



take
time
together

INTRODUCTORY COURSE

Taketime Meditations 08/19

OBJECTIVE

This five-week course enables newly qualified Taketime Practitioners to introduce Taketime to their Christian organisation before committing to a Taketime Together Group. It also allows those waiting to attend a Training Day the basic skills to start engaging with their audience, ahead of their training

Elizabeth Smith

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1 Introduction to Taketime

Taketime is a Fresh Expression of Church, inspired by Ignatian Spirituality, which has grown out of Rev Clive McKie's prison and Church ministry.

It enables people, with or without a Church background, to meet with Jesus in their imagination and to find a nondirective, experiential, therapeutic, transformational spiritual reality.

The guided meditations are available in three ways:

- a. the Taketime website - **www.taketime.org.uk**
- b. the app, ***Taketime Spiritual Meditations*** (Android and IOS)
- c. local Taketime Together Groups. These use and expand upon the meditations in ways which enable those with or without a faith background to feel welcomed and valued.

1.1 The Taketime website and app

These provide meditations on episodes of Jesus's life in the order that they appear in the gospels. A new meditation is added every week.

Each meditation is available in a 5, 10, 15 and 20-minute version, so users can choose according to how much time they have available.

For those who want to know more, there is a Faith page on the website which has links to Christianity.org.uk and Chatnow.org which both respond to enquiries.

1.2 Taketime Together Groups

Some people who enjoy the online meditations wish to deepen their experience by meditating with others. The website facilitates this, by helping them find details of their nearest Taketime Together Group.

The Groups also give an opportunity for people with no church connection to get to know people in local churches.

1.3 Taketime Training Days

The aim of these days is to enable participants to understand the vision and to be able to run Taketime Together in its various formats.

The day covers three main areas:

1. The Taketime story and vision
2. Skills Workshop - leading a Taketime Meditation and facilitating a Sharing Session
3. How to set up and run your Taketime Together Group

During the day, you will take part in a full Taketime Together meditation, learn about our values and principles, understand the nuts and bolts of running Taketime and there'll be time to answer your questions.

Please note that ideally, you need two people to run Taketime Together - one to lead the meditation and one to lead the sharing part of the session. Leaders alternate in leading the meditation and the sharing - and are there to support and mentor each other as well as praying for one another and for the attendees.

Therefore, if possible, **please bring a co-leader with you to the workshop**. The workshop is also suitable to those who are thinking of running Taketime but want to find out more so please do invite them along.

For further information email info@taketime.org.uk

2 The Taketime Together Introductory Course

2.1 Background

The Taketime Together Introductory Course is an excellent way of introducing people to Taketime and perhaps starting a regular group. It is not a replacement for the Taketime Training Day but instead, it will enable you to introduce Taketime to your Christian organisation before committing to a Taketime Together Group. It also provides you with the basic skills to start engaging with your audience, ahead of your training.

2.2 Course Objectives

The objective of the course is to introduce Taketime Meditations to a group of people with the intention of continuing to mediate as part of a Taketime Together Group. At the end of the five weeks, you can agree on frequency, time and location of your group and begin to advertise outside of your Church or other Christian Organisation.

3 Preparing for your Course

You just need a few things in place to run your course:

- We suggest that you set a time and a place when you know a core group from your Church will be available to participate in the course
- Produce your posters and flyers and distribute them in good time so that people can book the time in their diaries
- Ensure you have prepared yourself to run the meditations and sharing sessions by reading through the material in this document

Help and advice can be obtained from Clive and Elizabeth via info@taketime.org.uk.

3.1 Taketime Christian Mindfulness Meditations Values and Principles

3.1.1 Accept people whoever and whatever they are

- People sometimes fear that Christians will judge them or pressurize them to conform to their particular beliefs and doctrines. Taketime lets people meet Jesus and learn from him themselves

3.1.2 Value everyone equally

- We have all perhaps felt a little nervous sometimes about sharing our views in groups with mature or scholarly Christians. But sharing experiences of a meditation is different. This is because, all experiences of meditation are equally valid. We value and respect each person's experience when they share it

3.1.3 Assume no prior knowledge of the Christian faith

- Many people are put off exploring faith because they do not wish to feel ignorant in front of people who appear to know more than they do

3.1.4 Aim to enable experience not learning

- Taketime is about experiencing a relationship with Jesus, not learning about him. There are other contexts for teaching such as courses like Alpha or Bible studies.

