

Build
Discover
Imagine
Create

Re:Set

Start
Fuel
Connect
Design

RE:SET

**SANCTUARY FIRST
CONNECT BIBLE STUDY**

JANUARY 2025

WELCOME TO CONNECT!

A Connect Bible Study is a small group who meet regularly to explore faith and Godly responses to life issues, growing in the things of God together as we go. Anyone can host one using these materials and contact us for support and guidance. Online or in-person, our heart is that they offer a relaxed space for faith, friendship and fun.

We hope the resources and discussion points encourage, inspire, and invigorate you on your walk with God.

It might be the conversation follows the discussion as laid out or heads in a different direction, both are wonderful and we hope the outline we offer here is flexible and supportive to engage with the Bible and our faith in fresh and vibrant ways as we make our way in the world as 21st century disciples exploring the wonders of life with Jesus!

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Each week begins with an introduction and a 'seed to sow' conversation starter. These are open-ended prompts to inspire creative responses to the themes. Perhaps they will inspire you to write a song or a poem, or to paint, draw, move or explore! We imagine the material for each week would work for 90 minute sessions but feel free to adapt to your group!

There are more songs, videos, podcasts and blogs linked to this theme on our **website** and **App**, have fun exploring it all!

RE: SET

In the beginning was the Word. Then there was light and dark.

That's two more words.

And then the words just kept coming and coming...

The story of Christianity, indeed of the world, is an ongoing conversation that began with the 'Word' — God addressing creation in the person of Jesus — with the meaning at the heart of everything.

When humanity — made in God's image — came crying, shouting and whooping into being we had mouths full of our own words. We responded to the Word of life with our own words of delight, shame, sorrow, curiosity, anger, wonder and love as we worked out what it means to be alive. And since then the words have only continued to flow as we have learnt more about what it is to be.

Every so often in this ongoing conversation it comes time to reset, refocus, and rediscover the thread. We take stock and respond again to that initial Word at the heart of the universe.

God is speaking.

And it's time for us to reply.

Ready, set...

This is a theme remix revisiting and reimagining material we first developed in 2021.

WEEKLY OVERVIEW

- **Reset to Rediscover**
- **Reset to Reimagine**
- **Reset to Reconfigure**
- **Reset to Restart**
- **Reset to Remix**

LYRICS

FROM 'START ALL OVER AGAIN'

*When I feel a failure,
when life is full of regrets
When my fear of rejection
has made me rejected
And suddenly I've given in
When I have allowed myself to become
The fall guy truant me to be
Lord,
Break me break me up
Shake me out
And start all over again*

Albert Bogle

PRAYER

LET US PRAY

Lord Jesus Christ, Risen from the dead,
Ascended to the Father,
To You is given all authority in heaven and on
earth.
With the disciples, we stand amazed
At the mystery as You return to glory.

We take time to gaze in wonder:
To slip the moorings of our limited faith
And let You carry us on the river of the Spirit
Into the open ocean of resurrection
possibilities.

Beyond the problems that perplex us — new
wisdom.
Beyond the fears that paralyse us — new
confidence.
Beyond the ideas that confine us — new
visions.
Beyond the cynicism that blinds us — new
hope.

Lord Jesus, we offer ourselves to be your
witnesses today,
Pointing to You by our faithful living, our life-
giving words,
And our caring attitudes and actions,
Trusting You to draw others to follow You.
AMEN

Peter Neilson

WEEK 1: RE: SET TO REDISCOVER

INTRODUCTION:

Reset us Creator God that we might rediscover our callings, our gifts, our humble beautiful purpose to love one another.

As we pray and hope for restoration, rebuilding and renewal throughout society what are we hoping to rediscover?

SEEDS TO SOW:

Who are you going to rediscover this year? What friendship or community or collaboration are you going to remember and re-appreciate?

