

LET'S CONTINUE TO BUILD COMMUNITY by pursuing the COMMON GOOD SESSION GUIDE



HERE : NOW: US
COMMUNITY



Acknowledgements

Let's Continue to Build Community is one of a series of resources called
HERE: NOW: US from Together for the Common Good (T4CG).

First Edition: June 2020

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About Together for the Common Good (T4CG)

T4CG is a small charity working to strengthen the bonds of social trust. Our vision is of a world transformed, where more and more people take responsibility for the Common Good.

Our mission is to support people to play their part and fulfil their vocational responsibility by putting Common Good principles into practice. We call people to work with others across different opinions and backgrounds in shared purpose, to strengthen civic immune systems and uphold the sanctity of human beings and creation.

We do this through training resources, public conversations, online and printed materials, talks and sessions. We partner with people and organisations across the churches and with allies from fellow faith and non-religious traditions. T4CG works across the UK and beyond.

Find out more and download more resources at

www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

About this guide

The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.

The Common Good is something we build together - it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.

As we consider the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath, we realise that the re-build required will need to be underpinned by a consensus, where human beings understand the relationship between virtue and social, political and economic life. The crisis is showing us in stark terms that it is only when we think of others and love our neighbours, when we show solidarity with each other, and when we work together to build the Common Good, that we flourish as human beings.

In the wake of the crisis, there is a danger we may return to the status quo. But the crisis has exposed many weaknesses in our society that were there before. That is why pursuing the Common Good is so necessary. By building on the community spirit that emerged during the crisis we can strengthen relationships and social solidarity within our communities. We can strengthen our civic immune systems, preserve and celebrate the unique character and humanity of our neighbourhoods.

The purpose of this guide is to show you how to run four sessions as a basic introduction to Common Good principles which includes developing an action plan for your local context.

This is one of a series of resources from Together for the Common Good aiming to equip and train people across communities to pursue the Common Good (see the T4CG website). This guide includes an outline for each session, readings and questions, as well as tips on preparing for and running the sessions. The sessions help participants explore Common Good principles and relate them to their lives: in this place, right now.

Let's Continue to Build Community explained

It is:

- ✓ A set of open conversations in which each person should have an equal voice
- ✓ A stimulus to reflect on the Principles and practical application of the Common Good
- ✓ An opportunity to bring together people of different backgrounds, life experiences and political persuasions to recognise their individual gifts and need for one another.
- ✓ An introduction to further training on Common Good Thinking and Practice.

It is not:

- ✗ A series of lectures delivered by an expert
- ✗ A programme designed solely for people of faith.
- ✗ A set of neat and tidy answers to questions of community life and relationships.

The four sessions

Aspects of Common Good Thinking have been divided to be discussed over three sessions. These sessions should help you and people in your community to have ideas on how they can use such thinking as a group, with their gifts, at this time, in this place. Ideas from each session are captured by an attendee and, in a fourth session, these can be discussed further and action plans developed for some issues.

It is very much hoped that follow-up sessions will be organised by the group to continue with any proposed actions.

Session 1	The Human Person and the Common Good	A discussion on four aspects - human dignity, human equality, dignity of work, respect for life.
Session 2	Social Relationships and the Common Good	A discussion on four aspects - participation, reconciliation, subsidiarity, solidarity.
Session 3	Stewardship and Interdependence and the Common Good	A discussion on two aspects - stewardship and interdependence - 'everyone is included, no-one is left behind.'
Session 4	Next Steps as a Community	Following the discussions above, what are the issues in the community that need to be addressed and what are the priorities?

Why Here: Now: Us?

This is from the series of Here: Now: Us resources from Together for the Common Good:

HERE because we belong to this place, through our relationships, local institutions and communities

NOW because we are at a critical point in our history where we each need to play our part to strengthen our civic immune systems

US because we can act together, across our different backgrounds, opinions and traditions, and contribute through our individual responsibilities

Why use these sessions, who can run them, and who to invite

Why you might use the sessions

- ✓ To avoid returning to the status quo in the wake of COVID-19. There is a need to continue to strengthen and build relationships and solidarity within our communities to preserve and celebrate the unique humanity of our neighbourhoods.
- ✓ To build a rapport within a group/groups representative of your community as a prelude for how you might renew and expand your work together towards the Common Good.
- ✓ To start people thinking about what they do to build the Common Good.
- ✓ To enable individuals and groups to make sense of the world we live in.
- ✓ To encourage people to think of their community more frequently.
- ✓ To encourage people to step forward to help solve problems within their communities.
- ✓ To set a context for further training about the Common Good.

Who might you want to invite?

- ➔ For best results try to ensure your group is as diverse a mix of local people as possible, from different backgrounds, classes and political views, including people you don't really know and are not part of your existing network.
- ➔ Here are some ideas: neighbours, key workers, faith leaders, acknowledged community leaders and volunteers, local business leaders, local representatives of 'agencies' e.g. Local Authority, police, NHS, schools, people who have used the foodbank or other community services. This list is not exhaustive!
- ➔ The sessions are suitable for people of all faiths and none.

Who could run the sessions

The convener of the group could run the first one to role-model how it is done. Then share the leadership by asking for volunteers.

Everything is provided so it shouldn't be too daunting. This is a good way of developing leadership; different voices add variety to the sessions.

Everyone should have a voice, so share input and try to encourage everyone to contribute.

Outline of each session

1	Pre-session	Send out the Readings and Questions (using the pdfs on pages 29-37) for each session so participants have time to think them through.
2	Welcome and introduction	Welcome and explain the purpose and format. How we work together e.g. everyone to have a voice. If appropriate, ask people to say who they are. Be brief.
3	Reminder of Common Good	Ask someone to read the definition of the Common Good.
4	Read through aspects to be focused on	One person or more reads through aspects of Common Good Thinking.
5	Pause and reflect	A few minutes of silence. How does this affect us at this time, in this community? (See quick guide on next page).
6	Sharing reflections and questions to prompt	Suggestions provided but let the group members take the lead. Make notes of comments made, issues identified, actions suggested. Always ask the question: <i>"Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?"</i>
7	Summarising	Pull out major themes, issues, etc and capture for later use. Circulate after the session.
8	Next session	Introduce the theme and date.

Length of sessions



Each one is designed to last 45-60 minutes. The sessions can be held online, e.g. over Zoom or as a physically gathered group. If possible, try to make the initial session face-to-face, whilst maintaining social distancing. If you need more time, you could decide to continue a session either then and there or schedule an additional session. If you are gathered (rather than Zoom) you may want to consider running two or more sessions together.

Quick guide to running 'Pause and Reflect'

(Part 5 of each session)

1	The group restarts after a period of silence and reflection.
2	There is a simple principle in this kind of reflection group: that you do not comment on what another person says. This is counter-cultural as we are used to stating our position. This means that when you are listening, you are not preparing a response, or judging what they say. Instead you are really hearing what is said.
3	Each person will have a unique story to tell about their thoughts in their quiet moments of reflection. By listening we receive gifts from other people and get a richer, multifaceted insight into different people's lives.
4	Each person should share only what they feel comfortable sharing. You don't have to say much but it is good to hear all voices. It is important that all participate.
5	You may want to share how you experienced the reflection, and the question prompts. How this affected you personally, your understanding, your sense of justice and/or prejudices etc. No need for detailed accounts.
6	Don't worry if you feel like you have nothing profound to share. Often it is the more ordinary statements which are honest reflections of our experience and offer insight that resonates with others. Every now and you might even surprise yourself and say something you didn't even think was there. Trust that whatever you say, however simple or short, is what you are guided to say.
7	Keep your inputs brief. Three or four minutes maximum. Too much information is hard to process for others and we want to make sure there is time for everyone, including those who might be a bit shy, to have a chance to speak. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, there may be time for a subsequent "round" of sharing.
8	You may like to leave some silence between speakers to allow what each person said settle in our hearts and minds. If you jump in too quickly, they may not feel heard. When we truly listen, we will need those few moments to gather our own thoughts before we are ready to speak.
9	We live in different ways. We respect one another's perspectives and individual journeys through listening attentively and we do not try to advise, fix, or convert anyone else.
10	That which is shared in the group, stays in the group. It is not usually appropriate to talk about something shared in the sacred space of the meeting after the session has ended, even if you are talking to the person who shared it.

