







ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those who, because of their faithfulness, have impacted my Christian journey and life-changing encounters from my childhood at Ampthill Baptist Church to the last 14 years at City Life Church. Thanks to my amazing family who constantly support and encourage me. Thanks to all at Powerpack Ministries and Bethel's Rewire Conference who have inspired me through this Encounter the Kingdom journey.



Why Encounter the Kingdom? Because an encounter with God changes everything!

"It was truly amazing. A couple of minutes changed my entire life. My whole body was consumed by this warm, loving blanket - a feeling of pure and utter reassurance that Jesus was real. People spoke beautiful words and all the stress and problems faded away. I had never been so relaxed; my body was overflowing with the Holy Spirit. I saw light at the end of the tunnel, a smile in the sky. Pure and utter reassurance that Jesus was real!"

- Power Shower - Abigail, aged nine years -

Encountering God is necessary to start a relationship with Him. Encounters build faith and trust. John 3 v 3 tells us that we can see the Kingdom of God and Matthew 7 v 7 tells us to ASK! God cannot break a promise (Hebrews 10 v 23) so we can claim His promise that if we draw close to Him, He WILL draw close to us (James 4 v 8). He is waiting for us to encounter His love, glory, promise and power, knowing that this will change everything.

Encounters are for all ages, they can happen anywhere and be experienced in the most unexpected ways. Through your ongoing encounters with Him an intimate relationship with your loving and good Father awaits.

This book is a collection of Encounter the Kingdom spaces we created from personal encounters and journeys. A resource designed to support Churches and Religious Education curriculum. Our prayer is that they will inspire you and equip you to go on a encounter journey in your setting.

A few practical tips: build up supplies gradually, the 'spaces' do not have to be big, always have clear instructions bearing in mind they are for all ages, commit each 'space' to prayer at the very beginning, and have an opportunity for testimony and thanksgiving.

Because an encounter with God changes everything!

Lynda Sanders

Assistant Pastor (Children) City Life Church

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TESTIMONIES

Because one encounter changes everything!

Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" - John 11 v 40 -

THE Courage Tunnel

As I entered the 'Courage Tunnel', I experienced a feeling that I was being drawn into a very intimate, quiet, holy place. There was no sound, and nothing to see apart from the thick, deep red curtains on both sides and a few flickering candles on the floor. The curtains caused me to think of the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem, and gave me a very real sense of being in a special place – I was able to talk with God in a quiet voice, openly, honestly, intimately – not in fear but in reverence. Sensing that I was in a 'holy place' and He was very close.

- JEFF -

We came along to the Encounter the Kingdom event, bringing our thirteen year old son. After spending a couple hours in church exploring, praying and even painting he just didn't want to leave and begged us to come back again - he felt and loved being in God's presence. That's how we want teenage boys to feel about church!

- CATHERINE & MIKE -

ENTERING THE THRONE ROOM

I felt drawn to this particular reflective station and I anticipated the sense of awe and privilege of sitting and praying at the foot of the throne. However, what I hadn't anticipated was the hesitation I felt about entering. Was I really allowed in there? Should I take off my shoes? Was I 'holy' enough? I've never been invited to Buckingham Palace to talk to the Queen – how could I presume to enter the throne room of God?!! As I stood looking at the curtain, torn from top to bottom, I realised how this reflected my walk with Him. Jesus has made the way open for me to approach God, but I still have to make the choice to enter in.

- MIRIAM -

Of all the areas set up to encourage reflection and prayer, there was one that just didn't appeal to me! It was red and fluffy, with heart-shaped cushions, red blankets and teddies and I'm definitely not a red, fluffy, teddy type and I dismissed the area as something for the kids. However after visiting the other prayer areas I gave in, knelt down and cuddled into 'Little Ted', who was huge, with a red, fluffy blanket around me. In a moment I was no longer in the arms of a teddy, wrapped in a blanket but in the arms of my Heavenly Father, wrapped in His love for me. I wept, laughed and talked to Him and He to me, all together, at the same time. There's no words can describe His presence that day but I know that my character, excuses and pride could have robbed me of that experience.

