



Equipment:

You will need - DVD player, TV, pens, leaders' guide and course members' sheets for everyone in the group, a box of something that people need to pass round to share (box of wrapped chocolates or sweets?).



Timings:

This material within the session is timed to run for around 60 minutes to leave plenty of time for informal discussion at the beginning of the session to help people relax and feel at ease in the group.



Session Aims:

- Creating a warm atmosphere in the group
- Recognise the nature of God and his generosity
- See ourselves as stewards with all the responsibility that entails
- Understand the value of vision for God's world and God's work



Welcome: (12 minutes)

Welcome people and thank them for being part of the course.

Give them something to share (pass round a box of sweets/chocolates?)

Ask the group to tell the other group members their names and tell the group the most generous gift/action they have received/experienced.



DVD 1:1 (6 minutes 30 seconds)

Watch the first part of the Session 1 DVD. Please note that there is a subtitle option on the DVD if that would be useful to members of the group. Pause the DVD when the screen goes black.

DVD content

- Welcome and overview of the course
- The nature of God and his vision and plan – creation
- The nature of God and his vision and plan – redemption
- Signs of generosity all around us



Exercise: The nature of God (14 minutes)

Pass out the members' booklets. Ask the members of the group to look at the list (Supplementary Sheet 1 to this week's Leaders' Guide) of words that different parts of the Bible use to describe God and circle up to three that strike them as particularly powerful or surprising. (3 minutes)

After group members have done this, discuss together the responses and reactions of members of the group. (10 minutes)

At the end of the exercise, encourage group members to see that we see God's generosity in creation but also that our faith is built on the generosity of God in sending Jesus as our Saviour, and many of the words we use to describe God relate to that generosity. (1 minute)



Bible: Psalm 8 (10 minutes)

Read Psalm 8 aloud together and then read it again. Share together any phrase that struck you.

- ¹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
in the heavens.
- ² Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.
- ³ When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
- ⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?
- ⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honour.
- ⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:
- ⁷ all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
- ⁸ the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.
- ⁹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!



DVD 1:2 (3 minutes)

Watch the last section of the DVD and then turn off the DVD.

DVD content

- Stewards look after people
- Stewards look after things
- We are God’s Stewards



Exercise: School pets (5 minutes)

It’s often said that “to fail to plan is to plan to fail”.

In the creation story, we see that God planned to make man and that he put him in the garden to “take care of it” (Genesis 2:15).

Ask the members of the group to look at the Exercise “School Pets” in the members' booklets.

Imagine you’re back at school and you’ve been chosen to look after the class goldfish/hamster. What would you need to do?

Have a group discussion to see just what would be involved to make sure the goldfish/hamster returns to the class ALIVE at the start of term.

You should uncover that it’s a responsible job and it will probably need far more effort than the child originally anticipated and usually a parent’s help too.



Exercise: Our responsibilities (3 minutes)

Encourage members to reflect on this section quietly

As stewards of all that God has given us, what are our responsibilities for the world, the church and people?

	My responsibilities for the world include:
	My responsibilities for the local and worldwide church include:
	My responsibilities for other people include:



Prayer: (2 minutes)

From the course members' sheets, join in praying the Giving Generously prayer, or use some other suitable prayer.

**Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.
All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you. Amen.**



Take Away activity: (1 minute)

Encourage course members to notice when they see people being generous and give thanks for that person's generosity and for Creator God, the source of our generosity.

Session 1 - Supplementary Sheet

Look at the list of words that different parts of the bible use to describe God and circle up to three that strike you as particularly powerful or surprising.

**Abundant, Almighty, Alpha (Beginning),
Blessing, Builder, Creator, Equipper,
Everlasting, Generous, Giver, Grace,
Kind, King, Judge, LORD, Love,
Majestic, Merciful, Mighty,
Omega (End), Poor, Providing,
Redeemer, Renewing, Rescuer,
Rich, Righteous, Saving, Sovereign, Tireless,
Trustworthy, Understanding, Unfathomable**

- Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
- Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’
- 2 Samuel 7:28 Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.
- Psalms 65:9 You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with corn, for so you have ordained it.
- Psalms 71:16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.
- Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.
- Isaiah 44:6 ‘This is what the LORD says – Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- 2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
- Galatians 1:3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- Ephesians 4:11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
- Titus 3:4-6 But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour,

There are many ways in which we can picture God, but through this course, we’re going to focus on his generosity in creation, his grace fully revealed in Jesus and his gift of new life made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit, whilst thinking about how we can respond by living lives of generosity.