

CY

**LEADER'S GUIDE
FOR CY AND CY NANO**



INTRODUCTION

Welcome TO CY

Welcome to *CY*, the youth edition of *Christianity Explored*.

This seven-week course is designed to present young people with the good news about Jesus. With a creative mixture of Bible studies, talks, DVDs, activities and group discussions, *CY* takes your youth group on a journey through Mark's Gospel. They'll discover the identity, mission and call of Jesus on their lives – who Jesus is, what he came to do, and how he calls us to respond.

This course, now in its second edition, has benefitted enormously from the experience of the many youth leaders in churches worldwide that have led thousands of young people through the material, and brought them face to face with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today, as always, young people of all ages need to hear the message of forgiveness, hope, meaning and purpose that will bring a shape to their lives, and a new relationship with God that will last for eternity.

What makes this course – and the Christian gospel – distinctive is its insistence on God's remarkable grace: the clear teaching that although we human beings have rebelled against God, we are deeply loved by him. Loved with an outrageous, costly and incomprehensible love that was poured out for us on a little hill just outside Jerusalem.

It may be no easier for leaders to explain Jesus' teaching on sin, judgment, wrath and hell than it is for the young people to hear it. But, if we are prepared to trust in the Holy Spirit's power to open blind eyes, these uncomfortable truths pave the way for a faithful, fruitful life driven by God's grace.

This Leader's Guide is divided into four sections: the first will introduce you to how the course works and train you to run it; the second will be your guide session by session as you run the *CY Nano* course for 11-14s; the third will guide you in running *CY* for 15+ and young adults; and the fourth section contains session outlines and programme suggestions for the *Inside Track* weekend/day away.

If you are running a *CY* course of any kind, please log onto www.christianityexplored.org and register it, so that others may pray for you, or even send other people along.

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SECTION 1

How to run the course

Getting started

Telling young people about Jesus Christ is a stunning privilege and a huge responsibility. It's a stunning privilege because Almighty God is pleased to call us his "fellow workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9) as he seeks and saves the lost. And it's a huge responsibility because it can be tempting to present a watered-down gospel that has no power to save and is "no gospel at all" (Galatians 1:7). Our evangelism, especially with impressionable young people, must always be careful, prayerful and faithful.

CY has been developed to let the gospel tell the gospel: it takes you, and those in your care, on a seven-session journey through Mark's Gospel to discover who Jesus is, why he came and what it means to follow him.

To help your journey run smoothly, you will need to consider the following before the course begins.

WHO WILL COME?

For many churches with an existing work among teenagers and young adults, the first place to start is the groups that you have running week by week. Running CY or CY Nano need not be billed as a specifically evangelistic course – it may be billed as a "refresher course" on the basics of the Christian message, or simply as a series that goes through Mark's Gospel. So even for those who have some kind of Christian commitment, there will be plenty of spiritual "meat" in the course, as they study the Bible together and think about the message of Christianity.

And there is great value in running this course "internally" to begin with.

- ◆ **Teaching:** The gospel is not only how you come to faith in Christ, it is also the means by which you grow in your understanding of God, and your love for him. *CY teaches* the gospel over seven sessions in a way which will be fresh and accessible to your group, and build their understanding and faith.
- ◆ **Inreach:** Any group will have members or fringe members who are not yet Christians. *CY* is an evangelistic tool to explain the gospel of Christ to them.
- ◆ **Training:** If you hope at some stage to use *CY* as a specific outreach tool, then running it first with your professing Christians will train them and your other leaders in how it works, and inspire them to invite others the next time it is run.

Obviously, we would hope that *CY* goes on to be used more formally as an outreach programme, where group members are specifically invited to join in order to discover more about what it means to be a Christian today. These kinds of groups will vary enormously, depending on the age group *CY* is used with, and the context in which it happens. So,

for example, you may be running it in a home, or on school or college premises in a lunchtime, or on church premises on a weekend, or at another “neutral” venue.

We have written the course material to include ideas for a variety of settings and groups, but you must adapt the material to suit your particular group and circumstances.

WHERE SHOULD YOU MEET?