- CALLY -

I came in for a hour of prayer and I was amazed at the whole Encounter the Kingdom room. It was absolutely fantastic because it was inspiring. I started to walk around the various stations and came to the Power Shower . . . at first I started to look at the construction first to see how I had made it. Well I thought: "Let's get in!" And then it happened . . . it felt as if someone had got their hands on my shoulders. It was like a heat coming upon me, it was phenomenal. In my 85 years I had never felt like that before.

- GERALD -

HOLY PLACE

After seeking God for resolution regarding habitual sin in thoughts, words and deeds, I found myself standing in the holy place with just the curtain separating me from the Holy of Holies. I was hesitant to enter, feeling a sense of unworthiness. When I did 'boldly' enter and sat at the foot of the throne, I asked God to deal with these habitual sins and remove them , so that I would not fall again ... and it was as though someone was sitting next to me, speaking: "I will not remove them from you, I have given you authority to make the choice, now go and do it!" This in a powerful way was a path to freedom, though there will be skirmishes. I was reminded of my authority as a son, with an encouragement by Holy Spirit to continue to walk in that authority. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5 v 1.

- BARNEY -

THY KINGDOM COME

Wednesday was a typical morning rushing to school with my three kids - except this day we were supposed to be out an hour earlier because my eldest daughter aged 9 was going to school camp. After dropping her off and saying our goodbyes my younger two children and I found ourselves with time to spare before school and nursery started.

Remembering that there was a 'Thy Kingdom Come' event on at our church and since the church, nursery and school are all beside one another it seemed a perfect opportunity to go and see what it was all about.

We were kindly welcomed in and I could feel at once the calm quietness of the space. So of course my two kids (aged 3 and 5) - in typical fashion - took off in opposite directions to explore, touch and experience as much as possible. I managed to direct them to the area for making crowns and I explained about the meaning behind these crowns - they liked imagining being princes and princesses and that our Father in heaven is the king.

They put a lot of effort into their crowns and as they were working my son (aged 5) said to me: 'Mum it's peaceful in here.' I responded: 'Yes I know . . . shhhh!' A few minutes passed as they worked away and my son said again: 'Mum you know it's like so peaceful in here'. I repeated the same again: 'Yes I know . . . shhhh!' Again more time passed and he said it again but now stressing his point: 'No Mum! . . . it's like really peaceful in here!' I remember thinking: 'It would be peaceful if you weren't talking so much!' But later I came to realise that perhaps he was sensing a peace that he couldn't make sense of and couldn't find words to perhaps



explain a "peace that surpasses understanding".My kids rarely stay in one place for long so were soon intrigued by the tent in the church which represented the tabernacle. I explained the concept of the Holy of Holies to my kids and again in typical fashion, they didn't hesitate to go right in and start touching things. I was doing the mum thing . . . trying to get them to calmly and gently look without touching things but then I remembered Mathew 19 v 14: 'Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' So I sat on one of the cushions on the floor and watched quietly as my 3 year old daughter enjoyed the

space. My son had a look about then went in search of new things to see, but my youngest daughter stayed in the throne room for such a long time. She sat on the throne quietly smiling to herself, just content to sit there doing nothing - she stayed there long enough that I even managed to snap a picture or two.

My eldest daughter also got to experience God in a new way on the Sunday after returning

from her school camp. She shared at church with Lynda, and in turn the whole church, that when she was in the tabernacle tent she felt like: 'God's hands were over/around the tent'.

Later at home I asked her to draw what she had meant and I was surprised at her effort and creativity ... why wouldn't God wear a rainbow of colours?

I find it encouraging how even very small children can know God and



experience His presence. The Thy Kingdom Come encounter was a wonderful activity that lets you and your little people experience God in a new way.

Wow! In one's 74th year it is rather easy to slip into being an old misery. One wonders if life still holds something new to be discovered. In such a geriatric frame of mind I offered my contribution to Truro's 24/7 prayer week. Side-stepping the sacrificial privilege of doing my bit at 4am, I chose an hour from 9pm on the first evening. That being my usual bed-time was my best shot at being 'sacrificial'.

But the experience proved neither a sacrifice nor the dull 'same-old' that I expected. All that cynicism was shattered just a few steps inside the church door. The installation of a shower cubicle made me chuckle with its invitation to step inside for a Power Shower! Despite non connection to South West Water, it promised streams of 'living-water'. Turn on a splash of faith and expect a cascade of heavenly joy. I didn't go in as I'm not a great fan of shower cubicles. But it put a smile on my face preparing me for what was just around the corner. For me it was a heavenly hot tub of sorts!