3.1.5 Allow an individual to encounter Jesus directly

- What people experience is unique and personal - it should not be someone else's interpretation or experience; it should be their own.

3.2 Building Blocks of a Session



3.2.1 The Three Elements

A full Taketime Together Session offers three levels of optional participation and focuses upon welcoming visitors, some of whom may have no faith background.

Meditating together (20-30 minutes)

For newcomers or those short of time, there is the opportunity to leave after the meditation (which concludes with a piece of relaxing classical music).

Socialising together over refreshments (15-20 minutes)

For those who wish to stay, there are refreshments so that people can get to know each other. Being relaxed after the meditation makes this socialising seem like the natural thing to do for many. It also makes the Sharing element easier.

Sharing together (20-40 minutes)

For those who wish to participate further, there is a time of Sharing which uses open questions based on the "wondering" questions as developed by Jerome Berryman, founder of the Godly Play Foundation.

The wondering questions are followed by a time of looking at the text and being open to the words that catch our attention (inspired by the Benedictine practice of *Lectio Divina*). Everyone can then engage with the text of the Bible passage which inspired the meditation. They then share their experiences.

There is deliberately no teaching and no Bible study because the aim is to provide a safe, compassionate, exploratory and experiential space in which all experiences are valued equally.

3.2.2 Using these elements flexibly for your Introductory Course

You will need to decide how long you give to these different elements so that they fit with what you are offering. For example, a lunchtime session to which people bring their own lunch will probably want to be no more than an hour.

In this case you may wish to shorten the meditation to 25 minutes and invite people to eat during a 35-minute Sharing session.

3.3 Leading a Meditation



A Taketime meditation usually consists of six parts as shown above:

1. Introduction - this consists of the welcome and sets some expectations
2. Relaxation Exercise - relaxation really helps people engage with the meditation
3. Count down - a transition between the state of relaxation and the meditation
4. Meditation and silence - Ignatian guided meditation including speaking to and listening to Jesus and then offering the opportunity to rest in God's presence or to return to the story and imagine being one of the characters and being open to what God is showing you through this
5. Count up - a transition between a very relaxed state and normality
6. Closing music - a simple count up is not enough for many people who want time to return to normality in a gentle and beautiful way. Others use the music to bring them closer to God

3.3.1 Good Practice

There are two parts to this, Delivery and Timing Management

1. Firstly, Delivery

Who are you talking to?

We speak in one way to a doctor and another to the person at the checkout. We speak in one way to our mother and another to our boss. When leading a meditation, picture yourself talking to a good friend.

Practice

If you stumble over your words, you can make it harder for people to imagine themselves in the setting - so reading the words out loud beforehand, might be a good idea.

Drama and pitch variation

A meditation aims to enable the participant to create the biblical setting in a relaxed and thoughtful way in their own personal space.

Too much dramatic emphasis or variation in pitch can distract and break the concentration. Leading a meditation is quite different from story-telling, which uses a greater degree of drama.

On the other hand, if you feel that your delivery is too flat or monotonous, try using a mood board to identify the feelings of the main characters before you read the script.

Pace

Deliver the meditation at a relaxed pace - but not too slowly. A slight change in pace can do two things

- It can mark a change in the direction of the story as in "Suddenly..."
- It can give characterisation to a voice without trying to do a different voice
- e.g. if Jesus is speaking, one way to characterise him is to speak his words slightly slower than the narration. This gives a sense of peace and authority. If someone is speaking excitedly then their words can be spoken more quickly than the narration

Remember the Gap

Leave a gap of 2 or 3 seconds between sentences for people to do the work of imagining and turn your words into a picture.

Confidence

There should be a gentle strength and assurance in your delivery which will help the participants to feel secure.

Most smartphones have a Voice Recorder app, so it is quite easy to make and listen to a recording of yourself. Alternatively, you could read to your co-leader and ask for their constructive comments.

2. Secondly Time Management:

In order to help people feel secure and boundaried, it is important that the session begins and ends on time (to the nearest minute or two).

