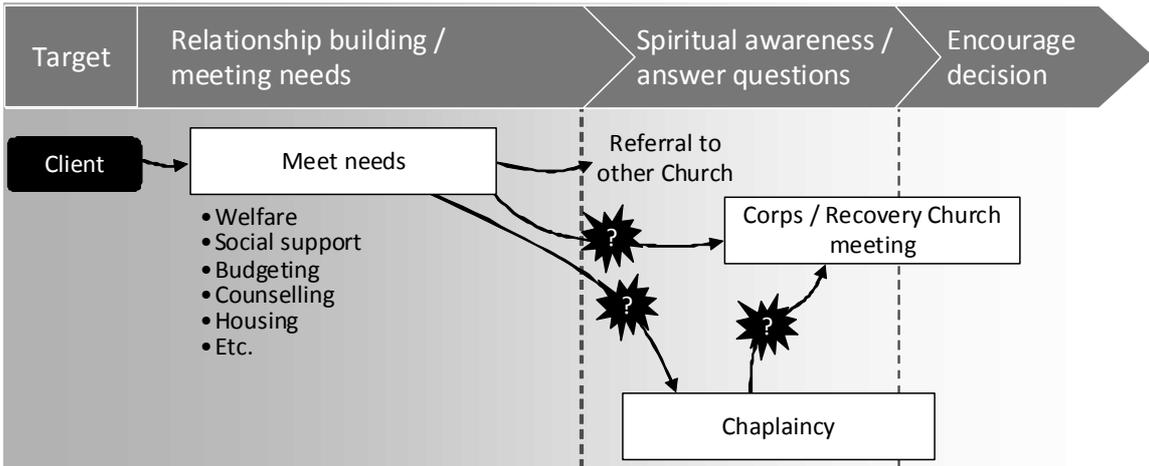
If you have questions over a link, or ideas for how to make it easier for people to progress, draw a big question mark over it.

Keep going through all your people groups until finished.

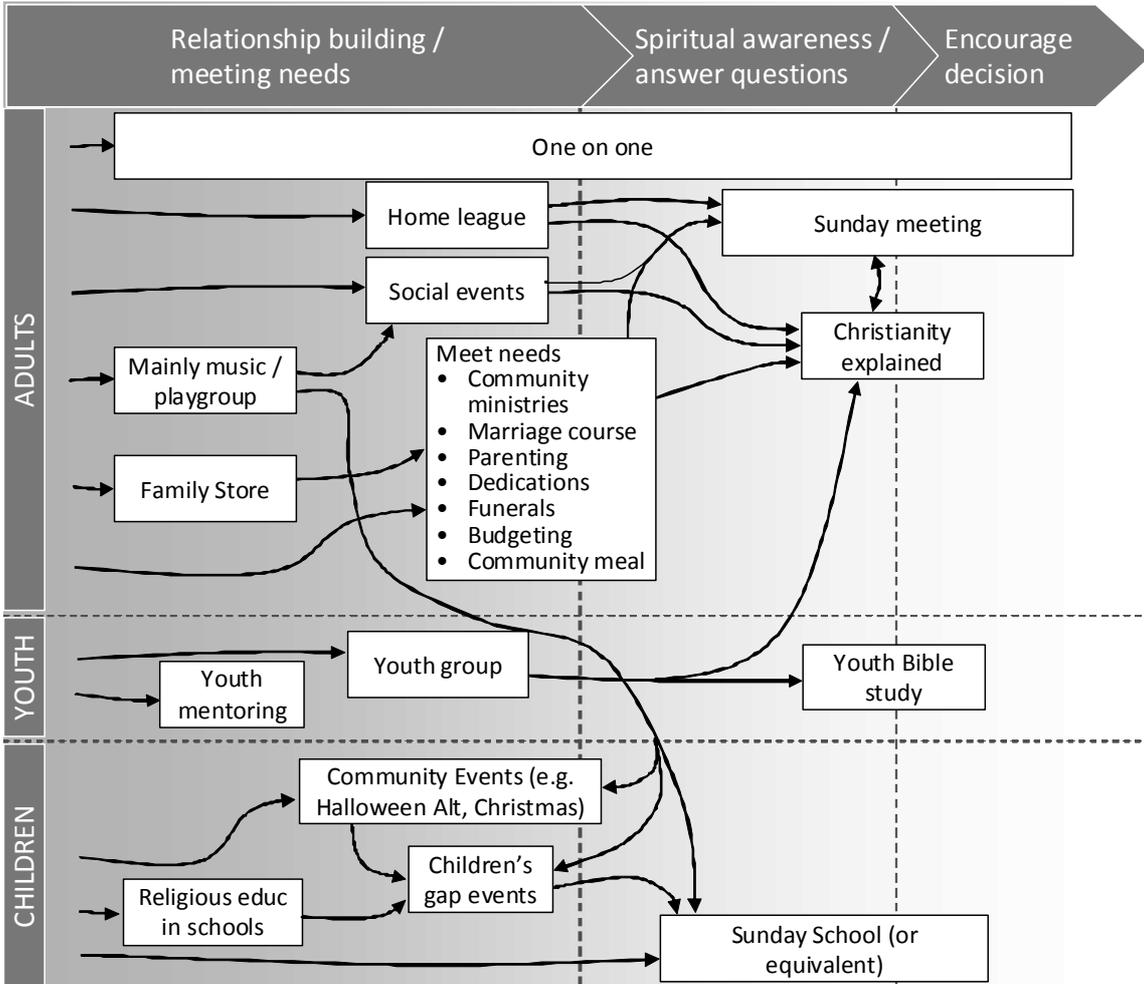
Corps example:



