



The Gifts we Receive: a course for churches

An exploration in the light of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, using 'Receptive Ecumenism'

NOTE: This course can be run over two days, a single day or in a briefer period. The timings are based on a single day but can all be varied.

How the course works

The course uses the experience of some of the most successful recent conversations between different churches. This is called 'Receptive Ecumenism'. It is essentially simple, even though its simplicity leads to deep and even complex understandings.

Receptive Ecumenism does not ask how others need to change so that we can deepen our relationship with them but what can we learn from them. *The Gifts we Receive* asks the same question: what can we learn? Anglicans and Methodists can discover surprising and wonderful things from each other.

The outline over the next two pages shows how this conversation can be facilitated. Anyone can lead a course of *The Gifts we Receive*, even if they do not have much initial knowledge. The outline is in two parts which could be before and after lunch, a short break or long break over many days if there is time enough for *The Gifts we Receive* to be held on two different days.

Leaders' notes

1. Leaders are encouraged to read through the course. While it does not require alteration or further work, leaders are free to adapt the course, should they wish, to their own circumstances.
2. The timings should be taken as flexible.
3. Despite seeking concrete and practical results, the method of the course is essentially relational and spiritual. Participants should be helped to relax and be open to God and to one another.
4. To ensure openness in discussing sensitive matter, it may be useful to invoke a version of the Chatham House rule, so that participants are free to use the information received but particular opinions may not be attributed to particular individuals.
5. The equipment required is little more than some means for groups to record their thoughts, some flipchart paper, and a flipchart for the plenary. If leaders adapt the course to their own circumstances that may, of course, require the use of other equipment.
6. It may be helpful to make a programme for participants using the information about the course as set out here.
7. The course can be used in other circumstances beyond the Anglican-Methodist context where it was developed.

Part one: Exploring

Welcome and introductions

The welcome should outline the aims of *The Gifts we Receive* which is for Anglicans and Methodists to learn by using Receptive Ecumenism. It is one way of making effective the Covenant between the two Churches. *The Gifts we Receive* is in two Parts: Exploring and Responding. The first seeks to see the gifts that can be seen in each Church; the second seeks to respond by taking those gifts, in a way that does not compromise the integrity of the receiving Church, into the life of the receiving Church. At the end of Part One we will have identified the gifts we shall consider; at the end of Part Two we will have seen how we can apply them to our own Church.

Prayer

The opening prayer should set the tone of relaxed reflection for the day.

Session 1: For what we have received

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| 5 Mins | <p>Introduction to Receptive Ecumenism</p> <p>Core concept: Receptive Ecumenism does not ask how others need to change so that we can deepen our relationship with them but what can we learn from them. We come to each other in our weakness, aware of our needs. What we learn transforms us. We take our learnings into the integrity of our identity to heal and enhance our lives.</p> <p>For further resources go to:</p> <p>https://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/91312/Home/Resources/Theology/Receptive_Ecumenism/What_is_Receptive/What_is_Receptive.aspx</p> |
| 10 mins | <p>Participants consider individually how they have been enriched by other denominations.</p> |
| 35 mins | <p>Note that what is discovered in the small groups of 4 will come to the plenary later, so it is necessary to write something down.</p> |

Short break

Session 2: For what we have received (continued)

25 mins Participants meet in plenary. Hear from each of the groups of 4. What did we want to know more about? Is any further conversation and explanation needed?

25 mins What do people feel may be lacking in their own church? What do we need to receive from the other? Record on flipchart paper.

Main break (lunch if a whole day)

Part two: Responding

Welcome back: Where do we think we are now? What have we learned? In the light of that we can now begin to respond and see how the gifts we see in the other Church may be able to be applied to ours.

Session 3: Let us be truly thankful

10 mins Work in pairs where one tells the other about their reflections on the previous sessions.

20 mins Pairs go into groups of 4. Each person reports to the group on the reflections of their partner.

20 mins Plenary to draw out main themes from this.

Session 4: Challenging and enriching

50 mins In denominational groups: What do we think we are learning in our denomination?

Session 5: What difference will this make?

20 mins Plenary for the two denominational groups to share what they are learning.

A flipchart is needed to record the learnings.

20 mins Still in plenary: how do we make our learnings available more widely?

Closing worship

It is wonderful on such an occasion to share together in the Eucharist.

About *The Gifts we Receive*

This course has been produced by the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group as a tool for Anglicans and Methodists as we grow in our covenant relationship. It is also offered as a gift to other churches who wish to discover more from one another.

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