Outside an enclosure for silent prayer and meditation was a giant poster with the words: 'BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD'. The words bathed me in a warm, tangible awareness of our Maker. Usually a buzz of joy fills this place as people arrive for our family get-togethers. Yet although I was physically alone, the place itself seemed full of joy! Looking forward to a whole week with his family, Jesus had apparently set up camp bringing gifts of love, joy and peace.

As I walked around the prayer stations it was as if the whole host of heaven had come with Jesus to keep the party flowing! It had been far too long since I last felt so intoxicated by the Spirit of God. I even began to to sing! I hadn't done that for a few weeks either. Trouble with my ears made sounds 'warble'. I certainly had no idea what kind of noise I was inflicting on others. But that evening alone with our Maker I knew His grace would cover a multitude of flat notes.

At each prayer station the subject matter prompted a new song. Returning to the burning bush enclosure, I followed the invitation to shed my shoes. I have never been one for 'consecrated' buildings and all that, but I knew I was walking on 'holy ground'. I looked again at the words: "Be Still and Know that I am God" which set me off singing those words to a very old tune. The second verse in 'ye olde English' is "I am the God who healeth thee". Shortly afterwards there was a slight 'pop' in my left ear. This was only a temporary healing but still a welcome gift of kindness. It was certainly a relief to hear myself singing somewhat in tune. It also confirmed my deafness wasn't permanent, so the next day I arranged to get my ears syringed!

We know we live and move and have our being in our Creator, all the time, wherever we are. But for the rest of that week I yearned to be alongside that precious 'River of Prayer'. There is such power in the continuous flow of a river. Our Heavenly Father seems to be reminding us to continuously flow together. The scripture that came to my mind during the week was: Acts $2\ v$ 46 and 47. 'Every day they met together in the temple courts . . . praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily'.

Something truly special was occurring at the 24/7 prayer place in Truro that week. In whatever way people made their connection with God, they all joined in a freely-flowing river of prayer.

COME

'Be still and know that I AM God'



ASK

And You Shall Receive

Jesus replied: 'If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would **ask me**, and I would **give** you living water.'

John 4 v 10

'So I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. *Everyone who seeks, finds.* And to everyone who knocks, the door WILL be opened. You fathers - if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father

give the Holy Spirit to **those who ask him!**

 ★ WHAT TO DO ★

Sit | Drink | Ask | Receive







What is God like and how does God connect with people and the world?

'Great and marvellous are your works,
O Lord God, the Almighty.
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations.
Who will not fear you, Lord
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come and worship before you,
for your righteous deeds have been revealed.'

Revelation 15 v 3-4

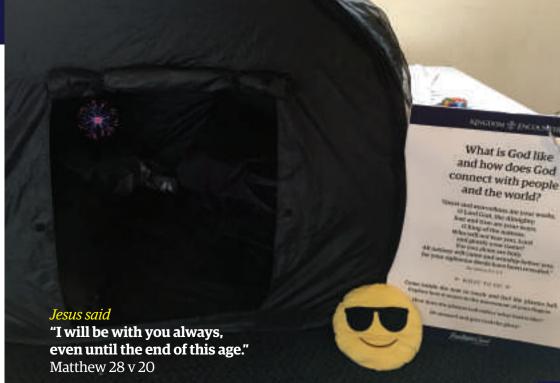
★ WHAT TO DO ★

Come inside the tent to touch and feel the plasma ball. Explore how it reacts to the movement of your fingers.

How does the plasma ball reflect what God is like?

Be amazed and give God the glory!









And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldy enter heaven's **Most Holy Place** because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting Him...

Hebrews 10 v 19-22

So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God.

Hebrews 4 v 16







Be thankful! Always be joyful. Never stop praying!

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus

I Thessalonians 5 v 16 - 18

♦ WHAT TO DO ♦

On a balloon write or draw what you are thankful for.

Add it to the 'Joyful and Thankful' board.





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Every morning I lay out the pieces of my life on the altar and wait for Your fire to fall upon my heart

Psalm 5 v 3

♦ WHAT TO DO ♦

Hold the heart and ask for God's fire to fall upon your heart.

