

REFRAME

An aerial photograph of a dense urban landscape, likely New York City, showing a vast array of skyscrapers and buildings. The image is split vertically by a thin white line. Overlaid on the image is the word "REFRAME" in a large, white, sans-serif font. A white line forms a frame around the text, with the vertical line extending from the top of the page and the horizontal line extending from the left edge.

Session 1: The Reframing Story



INTRODUCTION

ReFrame aims to help you live out your faith in everyday life, encouraging us to encounter Jesus afresh and allowing his story to shape our own. This first session explores how a fragmented and complex world can tempt Christians to either withdraw from, or assimilate to, the culture around them. However, the true story of Jesus enables Christians to resist these temptations and to live integrated and faithful lives.

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” —Luke 24:15

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?
3. Where is your Emmaus Road? Where are you in your journey of discipleship with Christ? Where do you want to see more of Jesus in your life?

DISCUSSION

1. What types of complexity and fragmentation characterize modern life? In what ways are our lives becoming more or less complicated?
2. What are some areas of life that Christians struggle to connect with their faith?
3. What questions are you currently wrestling with?

ACTIVITY

Our faith in Christ means something for every aspect of our lives. However, sometimes it is still difficult to see Jesus in the different places we find ourselves.

Think about the past week. Call to mind some of the different places, activities, and situations you were involved in. Where did you see Jesus? Where did you feel his presence? Where did you not feel connected to him? Be concrete in your examples.

Session 2: Cultural Stories



INTRODUCTION

Who am I? How does my faith in Jesus affect how I answer that question? How does our culture shape our response to this question of identity? Is there a conflict? As Christians, the story of Scripture and the person of Jesus shape the whole of who we are. And yet we often experience tension with our culture, which provides alternate answers to this question. We are told we must choose who we want to be, rather than receive our identity as a gift given by God. This session discusses some of the ways our culture shapes us, and why this so often leads to a crisis of identity.

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” —Luke 24:15

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. What was Christine struggling with in how her identity was being shaped?
2. What are the cultural messages that try to shape who we are? What does culture tell us makes a happy and full life?
3. Where do you feel cultural pressures in your life?
4. What activities help you, or could help you, remember that your identity is rooted in Christ?

ACTIVITY

We're surrounded by cultural messages that are trying to shape our identity (e.g. advertising, movies, workplaces). These messages have an underlying story about what it means to be a person—defined by what you do, or have, or feel. Part of connecting faith to all of life involves being aware of the patterns of the world around us, and in our own lives.

Discuss an example of something in your week that represents a cultural story about identity—positive or negative. This could be an advertisement, article, song, product, place, conversation or experience you had.

Session 3: Creation & Fall



INTRODUCTION

Over the next five sessions, we are going to cover the key moments in the scriptural story. This session starts with the beginning—the account of the creation and fall. Genesis tells us why God created the world and humanity, and his purposes for both. God’s creation was good, but this goodness was catastrophically marred through the fall. As the image-bearers of God, we are nevertheless called to cultivate this nevertheless goodness in our relationships with God, others, and creation.

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” —Luke 24:15

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. What tension did Hugo struggle with? What was creating this tension?
2. What do Genesis 1 and 2 tell us about who we are and God’s purposes for creation? What does the fall mean for God’s original purposes?
3. How could remembering the beginning of the biblical story change how we think about our vocations and our culture?
4. Where do you experience tension between faith and other areas of life? Understanding the creation story helped resolve Hugo’s tension, what difference might this make for the tensions you experience?

ACTIVITY

Recall those times when you’ve had good coffee with family and friends (or if you don’t like coffee, remember when you’ve shared a good meal), when coffee has been a gift from God for enjoyment or for fostering friendship. The many moments of making and sustaining are part of everyone’s vocation. Think about the times where God’s good work of creation is reflected and continued through your work in the world.

Session 4: Israel's Calling



INTRODUCTION

This session focuses on God's faithfulness to the people of Israel, and how Israel's story is part of our family history as Christians. The story of Israel helps us see how our faith makes a difference in a complex and messy world. Indeed, God calls ordinary people to trust him and blesses them so that they might be a blessing to others. God is with us—in our failures and our faithfulness—and continues to work through us to redeem this broken world.

