

2. Hearing

	Running Order	Materials to Collect and Prepare
1	Setting out 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * CD player and CDs * Quotations on hearing (these are used to introduce the session.)
2	Sense Aware 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Audio Track 3 - Sound Effects * Or download your own effects.
3	Creative Exploration 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Triquetra no 1 * thin strips of card / paper . * pens / biros * picture of baby
4	Relax & Enjoy 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Several short extracts from CDs of different styles of music * Include one or two classical pieces plus one loud discordant piece.
5	The Story 15	<p>The Promise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Read the story while playing softly some background music. Or Audio track 4 plus Audio Track 5 . * Or the recorded track Audio track 13 * (Toy that shines stars on the ceiling?)
6	Response & Reflection 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * list of blessings (page 7)

LEADERS' GUIDE

1. Setting out.

- ◆ Print out the quotations for the five senses and hand them out or display around the room.
- ◆ Welcome everyone as they arrive.
- ◆ Read quotations 1-6 hearing then again but in reverse order. Ask people what they remember and why they had noticed those words.
- This session we shall consider our sense of hearing.

2. Sense Aware.

- ◆ **Audio track 3: Sound effects.** Or make your own collection. Not all 8 need be played!!
- ◆ Tell people there are **8** different sounds. Ask everyone to listen to the sounds and to remember the ones they can identify. Play the sounds a second time and then ask people for their answers.
- ◆ **Answers :** table tennis; dungeon door; aerosol; whale song; fireworks; brushing teeth; shower; blackbird's song
- These sounds were a simple test of hearing and memory. I doubt if anyone felt much emotion.

3. Creative Exploration:

- ◆ Lay down pens, thin strips of card and the picture of the baby on the floor.
- ◆ Introduce the triquetra symbol 1.
- For the early Christians the three interlocking almond shapes symbolised God the Father, God the Son - Jesus - and God the Holy Spirit. So a symbol of the Trinity. This is not a pagan symbol the Christians had it first!
- Now place a finger on one of the points and follow the line. ... You can trace the whole figure and come back to the starting point. You could follow the shape endlessly. This symbolises the fact that God is eternal, outside the time/space universe he created.
- It can also represent our three fold nature. In the womb all that the baby needs is provided. No striving there.

➤ As a new-born baby we begin life with our body, soul and spirit open to the world around us. As life continues our souls, that is our minds, emotions and wills, are affected by what we perceive through our senses. This is especially true of the words we hear.



- We all like to be praised, but for a young child it is essential. It seems they need nine words of praise to undo one criticism. Simple words, often repeated like “super”, “well done” and “that’s great” build a child’s self esteem, making them more confident and secure .
- On the other hand name calling, taunts, constant use of foul language can all wound the soul as can broken promises that undermine a child’s ability to trust. Bullying is extremely harmful as it seeks to destroy the very identity of a person.
- ◆ Ask the group to consider if there are any words that are still resounding in their minds.
- ◆ Suggest to people they may like to write these words down on the strips of paper and lay them, text down, across the photo of the baby you have put in front of them on the floor. It would be helpful for them to put an identifying mark on the upper side of their strip of paper.

Play some quiet music while this is taking place.

- Look at the photo. You can no longer see the baby. These words, though not visible to the outside world, form a barrier, a barrier that begins to block and distort everything that person hears. In this state even good words become so distorted that they are heard as criticism.
- The sense of hearing is now working against the person. The thoughts and the emotions no longer function healthily. The soul is wounded and defends itself by taking more and more control.
- The healing needs to come from deep within the person. This is the work of the spirit.
- ◆ You may like to use this story to illustrate this:-

‘One little boy was trying to open a flower bud. Under his persistent efforts the blossom fell apart in his hands. In exasperation he looked up at his mother and asked, “Why does the bud fall apart when I try to open it, but when God opens it the flower is beautiful?” Shocked at his profundity, his mother was speechless. Soon, however, the child exclaimed eagerly, “Oh, I know! When God opens the flower, he opens it from the inside.” Quoted in Undersong, Peter Price, p.13

4 Relax & Enjoy



- Apart from being strengthened through our spirits, our sense of hearing itself can sustain us.
- Recent research has shown that listening to classical music can have a profound effect on us, even changing the very connections in our brains. A recent study showed that listening to music enabled children suffering from dyslexia to make marked improvements in their ability to read,
- Classical music can also reduce chronic pain by up to 25% and because of its calming and relaxing effect blood pressure is lowered. These particular health benefits are not seen with other styles of music.
- Music is also effective in enhancing or altering our moods and emotions. This is why the sound track of a film is so important. It keeps our emotions in line with the plot of the film. Music can touch parts of us that words cannot reach.
- I am going to play some pieces of music and I would like you to consider what effect they have on you
 - ◆ Ask people to find some space.
 - ◆ Play four/five short extracts of music including one modern piece and ending with at least one piece of classical music. About eight minutes?
 - ◆ Ask if anyone is willing to share how they were affected by the pieces of music. Which did they prefer etc. *Keep it light.*

The Story: The Promise (pages 5-6)

- I want you to listen to a story about deserts and stars, about promises and blessings, and one man's long journey with his God.
- ◆ Invite the people to sit in a circle to listen to the story. This is really effective if you can darken the room and even use a toy that shines stars on the ceiling.
- ◆ Read the story with or without a musical backing. Or use the recorded story.