READ COLOSSIANS 3: 12-17

Re: Clothe

New year, new wardrobe! As we look to reduce, reuse and recycle our physical clothes we also want to explore the metaphorical 'outfits' that we are putting together to share compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Just as we choose what to wear, we can choose what attitudes to have. Which of these words *compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience* do you want to see more of this year?

READ PSALM 81

Re: Tune

Chances are you don't have a lyre lying around that you can grab. But you probably do have another portable, handheld device that makes noise and that can help you retune into God. You may even be using to read this question...

This psalm is a stirring invitation to reconnect that invites us to engage our senses creatively and use technology imaginatively to help us focus on the divine.

What are the sounds that help you tune in and connect to God? Music? Speech? Quiet? Nature?

READ ACTS 8: 26-40

Re: Discover

You have got to love the honesty of that Ethiopian eunuch. When asked if he understands what he's reading there's no bluster or bravado or excuses. He presses the reset button and says "How can I, unless someone guides me?"

Is there an experience or story, film or book that has helped you rediscover things about God?

Sometimes in our lives we are the Ethiopian and at other times we're Philip! God calls us towards one another to help illuminate the heart of Christianity as we make sense of our faith.

Linking back to the Seeds to Sow above, let's have a time of prayer where we bring to God all the people and situations we will encounter this year.

WEEK 2: RE: SET TO REIMAGINE

INTRODUCTION:

Reset us Saviour God so that we can reimagine what is possible, that we might doodle, and sketch and take tentative steps in response to your transforming love.

As we pray and hope for restoration, rebuilding and renewal throughout society what are we wanting to reimagine?

SEEDS TO SOW:

Pick a street near where you live. Reimagine it in your mind's eye, what would you change about it? To improve the lives of all who use it. Then take that your reimagining to God in prayer and reflect on what you could do to make your re-imagination a reality

READ EXODUS 35: 4-35

Re: Designing

There's a lot of detail here giving us a window into a vibrant community that is pooling together resources and skills in a great shared endeavour: constructing the Tabernacle (a kind of portable sanctuary).

Enormous shared tasks like these can unite a community, weaving people together with a common purpose. God's people can achieve great things when they work together.

What helps a team work together? To bring out the best in everyone contributing.

READ HOSEA 11: 1-11

Re: Engaging

In the midst of all too human conflict and calamity, rejection and recklessness comes the

voice of God — tender, frustrated, in pain — and sounding astonishingly human.

Getting our heads around what it is like to 'be' God is phenomenally difficult. How can we possibly imagine what it is like to be the ageless creator of everything!? But knowing that we ourselves are made in the image of God might give us some insights.

As we see in this reading: a heartbroken parent raising a child making their way through the miraculous and the mundane, the incredible and the everyday, teaching their child to walk and then bracing themselves for rejection, offers an echo of the divine love at heart of the universe.

As we re-engage with who God is what words stand out for you in this reading? How might these words form part of a prayer that you could offer to God?

READ EPHESIANS 1: 3-14

Re: Imagining.

Let's imagine the seal of the Holy Spirit was a literal stamp on our souls. What would the design be?

Would everyone's be the same or would each one be unique? Discuss as a group what images and symbols speak to you powerfully of God's love for us.

You could even have a go drawing or painting these seals!

WEEK 3: RE: SET TO RECONFIGURE

INTRODUCTION:

Gathering-in God, having rediscovered what we need and reimagined how to get there guide us as we seek to flourish together.

As we pray and hope for restoration, rebuilding and renewal throughout society what needs to be reconfigured?

SEEDS TO SOW:

How could society be reconfigured to be fairer?

READ ACTS 1: 1-11

Re: Calibrate

Just like the apostles looking up into the sky, we are sometimes guilty of looking at where Jesus was rather than where he *is* now. What he was doing and not what he is doing now.

What ways do we need to recalibrate and reorganise our church communities? To reassess where Jesus is calling us to join him in the work he is already doing? Are we sometimes guilty ourselves of looking at where Jesus has *been* rather than where he *is* now?