One way to end the session is to fade the music out at the appropriate time. This is the easiest way of ending on time. You may then announce that the session is over and put on another piece of music as background music whilst people begin to stir.

Another way is to start the piece of music so that it finishes at the right time.

For example, if you finish the meditation at 8.30pm, a 3-minute piece of music needs to begin at 8.27pm

If the piece of music is longer than 5 minutes then it can still be started at the necessary time, but with the volume set to zero and then faded in when you are ready.

The closing words and count up, take about 1 minute, so you need to think about when you are going to start saying these words.

- Example 1. With a 3-minute piece of music, you should start speaking 4 minutes from the end and start the music as you finish saying "ten".
- Example 2. With a 9-minute piece of music, you should start playing it, with the volume set at zero, at 8.21pm and start saying the final words at about 8.24pm, fading the volume up as you finish saying "ten".

Finally:

The above points will help you to get better at leading a meditation, but most people will have no problem being guided through the meditation even if you are far from perfect. Ultimately the Holy Spirit uses our willingness and our love for others rather than our techniques. You are leading the meditation because you care for people and want to facilitate an encounter with Jesus, not because you want to impress them with your performance.

3.3.2 The Closing Music

The best music to play at the end of a meditation is a soothing piece of classical music. If time is not an issue within your session i.e. you have over an hour, then a piece of music should be 3-5 minutes long and will not have a fast or loud middle section. Something like Tomaso Albinoni's Adagio in G minor or Samuel Barber's Adagio for strings would be appropriate.

Note that you should have a PRS & PPL Church licence from CCLI to be able to play any recorded music, but your Church should have this in place.

3.4 Leading the Sharing

The goal of the Sharing Session is to help people enter into an imaginative way of experiencing that opens new possibilities and so inspires creative spiritual exploration.

As one person reflects and shares, so others may be inspired in their own thinking and feelings.

Facilitating the Sharing is, on the face of it, very easy because you are basically asking what are called “Wondering” questions (which are supplied below) and allowing people to respond. But we are also trying to create a safe environment, a compassionate space.

3.4.1 Principles

There are no right or wrong answers!

The concept of “Wondering” was first developed by Jerome W. Berryman as part of Godly Play and is based on the Montessori educational approach.

It is very easy to respond to something with “Yes!” or “That’s right!” or “What a lovely thought!” The problem with such responses is that they imply there are right and wrong answers and some people may not want to share their thought in case they are wrong. Instead, general responses should be simple acknowledgements like “Thank you”, “Thanks for that”, “Mmm!” or a nod.

Dr Rebecca Nye, National Director for Godly Play Training in the UK explains “*Wondering is about modelling and supporting a ‘wondering habit’, as opposed to a ‘what is your answer?’ habit (or worse still, a ‘what’s the answer’ habit)*”.

For those of us who are preachers or teachers, we must overcome our desire to affirm or correct or share a relevant story. Leading the Sharing is about valuing what people share, without attaching a particular value to it. This in turn encourages others to share.

To stop yourself commenting on something that seems to demand a comment, you can always ask “What does everyone else think?”

3.4.2 Format

The Sharing Session usually occurs after the Refreshments and consists of three sections.



1. The Sharing of peoples’ experiences during the meditation.

This is achieved with the use of the “Wondering” questions listed in the Sharing Session Script in Appendix B.

2. The reading of the Bible passage on which the meditation is based.

The Sharing Session Script also explains to people how to read the passage and discern what God may be saying to them. This helps unpack the story even more, but again, in an accessible and experiential way.

Note that you will need to either provide bibles or printouts of the passage. We provide printouts of the passage concerned rather than using bibles. We do this for two reasons:

- Firstly, because some people are unfamiliar with bibles and can feel intimidated by the fact that others know their way around them.
- Secondly because a printout means that people only have the passage in question in front of them and don't get distracted by other verses.

The New International Version allows online passages to be copied and pasted into a document and printed out for this purpose (see note 1 at the end of this document.)

3. Sharing responses to the passage

The Bible Passage Sharing Questions allow people to share the experience they had as they read the bible passage on which the meditation is based. This adds another layer of experience to the story.

The questions are listed in the Sharing Session Script, in Appendix B.