6. Response and Reflection

- In this story it was the personal promises and words of blessing that God put in Abraham's spirit that strengthened him, body and soul when he was old and ready to despair.
- Abraham heard these promises not in the comfort of his home but alone out in the desert under the night sky. In that silence his spirit could hear clearly God's plan for his life.
- Sometimes we need to do the same. In our busy lives we can leave little space for silence. Yet it is in the silences of our lives that there is the space to hear. The possibility to have a spirit to spirit contact.
- The need for times of silence is being appreciated more and more today but the ancient practice of speaking out and receiving words of blessing has largely been forgotten.
- I wonder if we need a word of blessing or encouragement to strengthen us today. So listen to these blessings and reflect on them in the silence.
- ◆ The leader reads out aloud some? blessings from page 7. Do not rush the reading and pause between each one, lastly read no 2.

*The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.
(Psalm 29:11)*

- ◆ Have a time of silence. Some people can cope with silence better than others so be sensitive to the group as a whole.
- ◆ To end this silence read blessing **No 10**.

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

- ◆ Ask people to collect their strips of paper and a list of blessings.
- ◆ Invite people to try listening to silence before the next session.

The Promise

(Play audio Track 6 - story and music; OR Audio track 4 and read the following text)

Our story is about a family for whom names spoke of destiny. It is about blessings and promises, hopes and disappointments and it begins nearly four thousand years ago. **(Pause)**

The young man looked around for the very last time at all that was familiar. **Never** again to walk these streets. **Never** again to view this landscape. **Never** again to talk with his friends. He had said his goodbyes. Tomorrow his whole family would start out on their journey, a journey along the great river Euphrates and through inhospitable desert. . Uneasy thoughts swirled in his mind when he thought of the desert,bleak and barren.

(Turn on the toy that will show stars on the ceiling)

He looked up at the night sky and marvelled anew at the number and brightness of the stars and wondered whether he'd see different stars in the land of Canaan.

So father, son, wife, nephew, servants and all their animals left the town of Ur. Month after month after month they travelled. More than five hundred miles they journeyed until they reached the town of Haran. There they stopped. **(Short pause)**

Abram was glad. Maybe now they were settled Sarai would become pregnant. They had been married many years but no child had been born. **No son** to hold in his arms, **no son** to teach the traditions of his people, **no son** to carry on his name.

Abram had wandered out under the stars when God spoke to him. *“Leave this country and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. Look up at the heavens and count the stars if you can - such a multitude as that will be your offspring.”*

Sarai would have a child! He would be a father - a father of a great nation. But he had to leave Haran and once more travel into the desert, where the winds constantly changed the shape of the land. Faith would be his guide and the night stars his way-marks.

(short pause)

They travelled for a long time before settling in Hebron, west of the Salt Sea.

(Pause)

The years passed and still no child was born. The barren desert reflected his own life. How could he be the father of a great nation when he had no son.

Each year Abram counted the stars. **Each year** he remembered the promise. **Each year** there was no child. (pause, read slowly) Then they were old.

Now the stars reminded him of unfulfilled hopes and yearnings almost too hard to bear. But he still held onto the promise. (**Long pause**)

(Begin Audio track 5)

Abram was out under the stars when God spoke a second time. *“No longer will you be called Abram but Abraham, which means ‘father of many nations’. As for your wife Sarai, her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her.”* Abraham laughed. Sarah, at her age, to have a child? She was far too old. He laughed and laughed and when Sarah heard what had been said she laughed too.

(Pause)

12 months later Sarah had a son. They called him Isaac, meaning ‘laughter’.

God kept his promise and blessed Abraham and Sarah. Their descendants were as plentiful as the grains of sand in the desert, as numerous as the stars in the night sky. They became the nation of Israel.

(Let the music play out to the end.)