READ EPHESIANS 1: 15-23

Re: Member

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." (Verses 15-16, NRSVA.)

Remembering one another in prayer, sharing our gratitude for others is a powerful thing.

Gratitude transforms communities, relationships, and lives as we remember that we are all members together in a bigger picture.

As we seek to rebuild in the wake of years of pandemic, recession, and conflict, how can we build simple gratitude for one another into our institutions and across society without compromising the need for fairness and justice?

What does a healthcare system based on gratitude look like?

What does a justice system based on gratitude look like?

What does an economics of gratitude look like?

READ LUKE 3:15-22

Re: Claiming

The loving Father God acknowledges his Son, laying claim to him. God also lovingly claims us, acknowledging us as his own.

In Baptism we lay claim to God and God lays claim to us!

Have you been baptised? If so, what does your baptism mean to you? If not do you have any questions about baptism and what it represents?

As a group discuss your shared experiences and association with baptism.

WEEK 4: RE: SET TO RESTART

INTRODUCTION:

Renewer God, having rediscovered, reimagined and reconfigured we bring our words, our hopes, our loves and longings, ready to restart...

As we pray and hope for restoration, rebuilding and renewal throughout society what needs to be re-started?

SEEDS TO SOW:

What do you want to see restart? Begin again? Go back to square one?

READ JOHN 2: 1-11

Re: Fuel

Jesus refuels the jars, refuels the guests, and refuels the party!

Often we need to refuel before we can restart. In what ways are we asking Jesus to refuel us for the year ahead? And not just to keep going, but to keep us partying and celebrating with one another!

Let's think about specific things we can pray to God for to help refuel us.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12: 4-13

Re: Gift

Unlike an unloved bottle of bubble bath that nobody wants and get re-gifted to somebody else every Christmas (sorry Uncle Frank...) Spiritual gifts were always intended to be shared.

Why do you think the Spirit often breaks up the gifts into interlocking pairs?

What gifts do you have that could be shared with others to build up the church?

READ NUMBERS 11: 24-30

Re: Setting

Even when we don't set out to reset or restart we can find ourselves suddenly moved by the Spirit and resetting anyway.

Eldad and Medad didn't go looking for the Spirit. They were in the wrong setting, but the Spirit found them...

As we look to restart, to set out again, having set our eyes on God, how can we be more open to the Spirit calling unexpected voices?

What steps can we take to be better and more generous listeners? In this context, how can you be more of a Moses and less of a Joshua...?

WEEK 5: RE: SET TO REMIX

INTRODUCTION:

Setting, resetting, and remixing with Jesus who continually revives, restores and revitalises us!

SEEDS TO SOW:

What's your remix for 2025? What are you going to shake up, re-imagine and re-approach this year?

READ NEHEMIAH 8: 1-12

Re: Visit

We revisit scripture for repeat encounters throughout our lives.

The process can be both sobering and enlivening, solemn and celebratory as it is in this reading! And it's crucially important that — like in the reading — we make time to do it together, to support one another.

What helps you read, understand and get insights from the Bible?

READ LUKE 4: 14-21

Re: Constituting

This part of the Gospel of Luke is sometimes referred to as 'The Jesus Manifesto', Jesus's mission statement.

How does Jesus's constitution compare with our contemporary constitutions and mission statements? Does the description of his mission sound like the mission of our local churches?

READ ACTS 16: 25-34

Re: Mixing

I tell you what, Paul and Silas's hymn remixes but have had some welly! Never underestimate the power of singing! The breaking down of the wall leads to a remix of the situation — suddenly the prisoners are free and it is the jailer who is trapped, but Paul immediately releases him. What had been a situation of antagonism and fear has become one of togetherness and celebration.

This is the Jesus remix. A vivid picture of how we are to sing it out, break down walls and transform relationships, bringing others into the place of Christ.

This year — what songs are we going to sing?

What walls are we going to break down?

And what relationships are we going to transform?