Note. Permission to print passages from the New International Version of the Bible. The webpage <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/#copy> states:

“When quotations from the NIV text are used in non-saleable media such as church bulletins, orders of service, posters, transparencies or similar media, a complete copyright notice is not required, but the initial NIV must appear at the end of each quotation.”

This means that because Taketime is not charging people to participate, passages can be copied from the internet, pasted onto sheets and given to Taketime attendees. The proviso is that the letters NIV must be printed at the end of each passage.

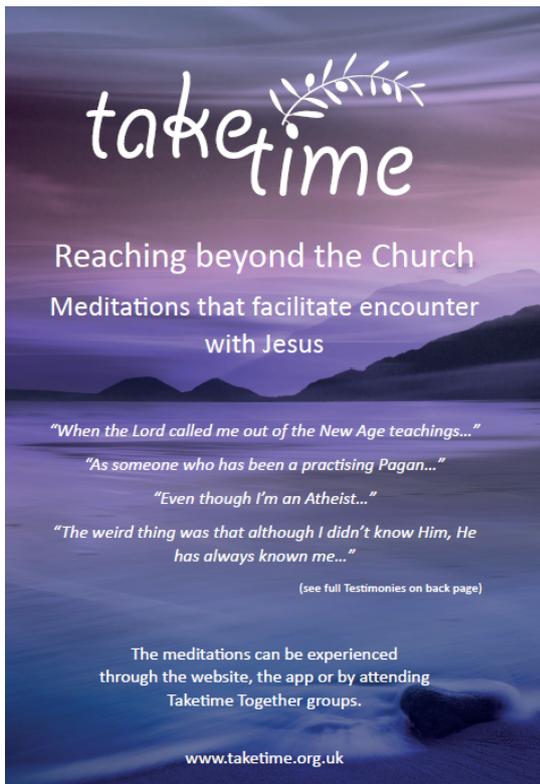
3.5 Publicity

Customisable cards, flyers, posters and banners are available from www.CPO/Courses & Campaigns/Taketime, telephone number: 01903 263354

The benefits of publicity will be explained to you during your Training Day. For the Introductory Course, you can customise our A4/A5 poster, an example of which is below.

In addition, there is a Taketime Booklet (folded A4 - 4 pages) for communicating Taketime to your Church or other Christian organisation.

TTPUB001 Church information leaflet



TTPUB004 Introductory course poster



Note. We recommend that if you do not have a suitable printer and cannot produce posters and flyers professionally yourself, that you contact CPO to produce them for you.

And finally, there are cards that you can distribute to members of the public which hold generic information about Taketime Meditations. All can be obtained from info@taketime.org.uk.



4 Scripts

These are based on the passages below:

- Mark 1:16-20 Calling Fishermen
- Mark 1:21-28 Casting out an Evil Spirit
- Mark 1:29-34 Jesus Heals Many
- Mark 1:35-39 Praying in the Night
- Mark 1:39-45 Healing a Leper

For each meditation, read 1a) OR 1b) then all sections

4.1 Mark 1:16-20 Calling Fishermen

1 a). INTRODUCTION FOR WHEN THERE ARE NEWCOMERS

Welcome to Taketime Together, your opportunity to pause in the presence of God's gracious and caring love - and find rest.

My name is, and I will guide us through the next minutes, so that we finish atam/pm

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Our session will commence with a simple relaxation exercise and then I will then count us down from 10 to 1, into a state of relaxation.

This will be followed by a guided Ignatian meditation in which we imagine an encounter with Jesus. Even if you know very little about Jesus, your imagination will fill in the gaps.

I will then explain how you can spend the following several minutes, either resting in God's presence or returning to the story.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

At the end of the meditation I will bring you back to this time and this place by counting back up from 1 to 10. The session finishes with a few minutes of gentle music which will take us up to am/pm.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 16-20.

1 b). INTRODUCTION WHEN EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR WITH TAKETIME TOGETHER

Welcome to Taketime Together, your opportunity to pause in the presence of God's gracious and caring love - and find rest.

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 16-20.

2. RELAXATION EXERCISE d (Filling up with peace FP)

Now close your eyes if that feels comfortable, - or lower your gaze so that it falls, unfocussed, on the candle or the floor - and focus your awareness on your breathing - without trying to alter it
[pause 20 seconds]

Move your toes and become aware of the feeling you have in them.