How to prepare for the sessions

✓	YOUR CHECKLIST
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the Principles and sub-principles of the Common Good. See pages 27-28.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider your purpose. In the light of that who might you invite? Personal invitations are best. Who is currently, and who has been, active in the community? See page 7.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide how to phrase the invitation. Think about what matters and is important to the people you invite.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Whilst maintaining social distancing, try to make the initial meeting face-to-face, and with a manageable number (maximum 15).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review the online tips and Zoom guide for those sessions which are online. See pages 38-40. Distribute to invitees if necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide on a number. For large gathered meetings, you may want to divide into smaller groups of 5 or 6 people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Select a date. Allow yourself sufficient time to invite people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	For gathered meetings, select a suitable venue: a hospitable space. Book the room.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide whether you want a colleague to assist you. Decide whose contact details will be used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If not an online session, organise refreshments – tea, coffee, biscuits etc and consider how to set up the room. Put out chairs in a circle.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider how to circulate pre-session materials - there are Pdfs of Readings and Questions for the first three sessions on pages 29 to 37. There are no pre-session materials for Session 4.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiarise yourself with the session outline (see page 8) and the quick guide on how to run the Pause and Reflect section (see page 9).
<input type="checkbox"/>	If a physically gathered meeting, get hold of a Common Good Principles poster or print out the principles from pages 27-28 onto a large piece of paper on the wall.
<input type="checkbox"/>	You may want to collect local stories or cuttings as material.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mention the www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk website to the group - where they can find further resources and subscribe to the free T4CG newsletter.

Note: suggested questions are provided to shape the discussion, but participants should feel they have permission to bring in their own and not feel obliged to cover all those provided.

How to open and close a session and get feedback

How to open a session

- Decide whether to do introductions at the start. If you want people to have open and honest conversations, an early opportunity to speak makes it easier later.
- Start with yourself and say three things: your name, your role/group you belong to and something of interest to lighten the mood. For instance, good things that have happened since last session, best thing that's happened to me this week; nicest thing said to me this week; funniest thing that's happened to me recently. Specify two minutes, that's all!
- Ask people to really listen to one another and to give equal air-time to each other. On the other hand, if people do not wish to speak that is fine too. But avoid filling in gaps yourself too often.
- Advise people that confidentiality is key: other than what the session is all about, nothing disclosed should be repeated outside the session.
- If not online, and a large group, ask people to do the introductions (as above) in pairs or in small groups. If you decide to have refreshments at the start, encourage the group to mingle, get to know names. And take a lead yourself by making connections in the group.

How to close a session

It is very important that the session ends well. In closing, invite everyone to:

- ✓ Review the session with gratitude.
- ✓ Notice where the Common Good was present and where it was absent.
- ✓ Pay attention to your emotions.


Thank people for their presence and input. Remind them of the next meeting.

Getting feedback

- ✓ At the end of the session, or soon after, ask a couple of people whom you know will give you honest responses if they can think of any ways to improve the session. Ask people whom you expect may give you differing opinions.
- ✓ Write up a summary of the session describing what came out of it of importance for your community and distribute to participants.
- ✓ Let Together for the Common Good know how you are getting on by emailing info@togetherforthecommongood.co.uk. Do this especially after Session 4, and at the end of that session invite participants to complete the simple feedback survey at: <https://bit.ly/HNUCfeedback> It will be good to share stories.

SESSION 1:

THE HUMAN PERSON AND THE COMMON GOOD

ABOUT THE SESSION		
OUTLINE	We start by considering the human person and the Common Good. Is the law of the jungle the right one for human beings? Does the secret of success in life have to be "each for himself and the devil take the hindmost"? Can managers treat employees any way they like? Such questions worry almost everybody.	
	The whole world sometimes seems to be getting less and less user-friendly. Even politicians cannot offer us much comfort. Talking about the moral rules at the basis of society has never been more difficult, nor more necessary.	
	But it is not impossible. There exists a set of ideas that tries to answer questions like these. It is called Common Good Thinking. It is not a list of Dos and Don'ts. It is not a blueprint for a perfect society. It is more like a set of signposts, suggesting the way forward, or a set of questions, by which we can examine the way we live.	
	In this first session we start to think about the human person; human dignity, human equality, dignity of work, respect for life.	
AIM	To explore together what is meant by ‘the Common Good’ – with a particular focus on the human person.	
DURATION		45 - 60 mins
PREPARATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	Circulate the Session One Readings and Questions (use the pdfs on page 30-31) to the participants a few days before the session.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read and review the reading in the context of what is happening: in the country; in your area; in your community; in people’s lives.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	List some examples of your own, to prompt, but ask for the examples from the group first.


SESSION 1: RUNNING THE SESSION

OPENING THE SESSION	<p>Give some context by reading the definition of the Common Good below and the session outline on the previous page.</p> <p>The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.</p> <p>The Common Good is something we build together - it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.</p>
THE READING	<p>Our session today focuses on the human person. How do we view others and our neighbours? How do they view us? Do we see the gifts of others which enrich our lives?</p> <p>Are we challenged when we see a neighbour who suffers or who lacks what is essential to human flourishing? Do we relieve our neighbour's suffering and meet our neighbour's needs?</p> <p>Each person possesses a basic dignity by virtue of being human, not from any accomplishment, not from race or gender, age, background or economic status. The test therefore of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human dignity and indeed human life itself. Systems, policies or attitudes which treat human beings as economic units, or which reduce people to a passive state of dependency on welfare, do not do justice to the dignity of the human person, in fact, they dehumanise.</p> <p>We offer 4 principles about the Human Person:</p> <p>1) Human Dignity Every person is worthy of respect simply by virtue of being human.</p> <p>2) Human Equality All human beings are of equal worth.</p> <p>3) Dignity of work Work is more than just a way to make a living – it is good for our humanity, because through work we participate, create, support our families and others.</p> <p>4) Respect for life People matter more than things: each human life has value, from the youngest to the oldest, from the weakest to the strongest.</p>

	<p>These principles help us challenge any ideology which dehumanises, whether of the left or of the right. Put into practice, the principles can help to build more love into the system.</p> <p>They also imply that you don't go in with ready-made solutions to other people's situations. You are willing to learn, to walk at the pace of your neighbour, understand the way they understand, to see from their perspective. A recognition and respect and patience and generosity for what this gift-giving other might just be for me.</p>
QUESTIONS TO PONDER	<p><i>Pause for Reflection. Make notes of key points in the discussion so you can summarise and also, any possible actions to consider in Session 4.</i></p> <p>→ In the COVID-19 crisis, what gifts and talents have we seen within our community? Were they a surprise? What do we need to do to gain a better understanding of them?</p> <p>→ To what extent are we working <i>with</i> people (good) rather than working <i>for</i> them?</p> <p>→ Are we encouraging people to recognise and use their unique gifts? Are we helping each other in the development of our talents and competencies?</p> <p>→ Are we conscious of where there is lack of respect for others in our neighbourhood, and more widely? Do we know the underlying reasons?</p> <p>→ Are we creating opportunities for work in our communities? Work that is fulfilling?</p> <p>→ How can we build on the community spirit we have seen and create conditions for the shared action in which people from different backgrounds can flourish?</p> <p>→ Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?</p>
CLOSING THE SESSION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank everyone. • Summarise. Pull out major themes, issues, etc and capture for later use. • Next Session - date and time.