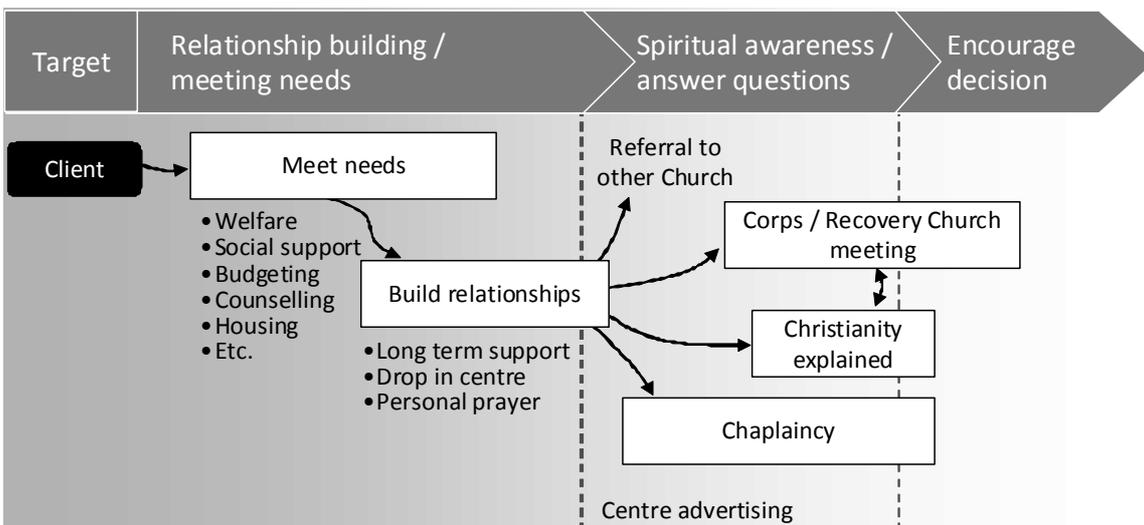
Social services example:



Corps example:



Social services example:



Step 5: Write it down

They say that a picture paints a thousand words so you definitely want to keep your picture. However, there is also something about adding words that clarifies the picture and removes any ambiguity.