Find somewhere where your group will be happy to invite their friends. You may like to experiment with some different locations other than church premises. Avoid using a classroom or somewhere that looks like one so that people don't feel they are back in school. The aim is to create a relational environment where people can listen to the Bible teaching while they enjoy the warmth of Christian fellowship so that they feel sufficiently relaxed to ask their questions and express their doubts and feelings.

The physical environment where you run CY can have a big impact on people's willingness to get involved in activities and discussion, so be creative in the way you decorate and set up the room. It's important to choose a place where you are unlikely to be interrupted and where you will be able to meet every week at the same time.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU MEET?

As this is a seven-session course, once a week for seven weeks is the ideal. Because each week builds on the one before, try not to interrupt the regular schedule of the meetings.

There's also a weekend or day away that we suggest takes place between Weeks 6 and 7, called *Inside Track*. The material relating to this is in section 4 at the back of this handbook. The idea of this weekend/day away material is to give group members an insight into what it means to live as a Christian – and therefore what would be involved if they decided to follow Christ themselves.

WHY SEVEN WEEKS?

In some youth evangelism there has been too much emphasis on a prepackaged gospel presentation which aims to “get people to pray the prayer”, often with little opportunity for serious consideration of what is involved in following Jesus. This approach to evangelism can be valid when you are dealing with people who already have the building blocks for understanding the gospel in place – knowing the facts about Jesus' life, death and resurrection, understanding the Christian view of God, etc. But increasingly, young people either have no understanding of these things, or else have knowledge that is patchy or confused. That is why this course seeks to put in place the building blocks of understanding the gospel slowly, over several weeks, with plenty of room for discussion and reflection.

As Christians, our aim should be to work for “fruit that will last” (John 15:16), not a superficial religious experience that is quickly forgotten when life gets tough. With that in mind, CY clearly sets out the implications of becoming a Christian, so that young people can adequately “count the cost” before making a commitment.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN EACH SESSION?

The structure we suggest is the same for each session:

1. Group activity;
2. EXPLORE (Bible study);
3. Talk or DVD;
4. TALKBACK (group discussion).

When this is packaged up with some time for food or just general hanging around time, it gives rise to a two-hour programme as below. Alternatively, a stripped down version can be done in an hour. Below are some suggested timings in minutes for each component:

Full programme		Shorter programme	
Food	30	Introduction	5
Group activity	25	Group activity	10
Explore	20	Explore	10
Talk/DVD	15-20	Talk/DVD	15
Talkback	25	Talkback	20
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TOTAL	120	TOTAL	60

You should be able to complete the full programme for a session in less than 2 hours. This can be shortened if necessary by limiting the time taken for food, activities or discussion. It is important to watch the time used for each of these components. Over-running can cause frustration and boredom – and may make it difficult for you to communicate the gospel effectively. CY has been extensively piloted with groups all over the world and the current course is the result of detailed feedback. We would urge you, when you first run the course, to try and use it as written – you may be surprised by how well your group handles the activities and questions!

FOOD

The main reason that food is suggested as part of the programme is not as a device to get young people to come (although in our experience, teenagers and students will go anywhere for a free feed!). Rather, it is because as you sit or stand around eating, you and your fellow leaders have the opportunity to interact with the young people – to discover what they are like, what interests them, what struggles and difficulties they face.

Time is precious, so if you can, recruit outside help with the food so that you are free to spend time with the group members. Resist the temptation to make the food over-elaborate. Keep it simple to eat and clear away. (Although it's always good to make an effort, there is a danger that food can end up squeezing out time for exploring the gospel.)

GROUP ACTIVITY

This is a short, fun game, intended to introduce the theme of the session, and build relationships between people. Each time you meet you will need to make sure you have all the equipment needed to run the activity, and have thought through how it will work for your particular group, in the place you are running CY.

EXPLORE

This is a Bible study from Mark's Gospel, giving the group a chance to explore Jesus' life and teaching.

The skill of your fellow leaders is crucial during EXPLORE – an excellent reason for you to schedule some training time with them. You will find extensive notes on training later on in this section.

TALK OR DVD

At this point you, as the course leader, will deliver a short talk based on a passage from the Gospel of Mark. Alternatively, you can use the *Soul* DVD instead of doing a “live” talk for the seven main CY sessions. There is no DVD material for the *Inside Track* material, so you will have to do live talks for them.