SESSION 2:

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE COMMON GOOD

ABOUT THE SESSION		
OUTLINE	<p>In the second session, we consider social relationships and the Common Good. The philosopher, Aristotle, said that ‘every community is established with a view to some good’ and he argued that the better the good, the better the community.</p> <p>How does our community measure up?</p> <p>Communities are brought into being by the participation of people responding to an impulse towards social relationships - essentially, the impulse to belong, to love and to be loved. It is a distortion of human nature, therefore, to suppose that individuals can exist independently of society, as if it had no demand on them. In other words, individualism. Our culture has been affected by this for some time. Individualism goes against the grain of human wellbeing.</p> <p>Members of society are subject to moral principles in their own lives, and these implicit and explicit moral demands are not of their own invention. The same is true of societies. They too have demands and those demands are not arbitrary. There are ways of structuring society which are essential to human flourishing and personal development.</p> <p>In this session we start to think about 4 aspects of social relationships: participation, reconciliation, subsidiarity, solidarity.</p>	
	<p>AIM</p> <p>To explore together what is meant by ‘the Common Good’ – with a particular focus on social relationships.</p>	
	<p>DURATION</p> 	<p>45 - 60 mins</p>
	<p>PREPARATION</p> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>	<p>Circulate the Session Two Readings and Questions (use the pdfs on pages 32-34) to the participants a few days before the session.</p> <p>Read and review the reading in the context of what is happening: in the country; in your area; in your community; in people’s lives.</p> <p>List some examples of your own, to prompt, but ask for the examples from the group first.</p>


SESSION 2: RUNNING THE SESSION

<p>OPENING THE SESSION</p>	<p>Give some context by reading the definition of the Common Good below and the session outline on the previous page.</p> <p>The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.</p> <p>The Common Good is something we build together - it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.</p>
<p>THE READING</p>	<p>We relate to neighbours, human communities, and nature itself in an ordered mutually connected system which makes up the natural world. The Common Good is the whole network of social conditions which individuals and communities need to flourish and live a fully, genuinely human, life. All are responsible for all, collectively, at the level of society or nation, not only as individuals.</p> <p>There are ways of structuring society which enable true human development and correspond to moral principles and demands. Participation enables people to realise their dignity, fulfil mutual obligations and responsibilities. The human race itself is a "community of communities", existing at international, national, regional and local level.</p> <p>The smallest such community is the family, the basic cell of human society. A well-constructed society will be one that protects the integrity, stability and health of family life, in all its shapes and sizes. All decisions should be stress-tested for their effect on family life and especially on children, as well as on other types of household.</p> <p>Good local institutions play a vital role too: local clubs, associations, unions, businesses, choirs, pubs, places of worship and so on, all help to strengthen our civic immune systems. Together, they help us to uphold the integrity of human life and resist the powerful forces that dehumanise, like an over-mighty state or predatory capital.</p> <p>But this civic ecology is vulnerable when our relationships are weak. It is only when our human connections are strong, that our immunity is stronger, and we are less vulnerable to exploitation. And so the principle of reconciliation is vital to bridge across our differences. It requires that we listen and encounter each other, to be prepared to "cross the road" and "stay in the room".</p>

	<p>The principle behind the relationships between the different layers of this "community of communities" should be that of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity requires that responsibility is held at the lowest appropriate level in order to uphold, preserve and strengthen the humanity of neighbourhoods. However, some decisions are more appropriately taken at a regional, national or even an international level. This principle can mean passing powers downwards or upwards according to the nature of the decision and the context.</p>
	<p>If subsidiarity is the principle behind the organisation of societies from a vertical perspective, solidarity is the equivalent horizontal principle. Solidarity means the willingness to see others as another "self", and to work for relationships of mutual concern and support. An injustice committed against another is no less serious than an injustice against oneself. Solidarity expresses the moral truth that <i>"no man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."</i> (John Donne)</p>
	<p>Thus we offer 4 principles about Social Relationships:</p> <p>1) Participation</p> <p>We have a right and a duty to participate and take up our proper responsibilities, working with others.</p> <p>2) Reconciliation</p> <p>We are called to build relationships where there is mistrust, suspicion or estrangement, especially when we encounter people with whom we disagree.</p> <p>3) Subsidiarity</p> <p>Responsibility is taken at the most appropriate level and decisions should always be taken closest to where they will have their effect. This means we need strong local participation and institutions. A central authority should only do tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level - so that all fulfil their unique roles.</p> <p>4) Solidarity</p> <p>We are social beings designed to be interconnected by relationships of mutual concern and support. Relationships within communities, with people, and with institutions need to be strengthened. Solidarity is a determination to work for the good of all and of each individual - all are responsible for all.</p>

<p>QUESTIONS TO PONDER</p>	<p><i>Pause for Reflection. Make notes of key points in the discussion so you can summarise and also, any possible actions to consider in Session 4.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ In the COVID-19 crisis, what groups participated? What groups did not? Did our local systems and structures encourage this? How can we change them? ➔ Are decisions around here made at the level where they will have the effect? To what extent are we working <i>with</i> people (good) rather than working <i>for</i> them? ➔ How do relationships between our local institutions need to be strengthened? ➔ Are we encouraging people to recognise and use their unique gifts? Are we helping each other in the development of our talents and competencies? ➔ Are we conscious of where the strained relationships or estrangements are in our neighbourhood, and more widely? Do we know the underlying reasons? ➔ Do we know who is invisible? Which groups are invisible to each other? Who is overlooked? Who is lonely? ➔ How can we build on the community spirit we have seen and create conditions for the shared action in which people from different backgrounds can flourish? ➔ The practical work of reconciliation is central to building the Common Good. Yet it can be tough. Parties can pull in different directions so trust, insight and courage are needed. It will take time. Have we persevered enough? ➔ What do we need to do to uphold, preserve, and strengthen family life and the humanity of our neighbourhoods? ➔ Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?
<p>CLOSING THE SESSION:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank everyone. • Summarise. Pull out major themes, issues, etc and capture for later use. • Next Session - date and time.

SESSION 3: STEWARDSHIP, INTERDEPENDENCE AND THE COMMON GOOD

ABOUT THE SESSION		
OUTLINE	<p>In this third session, we consider stewardship and interdependence and the Common Good.</p> <p>COVID-19 has taught us how closely we are all interwoven together. How a problem in one part of the world can be a problem for all of us. We can only thrive as humanity if everyone's fine. Our prosperity and our health are interconnected.</p> <p>There is no wall high enough to keep out the great threats that face us in our future, whether they're climate change or the devastating fallout of the pandemic on our lives, and certainly not the threats that face many people through poverty and deprivation. But stronger civic immune systems will help us withstand the storms ahead. Through our relationships, we can unleash ideas about how to change things, foster the sharing of experiences, technologies, investment and the other things that we need.</p> <p>As we each take responsibility to steward our world, how can we make sure everybody is included? The Common Good stands in opposition to the control of rulers or of a ruling (or any other) class. It implies that every individual, according to their ability and no matter how high or low, has a duty to share in promoting the welfare of the community as well as a right to benefit from that welfare. "Common" implies "all-inclusive": the Common Good cannot exclude or exempt any section of the population. It affirms our common humanity.</p> <p>In this session, we start to think about these aspects of stewardship and interdependence.</p>	
	<p>AIM</p> <p>To explore together what is meant by 'the Common Good' – with a particular focus on stewardship and interdependence.</p>	
DURATION		45 - 60 mins
PREPARATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	Circulate the Session Three Readings and Questions (use the pdfs on page 35-37) to the participants a few days before the session.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read and review the reading in the context of what is happening: in the country; in your area; in your community; in people's lives.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	List some examples of your own, to prompt, but ask for the examples from the group first.