Let them rest and visualise a sense of peace moving into your toes so that they become relaxed and heavy [pause 5 seconds]

Now let that same sense of peace move slowly through your feet – and into your ankles [pause 5 seconds]

As they begin to feel at rest, picture that same peacefulness moving into your lower legs and calf muscles [pause 5 seconds]

Then up into your upper legs and your thigh muscles [pause 5 seconds]

Now as your legs feel completely relaxed let that sense of peace move slowly up through your body [pause 5 seconds]

As it reaches the top of your chest, let it flow down into your upper arms [pause 5 seconds]

and then into your forearms [pause 5 seconds]

your wrists [pause 5 seconds]

your hands – your fingers and thumbs [pause 5 seconds]

Then let that sense of peace move up into your shoulders and feel any tension there just melt away [pause 5 seconds]

Let it move now into the muscles in your neck [pause 5 seconds]

and then into the muscles in your jaw - and the muscles around your face [pause 5 seconds]

until you are completely filled [pause 3 seconds]

Now just rest in this relaxed state for a few moments [pause 12 seconds]

3. COUNT DOWN

So, I count us down from 10 to 1. At each step just allow yourself to sink a little deeper into the support offered by your chair.

Ten, [pause 4 seconds] nine, [pause 4 seconds] eight, [pause 4 seconds] etc. one.

4. MEDITATION Mark 1:12-20 Calling Fishermen

Picture yourself on a calm and sunny morning, sitting on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, known as the Sea of Galilee looking out across the water to the distant hills.

Feel the breeze coming off the water. There are two fishing boats pulled up on the stony beach just a short distance from you.

As you look beyond the boats, you see Jesus walking along the shore in your direction.

At the first of the boats, he stops. You know the fishermen who own this boat, Simon and Andrew. They have waded out a short distance and are casting a net into the sea.

As they finish you hear Jesus call to them **“Come with me and I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish.”**

Immediately, Simon and Andrew leave everything and follow Jesus as he walks to the boat nearest you.

The brothers James and John are sitting in the boat mending their nets and Jesus says to them **"Come with me"**.

At once they climb out of their boat and join Simon and Andrew.

Just behind where you are sitting, Jesus gives the four of them instructions and sends them off. Picture him as he turns around and looks at you.

See him as he walks towards you and hear him as he greets you by name. Picture him as he sits down beside you.

He invites you to share with him whatever is in your mind, whatever is on your heart. Just take the opportunity now to share with him.

[pause 60 seconds]

And now listen as Jesus responds to what you have shared with him. Just be aware of any actions or feelings or images or words that he may choose to respond with. Hear him speak your name [pause 3 seconds] and wait for his response. [pause 30 seconds]

5. CONTEMPLATION

Hold on to anything that Jesus has shared with you, hold on to your feelings - and EITHER

be still in God's presence, resting in the warmth of His love, gently bringing yourself back to that place of peace each time you notice your mind has wandered,

OR

return to the story and ask yourself who you might be, how that might feel and what is God showing you through that experience.

So, either rest in God's presence or return to the story.

[Pause for 2 to 10 minutes depending on time available]

6. COUNT UP

Now very gently and slowly bring yourself back to this time and this place as I count us back up from 1 to 10

One [pause 3 seconds], two [pause 3 seconds], three [pause 3 seconds], ten.

7. CLOSING MUSIC

[Either fade in the closing classical music such that it ends at the appointed finishing time or fade it out so that the session ends on time]

4.2 Mark 1:21-28 Casting out Evil Spirit

1 a). INTRODUCTION FOR WHEN THERE ARE NEWCOMERS

Welcome to Taketime Together, our opportunity to pause in the busyness of life, to quieten our mind and allow our spirit some sanctuary.

My name is ..., and I will guide us through the next minutes, so that we finish atam/pm

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Our session will commence with a simple relaxation exercise and then I will then count us down from 10 to 1, into a state of relaxation.

This will be followed by a guided Ignatian meditation in which we imagine an encounter with Jesus. Even if you know very little about Jesus, your imagination will fill in the gaps.

I will then explain how you can spend the following several minutes, either resting in God's presence or returning to the story.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

At the end of the meditation I will bring you back to this time and this place by counting back up from 1 to 10. The session finishes with a few minutes of gentle music which will take us up to am/pm.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 21-28.