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

"As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them." —Luke 24:15

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. What struck you about Rich Dean's fear about working as a lawyer? What changed for him?
2. What was God's purpose in calling Israel? How did God work in the life of Israel and ordinary people?
3. Rich Dean faced complex situations. Are there situations or areas of life that are impossible to redeem? Should Christians be involved? Discuss why or why not.
4. What complex situations have you experienced? What can you learn from the story of God's relationship with Israel in these situations?

ACTIVITY

God calls us, like Israel, to be a blessing to others through acts of everyday faithfulness. Remember a time when someone helped you during a difficult time through an act of kindness. Or when someone blessed you with a simple gesture. What impact did this have on you? If appropriate, share this experience with the group.

Now think of someone you would like to encourage, either as a group or personally. It could be a friend, a family member, or a colleague. Before the next session, try to do something to encourage and bless them. This could involve taking the person out for a meal or coffee, or writing them a note. Tell them what you appreciate about them. Be specific in your encouragement.

Session 5: Jesus the King



INTRODUCTION

This session focuses on Jesus Christ as the climax of the story—the fulfillment of all the Old Testament scriptures (Luke 24:27). He is the true image of God, and true Israelite, who redeems humanity through his person, work, and words. Jesus is both Saviour and Lord, and his redemptive work affects everything, which gives meaning to all of life and culture—including our ordinary activities. The gospel is therefore more than personal salvation; it is the invitation to participate in a renewed life for a renewed world.

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” —Luke 24:15

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. When you think about Jesus being part of the larger story of Scripture, how does it change the way you think about him and his life?
2. What difference does it make to recognize Jesus as both Saviour and King?
3. What does Jesus show us about what God is like? What does Jesus reveal about what it means to be human and what it means to be holy?

ACTIVITY

Jesus' lordship and redemptive work affects every aspect of our lives. Christine's understanding of her vocation was reframed when she connected her daily activities (at home, community, workplace) with Christ's calling to love others and help them thrive—"people-keeping" as Rikk Watts reminds us.

Write down the activities in your life that are easy to connect to people-keeping, the ones that contribute to the lives of others. Then write down an activity where it is difficult for you to see a contribution to the flourishing of others. If you're comfortable, share the activity you find difficult with the group. As a group, discuss how you might reframe this activity. How does it, or could it, be connected to people-keeping?

Session 6: New Heavens & New Earth



INTRODUCTION

This fourth scriptural segment looks at how God promises to transform all of creation in the new heavens and new earth through the resurrection of Christ. As citizens of this promise, Christians are called to be holy foretastes, living previews of this final act of redemption

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” —Luke 24:15

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. Why did Vincent feel so helpless? Where have you experienced a sense of hopelessness when seeing the brokenness of the world around us?
2. What are common cultural pictures of heaven? How do these pictures compare with Christ's resurrection and the promise of our own resurrection?
3. Was there anything from the session that was new, significant, or raised questions for you, related to your understanding of heaven?
4. How does the promise of the new heavens and the new earth make a difference today? How might it make a difference for what we do now?

ACTIVITY

We live between Jesus' resurrection and the promise of new heavens and new earth; the Kingdom is here but not fully. This means we experience tension—difficult moments when we encounter the world as it was not meant to be. However, God promises that our labour is not in vain and Jesus' resurrection is God's ultimate commitment to restore all of his creation and dwell with us.

Pray for the brokenness around you: a difficult job situation, a hurting friend or colleague, a struggling neighbourhood, broken institutions and systems in our society and world. Remember God's resurrection promise that through Christ, everything will be made new. Consider saying a prayer in those places of brokenness, or as you begin each day.

Session 7:

The Church & The Spirit



INTRODUCTION

How do we enter into the story? In this final session on Scripture's story, we see how at Pentecost, God gives the Holy Spirit to empower the church. It is not enough to simply know the story; we must also live the story. The Holy Spirit empowers us to participate in the story and God's work of redemption in the world.