SESSION 3: RUNNING THE SESSION

OPENING THE SESSION	<p>Give some context by reading the definition of the Common Good below and the session outline on the previous page.</p> <p>The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.</p> <p>The Common Good is something we build together - it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.</p>
THE READING	<p>The impact of COVID-19 has exposed longstanding weaknesses and inequalities in our society. It has accelerated pre-existing trends. The crisis presents an opportunity for us to learn and to put things right. This is a moment to strengthen our civic immune systems and, potentially stop the other great threats that we face like climate change, like immense poverty in the world, growing inequality in our own country, regional instability and conflict, mass migration, cascading financial crises, and the other things that threaten our jobs, our livelihoods and the planet.</p> <p>Whether we learn from this moment or not, is really the key question. Whether we are able as individuals to take responsibility, and to what extent as neighbours, local institutions and communities, we are able to act together. We owe the next generation a better future and a sustainable planet.</p> <p>It's our interdependence, the fact that we are now interconnected in so many ways, that makes it imperative that we care more about what happens around us - both close to home and further afield.</p> <p>And so the question we face today is, <i>'Are we able to learn from this experience?'</i></p> <p>And most of all, what we need is more co-operation because the threats to human beings and the natural world require that we work together.</p> <p>However, what if the solutions we come up with fail to take account of the interests of some of our fellow citizens? If any section of the population is excluded from participation in the life of the community, then the Common Good is not served, and calls for rectification.</p>

	<p>If that exclusion comes about from poverty, even if only "relative poverty", or if it comes about from powerlessness or injustice, then that demands attention. Neither governments or communities can be satisfied with "provision" designed only to prevent absolute poverty or which allows people only minimal involvement in the decisions that affect their lives.</p>
	<p>What level of social security provision and/or "power" transfer is adequate to meet the criteria of the Common Good is a political judgement that everyone should be involved in. There comes a point at which the scale of the gap between the most and the least powerful begins to undermine the Common Good. This is the point at which society starts to be run according to the interests of an elite and not for all its members.</p>
	<p>It is the obligation of every individual to contribute to the good of society. Every individual has a unique contribution that he or she can make, according to their gifts, influence and opportunity - a "vocational responsibility." This is not only in the interests of justice and in pursuit of an "option for the poor" but it is also in our own interests. It is how we find purpose and meaning.</p> <p>What are we missing if some cannot contribute? The context most likely to foster human fulfilment for everyone, is one where each person not only enjoys the benefit of living in an orderly, prosperous and healthy society, but also is able to contribute. A context that disregards the Common Good would not only be unjust to those it excluded, unpleasant and dangerous, it would also be undemocratic and become unstable.</p> <p>Thus we offer these two Common Good principles about Stewardship and Interdependence:</p>
	<p>1. Stewardship</p> <p>The Earth was here before us and was given to us - our common home. It is entrusted to us, and it is our shared responsibility to be good stewards of everything we have received – nature, one another, resources, gifts and talents.</p>
	<p>2. Interdependence</p> <p>Everyone is included. No-one is left behind. There is to be a preferential option for those who are poor or vulnerable, so we say "Come and join in...we need you!" If the strong are separated from the weak, the strong become impoverished, since being fully human means living together, sharing a common life.</p>

<p>QUESTIONS TO PONDER</p>	<p><i>Pause for Reflection. Make notes of key points in the discussion so you can summarise and also, any possible actions to consider in Session 4.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → What are the barriers in our community, in our nation, that hold back ideas of how to change things, how to share experiences of common humanity, share technologies, stop access to the people, the investment and the other things that we need? → What are my unique skills, and what assets does our area have? Do we know all the parts of our community? Which parts are excluded or in our blind spot? → What 'power' structures need adjusting in order to make sure everyone in our neighbourhood and our nation can contribute? → What are the immediate things we can do, individually and as a local community, to look after our area, and to create a more sustainable world? → Are we putting people who are poor and vulnerable at the heart of our decision-making? What needs rebalancing? → Inequality has been rising rapidly in Britain for the past 30 years. The gap between rich and poor has widened and the share of income going to the top 1% has doubled (from 6% to 14%). What evidence of this inequality is present in our community? → What happens if we pursue environmental solutions that neglect to consider the impact on jobs? → What examples do we have of people purporting to care for creation yet destroying it? As we are all interconnected and it affects us here, how can we stop this? → How will we join with our neighbours who have been invisible to us - or sidelined, excluded, poor or vulnerable, and then respect and honour what they bring? → Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?
<p>CLOSING THE SESSION:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank everyone. • Summarise. Pull out major themes, issues, etc and capture for later use. • Next Session - date and time.

SESSION 4: NEXT STEPS AS A COMMUNITY

ABOUT THE SESSION		
OUTLINE	<p>In this fourth session, we try to bring all we've discussed together to help decide and prioritise some initial actions which would help create the shared life of our neighbourhood in which everyone can flourish.</p> <p>We keep T4CG in the loop by inviting participants to complete a simple online survey.</p>	
AIM	To agree on an initial set of actions which several people can contribute to.	
DURATION		45 - 60 mins
PREPARATION		<p>Read and review the summaries of each of the first 3 sessions. Detect some common themes.</p> <p>Prepare material for the group and distribute in advance.</p>
		Decide on how to prioritise issues and actions that need addressing.

SESSION 4: RUNNING THE SESSION

OPENING THE SESSION	<p>Give some context by reading the definition of the Common Good below and the session outline on the previous page.</p> <p>The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.</p> <p>The Common Good is something we build together - it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.</p>
THE READING	<p><i>Summaries of our thoughts from previous sessions have been prepared and you should have a copy. Let us start off first with a reminder of aspects of the Common Good:</i></p> <p>The Human Person</p> <p>1) Human Dignity Every person is worthy of respect simply by virtue of being human.</p> <p>2) Human Equality All human beings are of equal worth.</p> <p>3) Dignity of work Work is more than just a way to make a living – it is good for our humanity, because through work we participate, create, support our families and others.</p> <p>4) Respect for life People matter more than things: each human life has value, from the youngest to the oldest, from the weakest to the strongest.</p> <p>Social Relationships</p> <p>1) Participation We have a right and a duty to participate and take up our proper responsibilities, working with others.</p> <p>2) Reconciliation We are called to build relationships where there is mistrust, suspicion or estrangement, especially when we encounter people with whom we disagree.</p> <p>3) Subsidiarity Responsibility is taken at the most appropriate level and decisions should always be taken closest to where they will have their effect...</p>

	<p>...A central authority should only do tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level - so that all fulfil their unique roles.</p> <p>4) Solidarity</p> <p>We are social beings designed to be interconnected by relationships of mutual concern and support. Solidarity is a determination to work for the good of all and of each individual -all are responsible for all.</p>
	<p>Stewardship</p> <p>The Earth was here before us and was given to us - our common home. It is entrusted to us, and it is our shared responsibility to be good stewards of everything we have received – nature, one another, resources, gifts and talents.</p>
	<p>Interdependence</p> <p>Everyone is included. No-one is left behind. There is to be a preferential option for those who are poor or vulnerable, so we say “Come and join in...we need you!” If the strong are separated from the weak, the strong become impoverished, since being fully human means living together, sharing a common life.</p>
	<p><i>Pause for Reflection. Make notes of key points in the discussion so you can summarise.</i></p>
QUESTIONS TO PONDER	Look at your thoughts from previous sessions:
	→ Do any need refining?
	→ Do we need to add anything?
	→ Can any be deleted?
	→ What would be easy to do and have a lot of impact?
	→ What would be hard to do and have low impact?
	→ What three would be our priorities? (Vote?)
	→ Who could work on these?
	→ Any other thoughts?
	→ Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?
CLOSING THE SESSION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank everyone. • Summarise. Read back the top actions and name those who will contribute to these. Capture next steps for later use. • Next Session - follow-up on actions. Date and time. • Invite participants to complete a simple feedback survey at: https://bit.ly/HNUCfeedback • Identify one of the group organisers to keep in touch with T4CG.