Optional reflection : *I wonder if the story would have been different if there had been no stars.*

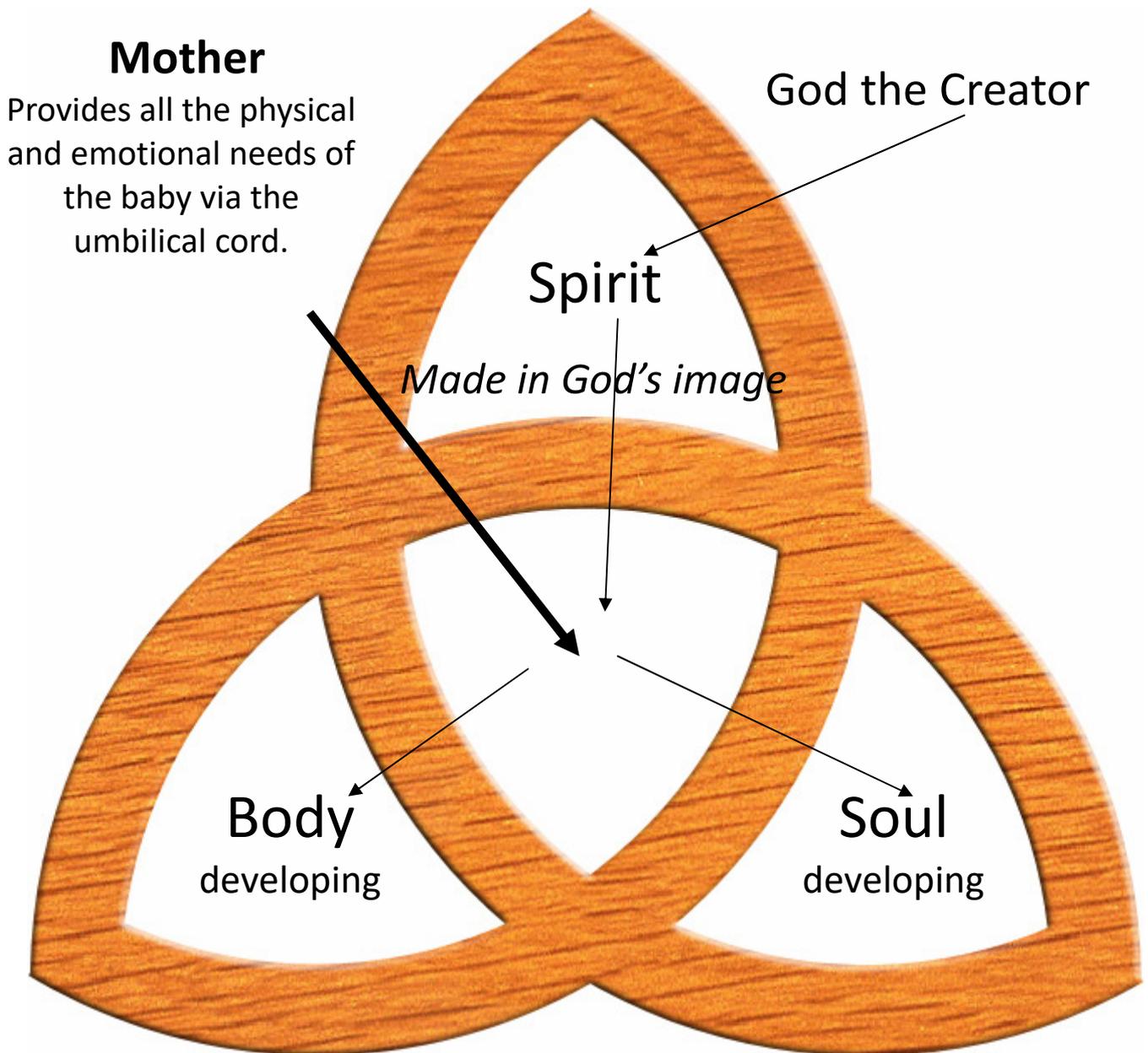
Blessings.

Choose some from this list or write your own.

1. The Lord will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and your going both now and for evermore. (Psalm 121:7-8)
2. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.
(Psalm 29:11)
3. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God, I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)
4. Fear not for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name, you are mine. . . You are precious and honoured in my sight and I love you, so do not be afraid for I am with you.
(Isaiah 43:2,4,5)
5. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14: 27)
6. Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way.
(2 Thessalonians 3:16)
7. May the warmth of the sun shine on you each day.
May the light of the moon caress you each night.
May the arms of God enfold you always.
To keep you from fear, to guard you from harm, to bless you with love, to hold you in peace.
8. May God be with you this day and every day.
The faithfulness of God to keep you safe,
The friendship of Jesus to bring laughter on your way.
The fragrance of the Holy Spirit to be your refreshing.
May God be with you this day and every day.
9. The strength of God for you. The peace of the Son for you. The wildness of the Spirit for you. And may the Three-in-One protect and nurture you on your journey.
10. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)



1. In the Beginning





Hearing

1. The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't being said.

Anon

2. When you hear a kind word spoken about a friend, tell him so.

H. Jackson Brown Junior

3. The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously

Hubert H. Humphrey

4. Praise does wonders for our sense of hearing.

Arnold Glasgow

5. A platitude is simply a truth told so often that you no longer hear it.

Stanley Baldwin

6. To make the right choices in life, you have to get in touch with your soul. To do this, you need to experience solitude, which most people are afraid of, because in the silence you hear the truth and know the solutions.

Deepak Chopra

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