1 b). INTRODUCTION WHEN EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR WITH TAKETIME TOGETHER

Welcome to Taketime Together, our opportunity to pause in the busyness of life, to quieten our mind and allow our spirit some sanctuary.

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 21-28.

2. RELAXATION EXERCISE a (Pressing hands down and pushing feet together HD)

Now close your eyes if that feels comfortable, - or lower your gaze so that it falls, unfocussed, on the candle or the floor - and focus your awareness on your breathing. You are not trying to alter it but to become aware of each part of your body that is involved in the process.

Notice the movement of the muscles in your stomach - and in your chest. Notice also the sensation of the moving air as it enters and leaves your body. [pause 18 seconds]

Notice how your body is already beginning to relax.

There are many tensions in our bodies, minds and spirits and we are going to focus them all into two physical tension exercises.

Firstly, put your hands palm down onto your legs and press down. Continue that pressure, and feel the tension in your hands, [pause 3 seconds] your wrists, [pause 3 seconds] you lower arms, [pause 3 seconds] your upper arms, [pause 3 seconds] your shoulders [pause 3 seconds] and in the muscles across your back.

Just hold that tension for a few moments. [pause 7 seconds]

Now gently and slowly release that tension. [pause 3 seconds]

Return your hands to where they are comfortable and enjoy the sense of release. [pause 7 seconds]

Now push your feet together [pause 2 seconds]

Continue that pressure, and feel the tension in your feet, [pause 3 seconds] your ankles, [pause 3 seconds] your calf muscles, [pause 3 seconds] your knees [pause 3 seconds] and your thigh muscles. [pause 3 seconds]

Just hold that tension for a few moments. [pause 7 seconds]

Now gently and slowly release that tension. [pause 3 seconds]

Return your feet to where they are comfortable and enjoy the sense of release. [pause 7 seconds]

3. COUNT DOWN

So, I count us down from 10 to 1. At each step just allow yourself to sink a little deeper into the support offered by your chair.

Ten, [pause 4 seconds] nine, [pause 4 seconds] eight, [pause 4 seconds] etc. one.

4. MEDITATION Mark1:21-28 Casting out Evil Spirit

Picture yourself with Jesus and his followers in the town of Capernaum, beside Lake Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee.

It is the holy day, the Sabbath and you have come in to the Jewish meeting place, the synagogue, which is a little above the town.

The word has gone around that Jesus has been invited to speak, so all the benches around the sides and the back of the synagogue are full and there is hardly a space on the floor where everyone else is sitting.

Now, as Jesus teaches, you can see from the faces around you how amazed people are at what he says. This is because he teaches with authority and not like the teachers of the Law.

Suddenly a man with an evil spirit in him comes into the Synagogue and yells, "**Jesus of Nazareth, what do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. You are God's holy one**".

Jesus responds to the evil spirit "**Be quiet, come out of the man!**"

As we watch, the man shakes from head to foot, there is a horrible shriek, as whatever it is within the man, is forced out of him. Everyone is completely stunned. They have never seen anything like this before.

People are saying, "**What is this? It must be some new kind of powerful teaching; even the evil spirits obey him**".

The synagogue eventually calms down and the teaching and worship continue. Now it is ending and you watch as people leave. Eventually there is just you and Jesus left.

In this holy place, picture Jesus as he approaches where you're sitting, hear him greet you by name and see him sit down beside you.

He invites you to share with him whatever is in your mind, whatever is on your heart. Just take the opportunity now to share with him. [pause 60 seconds]

And now listen as Jesus responds to what you have shared with him. Just be aware of any actions or feelings or images or words that he may choose to respond with. Hear him speak your name [pause 3 seconds] and wait for his response.

[pause 30 seconds]

5. CONTEMPLATION

Hold on to anything that Jesus has shared with you, hold on to your feelings - and EITHER

be still in God's presence, resting in the warmth of His love, gently bringing yourself back to that place of peace each time you notice your mind has wandered,

OR

return to the story and ask yourself who you might be, how that might feel and what is God showing you through that experience.