John answered their questions by saying: 'Ibaptize you with water, but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am, so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire'.

Luke 3 v 16





"Be strong and courageous!
Do not be afraid or discouraged.
For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go".

Joshua 1 v 9

❖ WHAT TO DO ❖

As you enter and walk slowly through the Courage Tunnel chat and pray to God about why you are afraid or discouraged.

Stay for a while and ask God to make you brave, strong and courageous.

Claim God's promise: He is with you wherever you go!





What troubles you? What do you worry about? What is stealing your peace? What are you frightened of?

Look at the promises of God, He wants to take your troubles, worries, fears and anxieties away.

❖ WHAT TO DO ❖

Write your troubles, worries, fears or anxieties on the clear paper.

Dunk it in the water, claim a promise of God LOOK! - It's gone!

'This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!'







Forgiveness

And forgive us when we do wrong and help us to forgive others.

Matthew 6 v 12

We can sometimes hurt others by the things we do or the things we say.

What hurtful things have you said or done to others?

Other people can hurt us by the things they say or do.

What hurt or painful memory are you carrying because of something said or done to you?

The other person may not know or care how you feel but would you like to let these feelings go from inside you?

To choose to let go of the hurt is to forgive.

❖ WHAT TO DO ❖

Take a tablet.

The tablet represents the feelings you have ... hurt, pain, revenge, anger or sadness.

If you want to let the feeling go: then drop the tablet in the water and as it dissolves ask God to let the feeling dissolve away.





Thanksgiving

Enter his gates
with thanksgiving;
go into his courts
with praise.
Give THANKS to him
and praise his name.

Psalm 100 v 4

What are you thankful for?

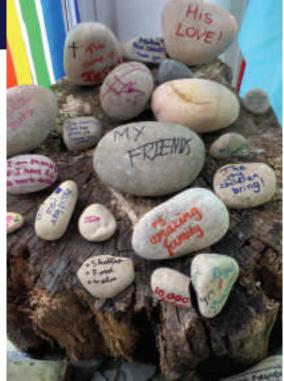
◆ WHAT TO DO ◆

Write this on a stone.

Walk through the gate.

Place the stone.

Be thankful!











Heaven to Earth

When Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer he said:

"Let it be on earth as it is in heaven"

Matthew 6 v 9-13

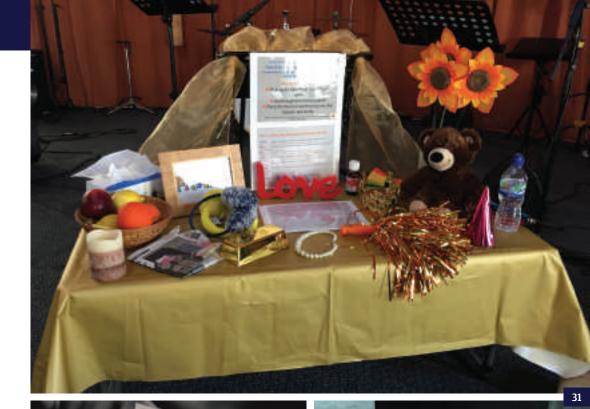
As we pray, let's ask God to change things to make our world more like heaven.

♦ WHAT TO DO ♦

Pick up an item from the 'heaven' table.

Go through the tent to earth!

Place the item on the earth and pray that heaven will come.









One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of the bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. "This is amazing", Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go and see it."

When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am!" Moses replied.

"Do not come any closer," the Lord warned.
"Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground".

Exodus 3 v 1 - 5

★ WHAT TO DO **★**

Come and see the burning bush.

Take off your sandals/shoes for you are standing on holy ground.

Take a moment with God at the burning bush.





But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit
comes upon you.
And you will be my witnesses,
telling people about me
everywhere.

Acts 1 v 8

The same power that raised Christ from the dead is living in you.

Romans 8 v 11

❖ WHAT TO DO ❖

As you step into the Power Shower invite God to fill you with Holy Spirit power.

Paper and pens are on the table if you would like to write about or draw your encounter with the Holy Spirit.





Our father in heaven hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done,

[IN OUR CITY]

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours

The Lord's Prayer [ASB 1980]

❖ WHAT TO DO ❖

Write your prayer on a Post-it note and stick it to the picture of our city.