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

"As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them." —Luke 24:15

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. What did Mary struggle with? What changed for her?
2. When have you felt you went from being a spectator to being a participant—from just knowing about the Biblical story to being "pulled through the frame"?
3. Why was Pentecost significant for the early church? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the early church and today?
4. What is your experience of the Holy Spirit? How vital is life in the Spirit for living the Christian life?

ACTIVITY

The large candle represents the Holy Spirit, the light and life that sustains each of us in our faith. The Spirit empowers and sends us to carry God's light into the world. The tea candle represents your call to be a light—to bring truth and light to the world around you. As your candle is lit, notice that the flame from the large candle is not diminished, rather the light increases.

Share with one another where you want to experience more of the Holy Spirit in your life. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill the group and send you into the world as faithful bearers of God's light.

Session 8: Strangers & Exiles



INTRODUCTION

How do we live out this story? How do we engage the world around us? For the next two sessions, we will explore how God calls all Christians to live as ambassadors. Rather than simply assimilating or withdrawing from culture, we participate in God's mission to witness to and redeem culture.

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” —Luke 24:15

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. What Like Fran, why do you think we are tempted to withdraw from our culture?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the exile we experience and the exile Daniel and the Israelites experienced? What can we learn from Daniel about engaging culture?
3. Where are you experiencing exile, and what difficulties do you experience there? What does it mean to be an ambassador in that place?
4. How is your church a local embassy? How might your church help sustain you as an ambassador? What is it doing well? What needs to change?

ACTIVITY

God works through our vocations in the world. Think of a place where God has placed you as an ambassador, a place you know and spend time in regularly. Over the next week, ask God to open your eyes as you go into this place or community: What is good in this place that I can celebrate and cultivate? What brokenness in this place grieves me?

As God opens your eyes to see, continue to pray for that place and ask: How can I help to bring more of God's light and love—God's shalom? Who do I need to work with to do this? Write down what you observe and pray over it.

Session 9: Ambassadors



INTRODUCTION

We are all called to be ambassadors, but how do we actually live as ambassadors? What does this look like? In this session, through the example of Daniel, we see that doing the diplomatic work of Christ involves being formed by the local church, knowing God's mission, learning the cultural language, and engaging in diplomacy.

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

"As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them." —Luke 24:15

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. What aspects of ambassadorship stood out for you in the stories of George Sanker (teacher) and Jennifer Wiseman (astrophysicist)?
2. Know the Mission: Don Flow works in the automobile industry. How did he reframe the purpose of his business from a biblical perspective?
3. Learn the Language: What did Don Flow identify as the dominant secular view of the purpose of business? What issues did he have with how that got worked out in practice?
4. Diplomacy: How did Don change the way he practiced business within his company and with his customers?

ACTIVITY

This exercise invites you to practice, as a group, how you might engage and reframe somewhere God has placed you as an ambassador.

Context: Have someone share where God has placed them as an ambassador (e.g., your workplace, neighbourhood, etc.). Once the person has shared, pray for the group: *"Lord open our eyes and imaginations to see you and your perspective in this context."*

Now brainstorm together how you could reframe the purpose and intent of this area of life in light of God's story? Why does God care about this?

Session 10: Joyful Living



INTRODUCTION

A reframed understanding of the gospel gives confidence and joy in the midst of daily life. The good news of Christ in the Scriptures frees us for an abundant life of work and rest.

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” —Luke 24:15

EMMAUS ROAD REFLECTION

1. What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?
2. What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

DISCUSSION

1. What does joy and confidence look like in the midst of the sorrows, heartaches, and disappointments of life—not only yours but of the wider world? In what do we place our trust and hope?
2. What have you seen with fresh eyes during ReFrame? What questions are you still wrestling with?
3. What sustains us as ambassadors on our journey of discipleship?
4. What is God saying to you, your church, and your community about how you can be an ambassador to the culture around you?