APPENDIX

PDFs to share with participants

COMMON GOOD: THE PRINCIPLES

These principles can help us as we build our common life together.

The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate.

We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility according to our calling and ability.



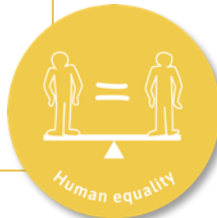
The Common Good

is built as people participate freely in the shared activities that generate it.

It is not a utopian ideal and cannot, by definition, be imposed.

Human Dignity:

Every person is worthy of respect simply by virtue of being human.



The Human Person



Human Equality:

All people are of equal worth.



Dignity of Work:

Work is more than just a way to make a living – it is good for our humanity, because through work we participate, create, and support each other.

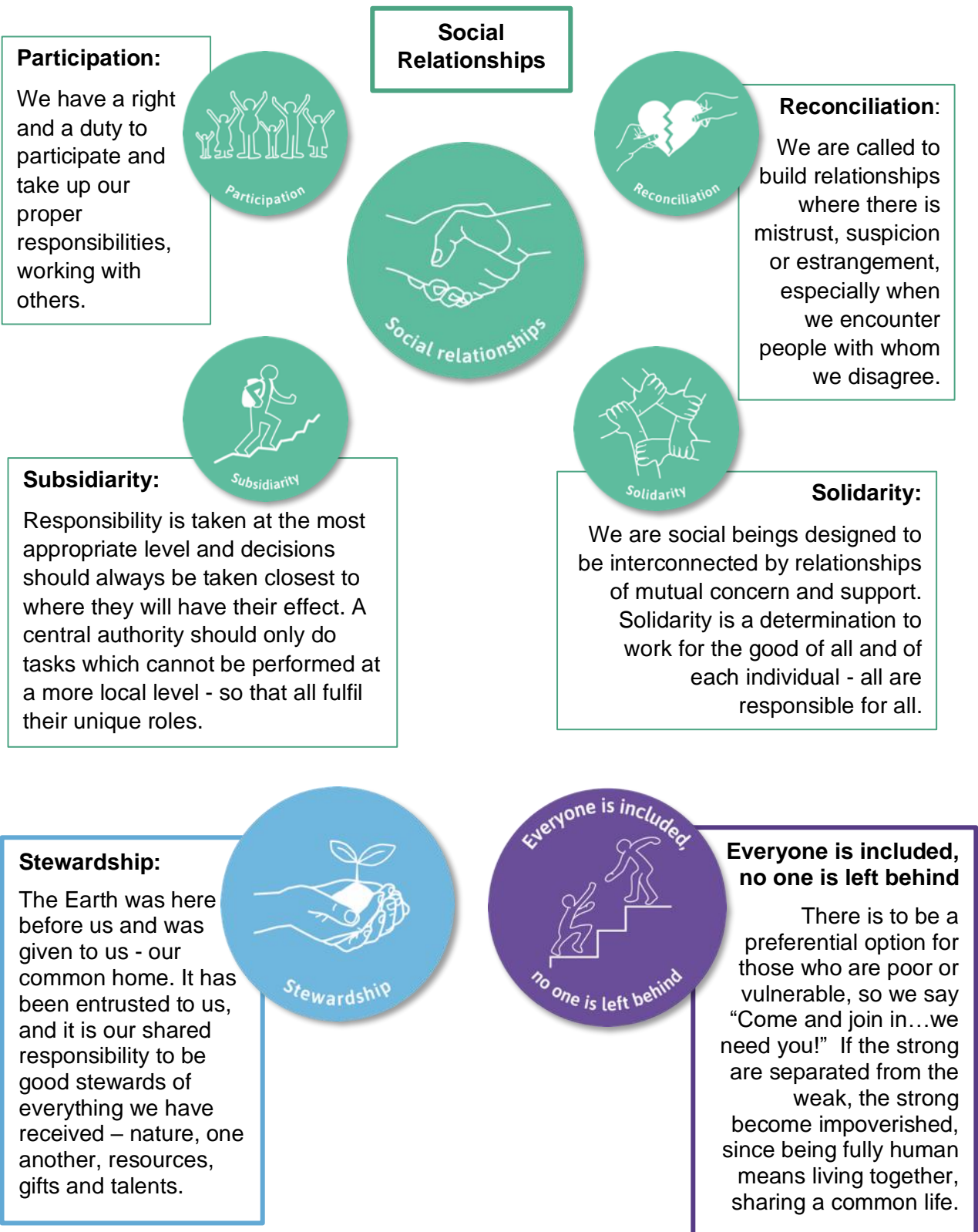


Respect for Life:

People matter more than things: each human life has value, from the youngest to the oldest, from the weakest to the strongest.



COMMON GOOD: THE PRINCIPLES



Pre-session readings and questions



FOR SESSION 1

READINGS AND QUESTIONS		SESSION 1
The Human Person and the Common Good		page 1 of 2
READINGS		
AIM	To explore together what is meant by ‘the Common Good’ – with a particular focus on the human person.	
<p>The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.</p> <p>The Common Good is something we build together - it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.</p> <p>We start by considering the human person and the Common Good. Is the law of the jungle the right one for human beings? Does the secret of success in life have to be "each for himself and the devil take the hindmost"? Can managers treat employees any way they like? Such questions worry almost everybody.</p> <p>The whole world sometimes seems to be getting less and less user-friendly. Even politicians cannot offer us much comfort. Talking about the moral rules at the basis of society has never been more difficult, nor more necessary.</p> <p>But it is not impossible. There exists a set of ideas that tries to answer questions like these. It is called Common Good Thinking. It is not a list of Dos and Don'ts. It is not a blueprint for a perfect society. It is more like a set of signposts, suggesting the way forward, or a set of questions, by which we can examine the way we live.</p> <p>In this first session we start to think about the human person; human dignity, human equality, dignity of work, respect for life.</p> <p>Our session today focuses on the human person. How do we view others and our neighbours? How do they view us? Do we see the gifts of others which enrich our lives? Are we challenged when we see a neighbour who suffers or who lacks what is essential to human flourishing? Do we relieve our neighbour's suffering and meet our neighbour's needs?</p> <p>Each person possesses a basic dignity by virtue of being human, not from any accomplishment, not from race or gender, age, background or economic status. The test therefore of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human dignity and indeed human life itself. Systems, policies or attitudes which treat human beings as economic units, or which reduce people to a passive state of dependency on welfare, do not do justice to the dignity of the human person, in fact, they dehumanise.</p>		

READINGS AND QUESTIONS

SESSION 1

The Human Person and the Common Good

page 2 of 2

READINGS

We offer 4 principles about the **Human Person**:

1) Human Dignity

Every person is worthy of respect simply by virtue of being human.