Lavish LOVE

[LAVISH]

Elaborate | Luxurious | Lush | Gorgeous | Costly | Grand Splendid | Rich | Regal | Fancy | Expensive | Liberal Open-Handed | Unsparing | Ungrudging | Free Abundant | Ample | Superabundant | Heap Shower | Give Freely | Overflowing

See what great love the Father has **lavished** on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3 v 1

❖ WHAT TO DO ❖

God wants to lavish His love on you, He has so much to show you and has such an adventure to take you on.

Come, make yourself comfortable and encounter the lavish love of God.







You are very precious

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God.
They cannot be numbered!
I can't even count them.
They outnumber the grains of sand!
And when I wake up,
you are still with me!

Psalm 139 v 17-18

★ WHAT TO DO ★

As you fill the jar with sand be amazed that God thinks about you more than all the grains of sand you are putting in it!

WOW ... God thinks about you loads!







Then God looked over all He had made and he saw that it was **very** good!

Genesis 1 v 31

Let's reflect and pray for the people, places and parts of creation where it is no longer 'very good'

May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6 v 10

* WHAT TO DO *

Pick up a bendy person.

Stand on the red spot mat to reflect and pray.

Then place the bendy person on the map where the person, place or part of creation is that you are praying for.





I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvellous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

Psalm 9 v 1 & 2

★ WHAT TO DO ★

What would you like to praise God for today?

Draw or write this on a Post-it note and display it on the board.

- or -

Place a heart sticker on the board as you praise God.



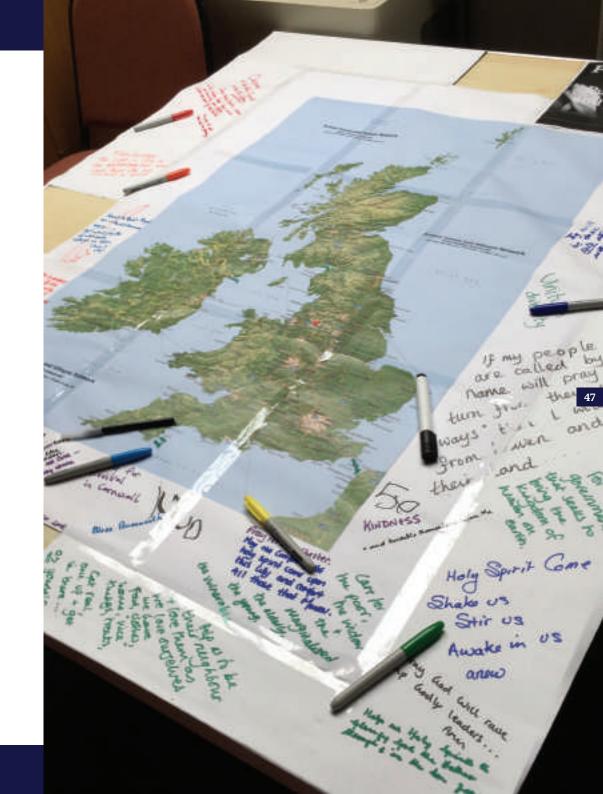


Pray for our nation

☆ WHAT TO DO **☆**

Think about those in areas of our nation that need God's help.

Write your prayer on the paper around the edge of the map.



Pray for the nations

★ WHAT TO DO ★

Draw a flag of the nation you would like to pray for on a flag.

Walk along the highway.

Place your flag in a boulder.

Pray for the nation to see the Saviour has come!











In the beginning God created . . . So God created human beings in his own image.

Genesis 1 v 27

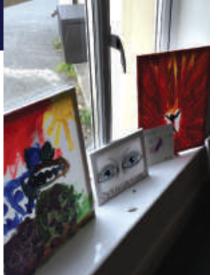
You are creative because you are made in HIS image and HE IS CREATIVE!

★ WHAT TO DO ★

Invite the Holy Spirit to be part of your creativity today.

How is God speaking to you through your creativity?

Is your 'creation' for you or is God asking you to give and bless someone else with it?



