Take the time to write down your pathway from the view of your demographic groups. For example:

a) **Friends:**

- We encourage everyone in the corps to form relationships with friends who do not follow Jesus (e.g. by regular talking at Sunday night services and in our discipleship training courses)
- Next, we encourage them to seek opportunities to meet their friend's needs. The corps supports this by providing activities such as marriage courses, parenting courses, and frozen meals.
- We also provide a range of social events where we encourage people in the corps to bring their friends to meet other people within the corps
- We provide a Sunday morning service that is new people friendly (welcoming, consistent, no cringe-factor).
- We seek to make the most of special events (e.g. Mother's and Father's Day, Christmas, Easter) and run "bring a friend" Sundays
- Decisions are made during regular Christianity Explained courses and during Sunday services.

b) **Children:**

- We provide a high quality children's programme at the same time as the main Sunday service
- To encourage children to bring their friends, we hold social events for kids every term. At these events, children are invited to come to the Sunday programme
- We provide morning tea afterwards to show children that church is fun, but also, we time the service to finish five minutes prior to the end of the children's programme so that new parents cannot slip out without someone making them feel welcome.

c) Community contacts/clients:

- We provide a range of community services to meet the needs we perceive in the community
- We ensure that no one leaves our centre without realising that we are Christian and that they would be welcome to join us or ask us questions (e.g. posters, brochures, DVD playing in reception, etc.)
- We attempt to build relationships with our clients by meeting their immediate needs, and seeking to make more of a long term difference by providing longer term social support, budgeting, etc. and inviting them to our community meal
- If appropriate, we offer to pray with our clients
- During our community meal, we provide a short God spot to raise awareness about God, ideally in the form of a personal testimony
- Each term, we hold an Exploring God seminar after the community meal and encourage guests to attend.
- At the end of the seminar, we invite people to continue their journey by attending an Alpha course which is where the opportunity to decide to follow Jesus would be offered.

d) Chaplaincy:

- When a client first joins our programme, we introduce them to (or they are visited by) our chaplain
- Our staff are trained to look for needs, and when observed, they offer to invite the chaplain. The chaplain helps provide for the client's need, including looking for opportunities to link the client with the local corps (e.g. over 60s club, community meal, youth group, etc.)

e) Raise our profile:

- We run events or advertise to raise our profile, such as Halloween alternatives; we put the "Centre on Parade" at Red Shield Appeal time and Christmas; we advertise in the local newspaper.

f) Collect what you want more of:

- We collect information from our leaders regularly on what we want more of (e.g. decisions made, new people, referrals from programmes to the Sunday service, invitations made, etc.).

Step 6: Do it

No explanation required – you've got a plan so get started.

However, the plan is only understood by the leaders who developed it. Your people need to understand the plan and how they can make the most of it as after all it is for them. How will you engage them?

Are you introducing anything new? Who is responsible for it?

Are you changing the focus of things you are currently doing?

Do your people have the skills to do what you are asking? Do you need to provide training in any areas (e.g. how to share your faith)?

How you will you ensure the plan remains a focus? Can you put a poster or similar on the wall; regular articles in your newsletter; reminders when promoting events, etc.

Once started, make sure you keep looking at your plan. Perhaps include it as a standing item on your meeting agenda.

Questions to consider:

1. How will we introduce the plan to our people?

2. What actions need to be taken to introduce our plan?
 - Key messages to be shared
 - New ministries to introduce
 - Current ministries to change or stop
 - Training
 - Other

3. How will we ensure that our plan keeps happening?

Step 7: Review and adapt

Once up and running, it's important to check that your plan is working, and take the time to consider possible improvements. But how will you know if it is working?

There's a saying *measure what you want more of*. This keeps the focus, and provides regular feedback on your plan. So what might we measure?

1. The number of people deciding to become a disciple of Jesus (e.g. recorded on a seeker register)
2. The number of people exploring Christianity (e.g. people attending 'Christianity Explained' or a seeker small group; new people to Sunday meetings)
3. How a relationship building/needs meeting ministry has attempted to raise spiritual awareness with their guests (e.g. through a personal story, God Spot, devotion, referrals to seeker events, etc.)
4. Attempts to raise spiritual awareness one on one with clients of ministries (e.g. spiritual discussions, prayer for clients, referrals to church-based activities, etc.)
5. Referrals to chaplains

Extras relevant only to corps / recovery churches:

6. Average Sunday meeting attendance and % growth
7. Average Sunday school attendance (or midweek equivalent) and % growth

Questions to consider:

1. What measures of success do we want to include in our discussions as a leadership team?

Well done. You've finished with the workbook. May God bless your pathway!