2) Human Equality

All human beings are of equal worth.

3) Dignity of work

Work is more than just a way to make a living – it is good for our humanity, because through work we participate, create, support our families and others.

4) Respect for life

People matter more than things: each human life has value, from the youngest to the oldest, from the weakest to the strongest.

These principles help us challenge any ideology which dehumanises, whether of the left or of the right. Put into practice, they can help us build back more love into the system.

They also imply that you don't go in with ready-made solutions to other people's situations. You are willing to learn, to walk at the pace of your neighbour, understand the way they understand, to see from their perspective. A recognition and respect and patience and generosity for what this gift-giving other might just be for me.

QUESTIONS

- ➔ In the COVID-19 crisis, what gifts and talents have we seen within our community? Were they a surprise? What do we need to do to gain a better understanding of them?
- ➔ To what extent are we working *with* people (good) rather than working *for* them?
- ➔ Are we encouraging people to recognise and use their unique gifts? Are we helping each other in the development of our talents and competencies?
- ➔ Are we conscious of where there is lack of respect for others in our neighbourhood, and more widely? Do we know the underlying reasons?
- ➔ Are we creating opportunities for work in our communities? Work that is fulfilling?
- ➔ How can we build on the community spirit we have seen and create conditions for the shared action in which people from different backgrounds can flourish?
- ➔ Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?

FOR SESSION 2

READINGS AND QUESTIONS		SESSION 2
Social Relationships and the Common Good		page 1 of 3
READINGS		
AIM	To explore together what is meant by ‘the Common Good’ - with a particular focus on social relationships.	
<p>The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.</p> <p>The Common Good is something we build together - it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.</p> <p>In this second session, we consider social relationships and the Common Good. The philosopher, Aristotle, said that ‘every community is established with a view to some good’ and he argued that the better the good, the better the community.</p> <p>How does our community measure up?</p> <p>Communities are brought into being by the participation of people responding to an impulse towards social relationships - essentially, the impulse to belong, to love and to be loved. It is a distortion of human nature, therefore, to suppose that individuals can exist independently of society, as if it had no demand on them. In other words, individualism. Our culture has been affected by this for some time. Individualism goes against the grain of human wellbeing.</p> <p>Members of society are individually subject to moral principles in their own lives, and these implicit and explicit moral demands are not of their own invention. The same is true of societies. They too have demands and those demands are not arbitrary. There are ways of structuring society which are essential to human flourishing and personal development.</p> <p>In this session we start to think about 4 aspects of social relationships: participation, reconciliation, subsidiarity, solidarity.</p> <p>We relate to neighbours, human communities and nature itself in an ordered mutually connected system which makes up the natural world. The Common Good is the whole network of social conditions which individuals and communities need to flourish and live a fully, genuinely human life. All are responsible for all, collectively, at the level of society or nation, not only as individuals.</p> <p>There are ways of structuring society which enable true human development and correspond to moral principles and demands. Participation enables people to realise their dignity, fulfil mutual obligations and responsibilities. The human race itself is a "community of communities", existing at international, national, regional and local level.</p>		

READINGS AND QUESTIONS	SESSION 2
Social Relationships and the Common Good	page 2 of 3

READINGS

The smallest such community is the family, the basic cell of human society. A well-constructed society will be one that protects the integrity, stability and health of family life, in all its shapes and sizes. All decisions should be stress-tested for their effect on family life and especially on children, as well as on other types of household.

Good local institutions play a vital role too: local clubs, associations, unions, businesses, choirs, pubs, places of worship and so on, all help to strengthen our civic immune systems. Together, they help us to uphold the integrity of human life and resist the powerful forces that dehumanise, like an over-mighty state or predatory capital.

But this civic ecology is vulnerable when our relationships are weak. It is only when our human connections are strong, that our immunity is stronger, and we are less vulnerable to exploitation. And so the principle of reconciliation is vital to bridge across our differences. It requires that we listen and encounter each other, to be prepared to "cross the road" and "stay in the room".

The principle behind the relationships between the different layers of this "community of communities" should be that of **subsidiarity**. Subsidiarity requires that responsibility is held at the lowest appropriate level in order to uphold, preserve and strengthen the humanity of neighbourhoods. However, some decisions are more appropriately taken at a regional, national or even an international level. This principle can mean passing powers downwards or upwards according to the nature of the decision and the context.

If subsidiarity is the principle behind the organisation of societies from a vertical perspective, **solidarity** is the equivalent horizontal principle. Solidarity means the willingness to see others as another "self", and to work for relationships of mutual concern and support. An injustice committed against another is no less serious than an injustice against oneself. Solidarity expresses the moral truth that *"no man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."* (John Donne)

Thus we offer 4 principles about social relationships:

1) Participation

We have a right and a duty to participate and take up our proper responsibilities, working with others.

2) Reconciliation

We are called to build relationships where there is mistrust, suspicion or estrangement, especially when we encounter people with whom we disagree.

3) Subsidiarity

Responsibility is taken at the most appropriate level and decisions should always be taken closest to where they will have their effect. This means we need strong local participation and institutions. A central authority should only do tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level - so that all fulfil their unique roles.

READINGS AND QUESTIONS	SESSION 2
Social Relationships and the Common Good	page 3 of 3
<p>[continued]</p> <p>4) Solidarity</p> <p>We are social beings designed to be interconnected by relationships of mutual concern and support. Relationships within communities with people and with institutions need to be strengthened. Solidarity is a determination to work for the good of all and of each individual - all are responsible for all.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → In the COVID-19 crisis, what groups participated? What groups did not? Did our local systems and structures encourage this? How can we change them? → Are decisions around here made at the level where they will have the effect? To what extent are we working <i>with</i> people (good) rather than working <i>for</i> them? → How do relationships between our local institutions need to be strengthened? → Are we encouraging people to recognise and use their unique gifts? Are we helping each other in the development of our talents and competencies? → Are we conscious of where the strained relationships or estrangements are in our neighbourhood, and more widely? Do we know the underlying reasons? → Do we know who is invisible? Which groups are invisible to each other? Who is overlooked? Who is lonely? → How can we build on the community spirit we have seen and create conditions for the shared action in which people from different backgrounds can flourish? → The practical work of reconciliation is central to building the Common Good. Yet it can be tough. Parties can pull in different directions so trust, insight and courage are needed. It will take time. Have we persevered enough? → What do we need to do to uphold, preserve, and strengthen family life and the humanity of our neighbourhoods? → Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do? 	

FOR SESSION 3

READINGS AND QUESTIONS		SESSION 3
Stewardship, Interdependence and the Common Good		page 1 of 3
READINGS		
AIM	To explore together what is meant by ‘the Common Good’ – with a particular focus on stewardship and interdependence.	
<p>The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish – as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.</p> <p>The Common Good is something we build together – it fosters community spirit and strengthens the bonds of social trust. It transcends party political positions.</p> <p>In this third session, we consider stewardship and interdependence and the Common Good.</p> <p>COVID-19 has taught us how closely we are all interwoven together. How a problem in one part of the world can be a problem for all of us. We can only thrive as humanity if everyone’s fine. Our prosperity and our health are interconnected.</p> <p>There is no wall high enough to keep out the great threats that face us in our future, whether they’re climate change or the devastating fallout of the pandemic on our lives. And certainly not the threats that face many people through poverty and deprivation. But stronger civic immune systems will help us withstand the storms ahead. Through our relationships, we can unleash ideas about how to change things, foster the sharing of experiences technologies, investment and the other things that we need.</p> <p>As we each take responsibility to steward our world, how can we make sure everybody is included? The Common Good stands in opposition to the control of rulers or of a ruling (or any other) class. It implies that every individual, according to their ability and no matter how high or low, has a duty to share in promoting the welfare of the community as well as a right to benefit from that welfare. “Common” implies “all-inclusive”: the Common Good cannot exclude or exempt any section of the population. It affirms our common humanity.</p> <p>In this session, we start to think about these aspects of stewardship and interdependence.</p> <p>The impact of COVID-19 has exposed longstanding weaknesses and inequalities in our society. It has accelerated pre-existing trends. The crisis presents an opportunity for us to learn and to put things right. This is a moment to strengthen our civic immune systems and potentially to stop the other great threats that we face like climate change, like immense poverty in the world, growing inequality in our own country, regional instability and conflict, mass migration, cascading financial crises, and the other things that threaten our jobs, our livelihoods and the planet.</p>		

READINGS AND QUESTIONS	SESSION 3
Stewardship, Interdependence and the Common Good	Page 2 of 3

READINGS

Whether we learn from this moment or not, is really the key question. Whether we are able as individuals to take responsibility, and to what extent as neighbours, local institutions and communities, we are able to act together. We owe the next generation a better future and a sustainable planet.