Crowds follow Jesus

Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him and he healed everyone

Luke 6 v 19

She thought,
"If I can just touch his robe,
I will be healed"

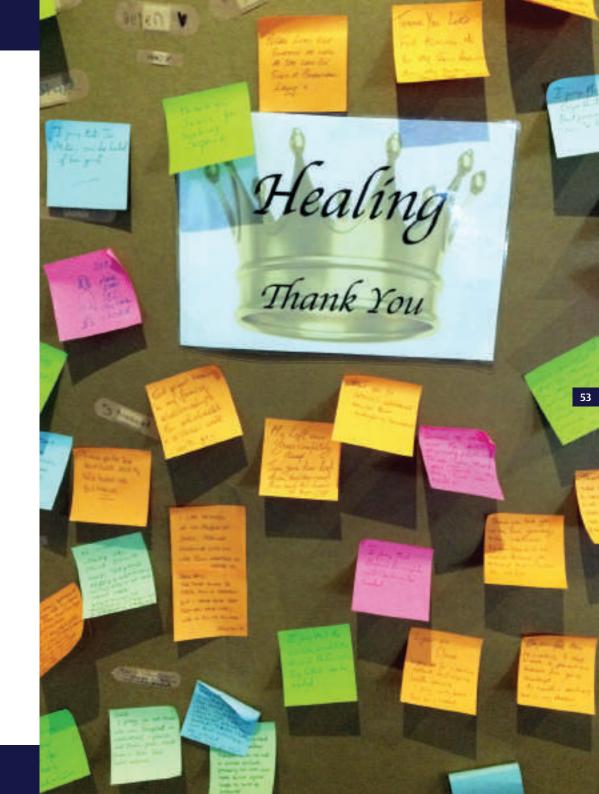
Matthew 9 v 21

☆ WHAT TO DO **☆**

Would you like to pray for someone to be healed?

Write or draw the person on a plaster or a Post-it note and stick it to the board.

Sit for a while and pray.







It's time to get rid of fear and lies . . .



Lynda lives in Cornwall, UK. She has been on the staff at City Life Church since 2013 as Assistant Pastor (Children). Prior to that she had led the TBC children's work in a voluntary capacity. Lynda regularly visits local primary schools to lead assemblies, RE lessons and Reflective Spaces. She oversees the TBC children's ministry programme, children's outreach in the local community and Encounter the Kingdom. She facilitates children's programmes for church weekends away. Lynda wants to see children and families know, experience and be empowered by God in a real and personal way.



The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians says: "Because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction." Reading the testimonies of those that have participated in the *Encounter the Kingdom* event, and being part of the event itself, I can with confidence recommend this book, and the event that it describes, to you as a means through which God can meet people, and they can meet with him . . . it truly is a 'drawing near' space. What I particularly love about it is the way that it engages with people of different ages and backgrounds, 8 to 80 years (and older and younger!) meeting with God by the power of the Holy Spirit. I have heard it said "We owe the world an encounter" (Bill Johnson), and this book, and the Encounter the Kingdom events, can, I am convinced, give this opportunity to the people who are willing to participate in it.

Matt Noble Pastor, City Life Church

An encounter with God can change everything! This book contains many creative ideas to help children and adults alike meet with God, hear from Him and see Kingdom realities established. I encourage you to try these out and see what God does - get ready for some surprises!

Heather Thompson Founder and International Director of Powerpack Ministries

My own faith journey began with an encounter with God at the age of six - I will never forget it! This beautifully illustrated, practical book encourages children (in fact people of all ages) to move beyond just a simple knowledge of God to a dynamic encounter with the One who transforms our lives. It is my pleasure to commend this to you and to encourage you to put in to practice these simple and profound spiritual exercises.

Carl Smethurst Regional Minister - Mission South West Baptist Association

I have had first hand experience of these marvellous reflective spaces and I am so glad that the ideas contained here may now have a wider audience than just we "Truronians'!! All the ideas are simple but incredibly effective with a real wow factor and appealing to all ages. When it is all set up, a space which otherwise would be very ordinary, becomes both extraordinary and holy. I hope the inspired ideas keep coming!!!!

Janet Tredrea Children and Families Worker. Truro Methodist Circuit

Kingdom Encounter is a creative and inclusive resource which will inspire churches and others to engage Christians and non-Christians of all ages. This multi-sensory approach is sensitive yet powerful, encouraging participants to open their hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Helen Holmes Former Deputy Head teacher and City Life Church Safeguarding Lead



Visit the City Life Church website for more information about our resources: www.citylifechurch.co.uk

