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*These elements put together in this order suggest a pattern for sharing and growing in the good news of the reign of God together. This would be a good template to use when planning a small group time, a larger public gathering or presentation, a family event, a church service or even something to think about when having a conversation.*



Connect:

The first part of any time that we spend together is best given to just being together, getting to know each other, valuing each person...listening, laughing and belonging. Jesus' first commandment is always to Love. This is the beginning of all things. If you want to be listened to, you must first listen. If children/young people feel heard, they are more likely to listen to you. You never know, you might learn something too!



Context:

The world of the Bible can seem like a whole other planet, inhabited by some freaky aliens. However, by putting a bit of time into some orientation activities, your group might find that the situations in the Bible are intriguing and possibly very familiar as we encounter the same old-same old of human beings.



Content:

If we want to get to know God, nothing can replace the centrality of engaging with the Bible (led by the Spirit). If opening the Bible is a hands-on, read-the-text-heaps, experiential, open event, there will be plenty of room for the whole person to be engaged – cognitively, physically, emotionally and spiritually. There is time and space for kids' questions, for processing time, for imagining ourselves in the text and for God to work.



Consider:

We all have opinions on things. As we hear and experience God's living word, it's a healthy thing for us to wonder and to question, look at it from a few different angles, express our emotions and contemplate the possible meanings and possibilities for action. A huge variety of media can provide the opportunity for us to work through in our own ways what is going on for us with God, and with what God's saying, and to share our ideas, ponderings and wonderings with one another. Some really fruitful ideas for consideration emerge from the questions beginning, "Has anything like this ever happened to you?"



Consequence:

You can't hear that someone loves you to bits and is never ever going to stop - and just walk away. Because God is God, when he addresses us it demands a response. There are a range of different ways we might respond: with a big **'Get out of my Face'** or **'I need more info on this one'** or **'There you go again being the same awesome God'** or **'Wow, I've got to change something and get on board with you, God.'** The thing is, God takes our response to him seriously, so it's pretty important that we allow freedom for kids and grownups to figure out what their response really is, and to own it. However, if you've never connected with God before, some samples that help put into words what you're thinking can be helpful. For many years we had a sample called 'The sinner's prayer' (I'm sorry I've sinned, thank you for dying for me, please forgive me and come into my life). A lot of the time, that one prayer won't be the most authentic response for the people we are with, so a variety of samples will be more helpful.