It's our interdependence, the fact that we are now interconnected in so many ways, that makes it imperative that we care more about what happens around us - both close to home and further afield.

And so the question we face today is, *'Are we able to learn from this experience?'*

And most of all, what we need is more co-operation because these threats to human beings and the natural world require that we work together.

However, what if the solutions we come up with fail to take account of the interests of some of our fellow citizens? If any section of the population is excluded from participation in the life of the community, then the Common Good is not served, and calls for rectification.

If that exclusion comes about from poverty, even if only "relative poverty", or if it comes about from powerlessness or injustice, then that demands attention. Neither governments or communities can be satisfied with "provision" designed only to prevent absolute poverty or which allows people only minimal involvement in the decisions that affect their lives.

What level of social security provision and/or "power" transfer is adequate to meet the criteria of the Common Good is a political judgement that everyone should be involved in. There comes a point at which the scale of the gap between the most and the least powerful begins to undermine the Common Good. This is the point at which society starts to be run according to the interests of an elite and not for all its members.

It is the obligation of every individual to contribute to the good of society. Every individual has a unique contribution that he or she can make, according to their gifts, influence and opportunity - a "vocational responsibility." This is not only in the interests of justice and in pursuit of an "option for the poor" but it is also in our own interests. It is how we find purpose and meaning.

What are we missing if some cannot contribute? The context most likely to foster human fulfilment for everyone, is one where each person not only enjoys the benefit of living in an orderly, prosperous and healthy society, but also is able to contribute. A context that disregards the Common Good would not only be unjust to those it excluded, unpleasant and dangerous, it would be also be undemocratic and become unstable.

READINGS AND QUESTIONS

SESSION 3

Stewardship, Interdependence and the Common Good

page 3 of 3

READINGS

Thus we offer 2 principles about stewardship and interdependence:

1. Stewardship

The Earth was here before us and was given to us - our common home. It is entrusted to us, and it is our shared responsibility to be good stewards of everything we have received – nature, one another, resources, gifts and talents.

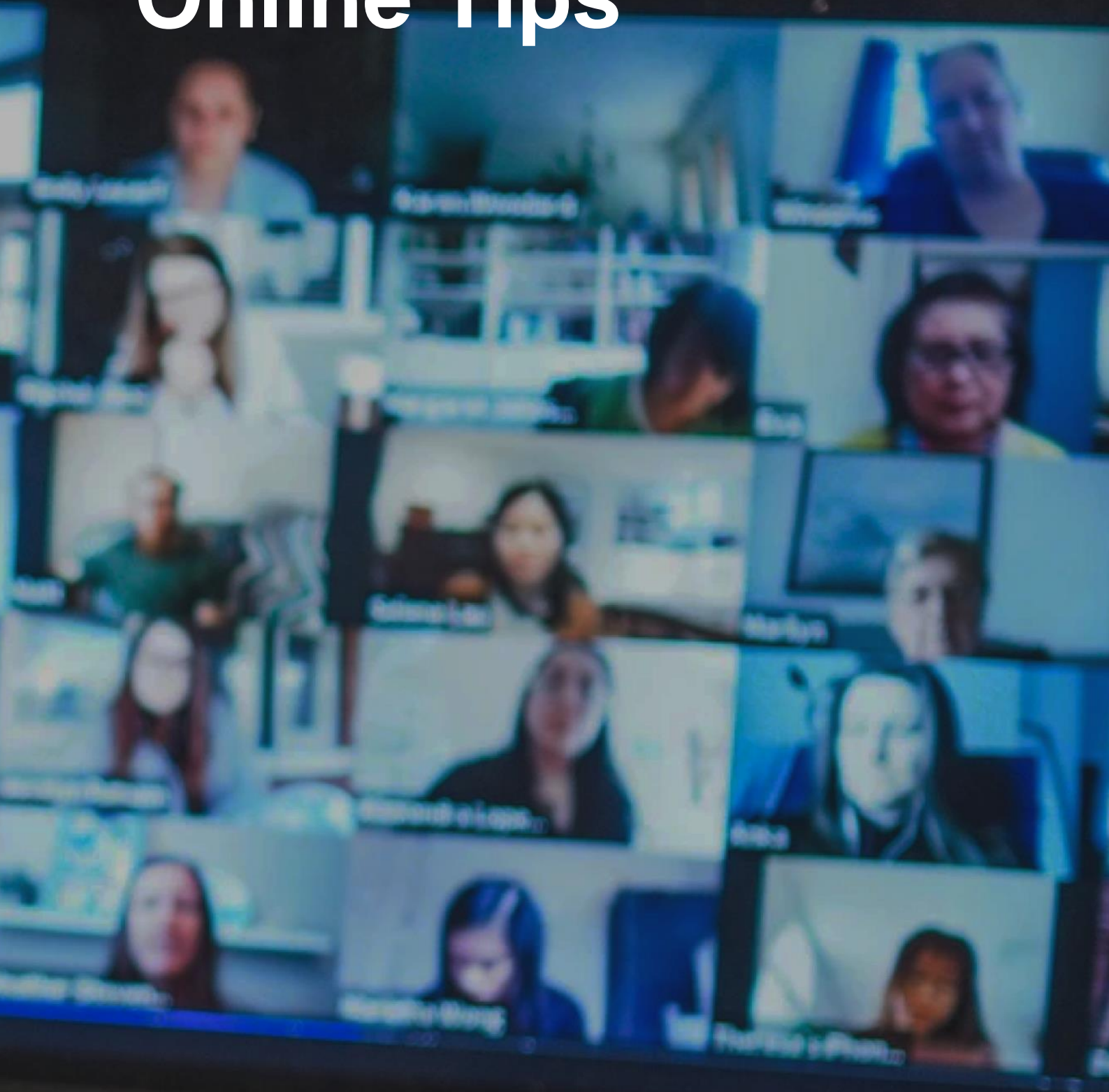
2. Interdependence

Everyone is included. No-one is left behind. There is to be a preferential option for those who are poor or vulnerable, so we say “Come and join in...we need you!” If the strong are separated from the weak, the strong become impoverished, since being fully human means living together, sharing a common life.