If you are using the *Soul* DVD, make sure that your leaders have watched the episode beforehand so that there will be no surprises with the content. Because the DVDs feature on-screen Bible text, it is inadvisable to use them with large groups unless you have access to a projection screen and projector.

TALKBACK

This is a chance to discuss the themes of the talk, and bring out the implications. TALKBACK questions are particularly designed to draw out what your group members actually believe.

HOW WILL YOU INVITE PEOPLE?

If you are running CY as an outreach series, then you will need to encourage your group to invite their friends. You might want to do a study with them on the importance of evangelism before you start running CY – although the best way to motivate your regulars to bring others on the course is for them to experience it themselves first. “Friends bringing friends” is the main reason people come to the course.

If you are running CY as part of a church youth group, you should advertise the course in your church bulletin, during the Sunday services, and at your regular youth group meetings.

Any publicity material you produce about the course needs to reassure people that no one will be expected to pray, sing or do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. It is also important to be honest about exactly what will happen, so that people don't feel duped into coming.

It is our hope that the course would not be a “one-time” event, but rather become a regular feature of your calendar. And once your youth group have experienced CY, you'll find that they'll be eager to invite their friends to future courses.

WHO WILL LEAD?

We recommend that one leader is made responsible for delivering all the talks, or introducing the DVDs, and running the whole session. If the group is small, the same leader will lead the group through EXPLORE and TALKBACK.

If you have a large group, you will need to split participants into smaller discussion groups and find additional leaders to lead EXPLORE and TALKBACK with each group. Participants

should stay with the same leader(s) every week. We recommend a maximum of 8 young people per group, with at least two leaders per group.

All leaders should be Christians who are able to teach, encourage discussion and care for participants. They should be able to teach the Bible faithfully and clearly – and be able to deal with difficult questions on Mark's Gospel (see page 197).

Participants may have questions that are not explicitly dealt with in the material, so leaders should have enough general biblical knowledge to help participants with these questions. (For help on answering difficult questions, see the section at the back of this manual and visit www.christianityexplored.org/reading)

Leaders should also be able to handle pastoral situations with care and sensitivity. In a mixed group, it is vital to have both male and female leaders present, in order to deal with pastoral situations appropriately. It can be very effective to ask Christian young people to help lead the course. The most important qualities of a leader are not age, but maturity in their understanding and gifting.

Asking a suitable young person to lead may encourage greater discussion and debate. If you do take this route, having an older Christian present in the group (but not leading the discussion) will be helpful in dealing with difficult situations or hard questions. It's also a good idea to choose a young leader who has already been through CY as a participant.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO RUN CY?

Everyone on the course – leaders and participants – will need to be given a Bible, or the Gospel of Mark. For the sake of clarity, it is important that everyone uses the same version. The version used throughout the course material is the New International Version (NIV). If you choose to use another version, please check carefully that the wording of the questions makes sense against the Bible version you are using.

An NIV Gospel of Mark themed for the *Soul* DVD is available to buy. Participants will only need Mark during the main seven sessions, but will need full Bibles for the *Inside Track* studies during the weekend/day away.

Each participant should be given a copy of the *CY* or *CY Nano Handbook*, which contains the EXPLORE studies, space to write their answers, talk summaries (Downloads) and room to make notes. We recommend that, for a younger group, these are kept by the leaders and handed out each week. (When you collect them after TALKBACK, you will need to promise that their Handbooks are private and that the leaders won't be reading them! Explain that you're holding on to them so that they won't be forgotten next week.)

HOW SHOULD YOU PRAY FOR CY?

Nothing happens unless God is at work, so make sure that you give plenty of time to prayer. Try to recruit prayer partners among your Christian friends, or from your church congregation, who will commit themselves to praying before (and during) the course.

- **Pray for the preparation of the talks** – that they would be faithful to God's word, passionate, challenging and clear.
- **Pray for the leaders** – that they would be well prepared and that they would “watch their life and doctrine closely” (1 Timothy 4:16).

- **Pray for the young people themselves** – that many would attend; that by his Spirit, God would open their eyes to see who Jesus is, and by his Spirit give them the desire to turn and follow him.



Please let us know when and where your course is running! The CY Team would love to pray for you. Email cy@christianityexplored.org or register your course at www.christianityexplored.org