



Session 3:

Going beyond: The stories of others



Preparation

- *Remind the appointed member(s) before the session that they will be sharing their story.*
- *Ensure your technology is set up and "Small Group Resource: Session 3" is ready to play.*



Group check-in (5 - 10 min)

1. *Would anyone like to share their experience of getting to know someone else's story outside of this group?*

Setting the scene (5 min)

Last session we learnt the skill of getting to grips with our own story, and got to engage with some of the stories in our group. We learnt more about some of the Ask. Listen. Tell. principles and about how our stories connect to God's bigger story.



This session we'll focus on how to use story-sharing as a way to reach out to others, to go beyond our comfort zones and our assumptions of people. We'll especially be challenged to take the courageous step of getting to know those who are different from us or who we feel shy about getting to know better.

First, we'll watch the trailer and a few scenes from Beyond the River, a film produced by Heartlines, and then have some discussions based on what we've watched. The main characters, Duma and Steve, show how we work alongside people every day but know so little of one another's stories.

Film synopsis



Duma is a talented young man who feels trapped by his surroundings and finds himself on the wrong side of the law. After a near miss with the cops, he finds an escape in the world of canoeing, an old passion of his. Steve is a nine-time Dusi gold medallist whose marriage is on the verge of collapse. His passion for the sport is fuelled by his desire to escape from something in his past that continues to haunt him.

Through a series of unexpected events, the two men find themselves attempting the three-day Dusi Canoe Marathon as a doubles pair. But there are a few things they must overcome, not least of which is the completely different worlds they come from. They realise that the dream they both desperately want requires them to work together, both in the boat and beyond the river. The film is inspired by the true story of Siseko Ntondini and Piers Cruickshanks, who defied many odds to compete in the 2014 Dusi.

Watch: Beyond the River trailer and film clips (20 min)

The trailer and film clips can be found on the DVD at the back of this resource or at the online resource centre under "Videos – Beyond the River".

Show Beyond the River trailer and Clip 1: Getting to the dam on time (discuss in pairs)

1. How much do you know about where some of your small-group members live, and how they get to church?

Show Clip 2: Language barriers (discuss in pairs)

2. In what ways does language create problems in getting to know someone?

3. What are some creative ways we could use to break down language barriers?

Show video Clip 3: Do you know my story? (discuss as a group)

4. What are some of the things that prevent us from getting to know our fellow Christians better? What prevents us from reaching out beyond "our people"?

5. What practical things could we do to live more relationally and communally, in this small group and as a church?



Ask someone to record or write down the ideas for your group to do.

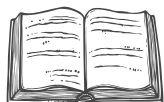


Tell: Sharing stories (10 - 20 min)

The group member(s) selected in the previous session shares their story. If you have enough time, two members can share but make sure the time is equally distributed.

After the member has shared their story, you may want to affirm them in one of the following ways:

- Say an encouraging word or identify something that inspired you from their story.
 - Say a short prayer, thanking God for the person's life and asking for His direction in some of the areas of challenge they may have shared about.
 - Write an encouraging word or blessing for them to take home.
 - If time permits, you can offer the opportunity to ask the person questions.
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Read: Galatians 3:28 (10 min)

Read the scripture together.

1. What would it mean for us to really live out this scripture of being "one in Christ"? Which values do we need to do so? What should we be doing that we are not doing right now?
2. In what ways can we use story-sharing as a means to love our neighbours?



Ask someone to record or write down the ideas for your group to do.



Go beyond

In God's Kingdom, His desire is for every nation, tribe, people and tongue to be doing life together. As Christians we have an opportunity to make sure people in our church – and those beyond our church – feel invited to be part of a loving community, regardless of their age, language or background.

In the week ahead, we encourage you to get to know the story of someone outside our congregation, especially someone we consider different to ourselves. There are some guiding questions in the back of your Participant's Workbook for starting that conversation. Get to know their story and encourage them to become part of our story of a loving community.



Close in prayer.