QUESTIONS

- ➔ What are the barriers in our community, in our nation, that hold back ideas of how to change things, how to share experiences of common humanity, share technologies, stop access to the people, the investment and the other things that we need?
- ➔ What are my unique skills, and what assets does our area have? Do we know all the parts of our community? Which parts are excluded or in our blind spot?
- ➔ What 'power' structures need adjusting in order to make sure everyone in our neighbourhood and our nation can contribute?
- ➔ What are the immediate things we can do, individually and as a local community, to look after our area, and to create a more sustainable world?
- ➔ Are we putting people who are poor and vulnerable at the heart of our decision-making? What needs rebalancing?
- ➔ Inequality has been rising rapidly in Britain for the past 30 years. The gap between rich and poor has widened and the share of income going to the top 1% has doubled (from 6% to 14%). What evidence of this inequality is present in our community?
- ➔ What happens if we pursue environmental solutions that neglect to consider the impact on jobs in our area?
- ➔ What examples do we have of people purporting to care for creation yet destroying it? As we are all interconnected and it affects us here, how can we stop this?
- ➔ How will we join with our neighbours who have been invisible to us - or sidelined, excluded, poor or vulnerable, and then respect and honour what they bring?
- ➔ Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?

Online Tips



Tips for running sessions ONLINE

During social distancing restrictions, when it isn't possible to meet face-to-face, you can hold the sessions online, with some minor adaptations. You may be familiar with platforms like Skype, HouseParty or Zoom. These tips are for Zoom but most will apply to all platforms.

If you're new to hosting online meetings, or to Zoom, see over the page.

APPOINT SOMEONE TO HOST	Once your group has agreed to meet, appoint someone familiar with Zoom to take responsibility for hosting and managing the technical stuff. You may wish to appoint someone else to lead the session content.
HOW TO INVITE PEOPLE	<p>Before each session, send a brief and friendly email with the date and time.</p> <p>In your message, encourage your group to be ready for the session with a cup of tea or coffee, arrange to be in a quiet place and sitting comfortably. Paste the unique Zoom meeting link, code and password into your invitation message. Reassure people that they should just need to click on the link, although they may be asked for the password. Ask them to log on in plenty of time before the session start time.</p>
HOSTING THE SESSION	On the day of your meeting, ensure you start the Zoom meeting ten minutes before the due start time. As people log on and you admit your participants, welcome each person and chat informally, helping each one learn to use the basic functions:
GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the Mute button and invite people to test it. In small groups people don't need to mute all the time but may wish to do so when not speaking. Establish an agreed protocol where participants mute themselves when there is background noise at home (dogs, children, drilling, rustling of papers.) A larger group may prefer default muting. • Encourage everyone to feel free to contribute, whilst being respectful of each other. Remind them of the importance of listening and giving everyone an opportunity to speak – if they wish. • Invite everyone to click on Gallery view in the top right-hand corner, so they can see each other. • Encourage people to use the Chat if they wish to share a thought, word or phrase that resonates -- invite them to try it out to get comfortable with it. This feature may be most useful in larger groups. • There is a feature where people click a button to raise a hand to ask a question but this shouldn't be needed in a small group. • You may wish to discuss with your group ways of using the Chat so that good ideas can be collected and perhaps shared with others.

New to Zoom?

Zoom is a video-conferencing platform which enables you to host or join an online meeting. You can access it from any PC, mac, laptop, tablet or smartphone as long as it has a camera and microphone. People don't need to download the Zoom app to join a meeting. All they need is a link to click on to join.

There are different price plans: there is a free option, which enables you to hold a meeting for up to 40 minutes; you can log in again and re-start for another 40 minutes for free.

However if you are going to use Zoom to host a regular group with sessions longer than 40 minutes, you may prefer to pay the monthly subscription. Visit the site here: <https://zoom.us/>

HOW TO SET UP A MEETING	<p>If you have the Zoom app already, set up your meeting using 'Schedule'.</p> <p>If you do NOT have the Zoom app installed, go to zoom.us and select 'Host a Meeting' to start the installation. Do a couple of trials with friends and family until you are confident in how to use the platform.</p>
INVITING PEOPLE	<p>Copy the invitation link, password and unique code. Paste it into a friendly email message and send to your invitees (see above).</p>
HOW TO JOIN A MEETING	<p>Tell your participants all they have to do is click the link they have been sent. They shouldn't usually need a password. Alternatively, go to https://zoom.us/join and enter the meeting code. For more information: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us</p>
HOW TO HOST A MEETING	<p>Select 'Manage Participants' under the View menu. This opens a side panel with details of participants joining the meeting.</p>
	<p>You as the host will be asked to 'admit' each participant. You will see when they've connected their audio and video.</p>
	<p>Click on 'Gallery view' in the top right-hand corner so you can see all of your group at the same time. 'Speaker view' is better for presentations.</p>
	<p>Help new users learn how to use the various Zoom features below.</p>
ZOOM FEATURES	<p>The bottom toolbar has various features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mute/unmute • Start/stop video • Manage/participants • Share screen • Chat • Record • Reactions • End/leave meeting <p>Note: items in bold are for hosts only. The host has the option to mute participants. Permission is required from the host if a participant wants to record the meeting.</p>

LEADER'S GUIDES

Two PDFs to share with whoever is doing leader duty if they don't need the whole resource.



Outline of each session

1	Pre-session	Send out the Readings and Questions (using the pdfs on pages 29-37) for each session so participants have time to think them through.
2	Welcome and introduction	Welcome and explain the purpose and format. How we work together e.g. everyone to have a voice. If appropriate, ask people to say who they are. Be brief.
3	Reminder of Common Good	Ask someone to read the definition of the Common Good.
4	Read through aspects to be focused on	One person or more reads through aspects of Common Good Thinking.
5	Pause and reflect	A few minutes of silence. How does this affect us at this time, in this community? (see quick 'Pause and Reflect' guide).
6	Sharing reflections and questions to prompt	Suggestions provided but let the group members take the lead. Make notes of comments made, issues identified, actions suggested. Always ask the question <i>"Looking forward to tomorrow, what will I do?"</i>
7	Summarising	Pull out major themes, issues, etc and capture for later use. Circulate after the session.
8	Next session	Introduce the theme and date.

Quick guide to running the 'Pause and Reflect' section (part 5 of each session)

1	The group restarts after a period of silence and reflection.
2	There is a simple principle in this kind of reflection group: that you do not comment on what another person says. This is counter-cultural as we are used to stating our position. This means that when you are listening, you are not preparing a response, or judging what they say. Instead you are really hearing what is said.
3	Each person will have a unique story to tell about their thoughts in their quiet moments of reflection. By listening we receive gifts from other people and get a richer, multifaceted insight into different people's lives.
4	Each person should share only what they feel comfortable sharing. You don't have to say much but it is good to hear all voices. It is important that all participate.
5	You may want to share how you experienced the reflection, and the question prompts. How this affected you personally, your understanding, your sense of justice and/or prejudices etc. No need for detailed accounts.
6	Don't worry if you feel like you have nothing profound to share. Often it is the more ordinary statements which are honest reflections of our experience and offer insight that resonates with others. Every now and you might even surprise yourself and say something you didn't even think was there. Trust that whatever you say, however simple or short, is what you are guided to say.
7	Keep your inputs brief. Three or four minutes maximum. Too much information is hard to process for others and we want to make sure there is time for everyone, including those who might be a bit shy, to have a chance to speak. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, there may be time for a subsequent "round" of sharing.
8	You may like to leave some silence between speakers to allow what each person said settle in our hearts and minds. If you jump in too quickly, they may not feel heard. When we truly listen, we will need those few moments to gather our own thoughts before we are ready to speak.
9	We live in different ways. We respect one another's perspectives and individual journeys through listening attentively and we do not try to advise, fix, or convert anyone else.
10	That which is shared in the group, stays in the group. It is not usually appropriate to talk about something shared in the sacred space of the meeting after the session has ended, even if you are talking to the person who shared it.

Find out more

→ There are more resources at the Together for the Common Good website:
<https://togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/>