ACTIVITY

PRAY: Leader to life, Path to truth, our Lord Jesus Christ; you led Joseph to Egypt, and the people of Israel through the Red Sea; and Moses to Mount Sinai, and his people to the land of promise. And you traveled with Cleopas and his companion to Emmaus. Now, I pray you, Lord lead me and my companions to travel in peace on the journey before us. Save us from the visible and invisible enemy and lead us safely to the place we are headed. For you are our way and our truth and our life. Glory and worship to you now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

—Hovhannes Garnets'i

Prayers Throughout the Ages

SESSION 1 & 10

Leader to life, Path to truth, our Lord Jesus Christ; You led Joseph to Egypt, and the people of Israel through the Red Sea; And Moses to Mount Sinai, And his people to the land of promise. And you traveled with Cleopas and his companion to Emmaus. Now, I pray you, Lord lead me and my companions to travel in peace on the journey before us. Save us from the visible and invisible enemy and lead us safely to the place we are headed. For you are our way and our truth and our life. Glory and worship to you now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen. *–Hovhannes Garnets'i*

BIO Hovhannes Garnets'i (c. 1180-1245) was an Armenian monk and hermit.

SESSION 2

Lord, to be turned from you is to fall, to be turned to you is to rise, and to stand in you is to abide forever. Grant us in all our duties your help, in all our perplexities your guidance, in all our dangers your protection, and in all our sorrow your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *–Augustine*

BIO Augustine (354-430) was a pastor, theologian, and bishop of Hippo Regius (present-day Annaba, Algeria).

SESSION 3

Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty you appoint us to do; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labors if you summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to thy word. God with us, and we will go, but if you do not go with us, send us not; go before us, if you put us forth; let us hear thy voice when we follow. Hear us, we beseech you, for the glory of your great name.

–Christina Rossetti

BIO Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) was an English devotional writer and poet.

SESSION 4

God, you called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert. Guide and guard us your children who, for the love of your name, journey through this life. Be our companion on the way, our guide at the crossroads, our strength in weariness, our defense in dangers, our shelter on the path, our shade in the heat, our light in the darkness, our comfort in discouragement; that through your guidance, we may arrive safely at the end of our journey and, enriched with grace and truth, may return to our homes filled with lasting joy. *—Codex Calixtinus*

BIO The Codex Calixtinus is an illustrated manuscript from the 12th century that includes sermons, songs, and advice for pilgrims traveling the Way of St. James (*El Camino de Santiago*).

SESSION 5

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

—Patrick

BIO Patrick (387-461) was a missionary and bishop to the Celtic people of Ireland.

SESSION 6

“God of heaven and earth, we pray for your kingdom to come, for your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Teach us to see our vocations and occupations as woven into your work in the world. We ask for your great mercy, for ourselves and those around us. Give us eyes to see that our work is holy to you, O Lord, even as our worship is holy to you. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.” –*Steven Garber*

BIO Steven Garber is a teacher, writer and founding principal of The Washington Institute For Faith, Vocation & Culture.

Adapted from *Visions of Vocation* by Steven Garber. Copyright (c) 2014 by Steven Garber. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com

SESSION 7

O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, to follow and enjoy you, for Christ's sake. –*Ambrose*

BIO Ambrose (340-397) was archbishop of Milan and a key figure during the Arian controversy.

SESSION 8

Our Father, each day is a little life, each night a tiny death; help us to live with faith and hope and love. Lift our duty above drudgery; let not our strength fail, or the vision fade, in the heat and burden of the day. O God, make us patient and pitiful one with another in the fret and jar of life, remembering that each fights a hard fight and walks a lonely way. Forgive us, Lord, if we hurt our fellow souls; teach us a gentler tone, a sweeter charity of words, and a more healing touch. Sustain us, O God, when we must face sorrow; give us courage for the day and hope for the morrow. Day unto day may we lay hold of thy hand and look up into thy face, whatever befall, until our work is finished and the day is done. Amen. –*Francis of Assisi*

BIO Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) was a Catholic friar, priest, and founder of the Franciscan Order.

SESSION 9

Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. –*“For Vocation in Daily Work”* from the *Book of Common Prayer*

BIO *The Book of Common Prayer* is the prayer book of the Anglican Communion originally published in 1549.

Editor note: some prayers have been edited and updated for contemporary language.