So, either rest in God's presence or return to the story. [Pause for 2 to 10 minutes depending on time available]

6. COUNT UP

Now very gently and very slowly bring yourself back to this time and this place as I count us back up from 1 to 10

One [pause 3 seconds], two [pause 3 seconds], three [pause 3 seconds], ten.

7. CLOSING MUSIC

[Either fade in the closing classical music such that it ends at the appointed finishing time or fade it out so that the session ends on time]

4.3 Mark 1:29-34 Jesus Heals Many

1 a). INTRODUCTION FOR WHEN THERE ARE NEWCOMERS

Welcome to Taketime Together, which will give you time to be still, to find sanctuary in a demanding world, to encounter God and enjoy the kind of peace that only God can give.

My name is... and I will guide us through the next minutes, so that we finish atam/pm

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Our session will commence with a simple relaxation exercise and then I will then count us down from 10 to 1, into a state of relaxation.

This will be followed by a guided Ignatian meditation in which we imagine an encounter with Jesus. Even if you know very little about Jesus, your imagination will fill in the gaps.

I will then explain how you can spend the following several minutes, either resting in God's presence or returning to the story.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

At the end of the meditation I will bring you back to this time and this place by counting back up from 1 to 10. The session finishes with a few minutes of gentle music which will take us up to am/pm.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 29-34.

1 b). INTRODUCTION WHEN EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR WITH TAKETIME TOGETHER

Welcome to Taketime Together, which will give you time to be still, to find sanctuary in a demanding world, to encounter God and enjoy the kind of peace that only God can give.

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 29-34.

2. RELAXATION EXERCISE b (Listening and breathing LB)

We have many senses, but we will begin by focussing on what we can hear. So Close your eyes if that feels comfortable, - or lower your gaze so that it falls, unfocussed, on the candle or the floor - and focus all your attention on the sounds you can hear from outside this place [pause 7 seconds]

Acknowledge these sounds - and let them go [pause 3 seconds]

Now focus all your attention on the sounds you can hear inside this place [pause 7 seconds]

Acknowledge these sounds - and let them go [pause 3 seconds]

Now move the focus of your attention even closer in and become aware of what you can hear and feel relating to your own breathing.

You are not trying to alter the rhythm but to become aware of each part of your body that is involved in the process.

Firstly focus your awareness on the movement of your stomach as you slowly breath in and out [pause 20 seconds]

Now focus your awareness on the movement of your chest as you slowly breath in and out [pause 20 seconds]

Become aware of the air as it enters and leaves your body [pause 20 seconds]

Your muscles work to draw air into your body - and they rest to expel that air. So our breathing is a rhythm of work - and rest. Just focus on that rhythm and allow your body to bring itself into a deeply relaxed state.

[pause 20 seconds]

3. COUNT DOWN

So, I count us down from 10 to 1. At each step just allow yourself to sink a little deeper into the support offered by your chair.

Ten, [pause 4 seconds] nine, [pause 4 seconds] eight, [pause 4 seconds] etc. one.

4. MEDITATION Mark 1:29-34 Jesus Heals Many

Picture yourself with Jesus and the fishermen James, John, Simon and Andrew.

You are in the town of Capernaum, beside Lake Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee.

It is the Holy day, the Sabbath and you are walking from the Jewish meeting place, the synagogue, to the home of Simon and Andrew.

Simon's mother in law is ill in bed with a fever. Healing is not allowed by the Jewish authorities on the Sabbath day, but as we arrive Jesus goes straight to her, takes her by the hand and heals her.

He helps her up and immediately she insists on preparing a meal for us.

It feels good as we relax and enjoy the meal altogether.

You have finished eating, the sun has set, marking the end of the Sabbath. The lamps are lit and people start arriving to see Jesus with all those in the town who are sick and possessed by demons. It's as if the whole town has gathered at the door.

You watch as Jesus heals countless people. He also drives out demons, commanding them not to speak because they know he is God's Holy one.

Eventually everyone is healed and everyone has gone home. Jesus says "I am going for a walk" - and he invites you to accompany him.

Picture yourself at his side. The moon is bright and there is enough light to see clearly, as you walk together down to the edge of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus invites you to sit down with him on the rocks by the shore - and to share with him whatever is on your mind, whatever is in your heart. Just take that opportunity now.

[pause 60 seconds]

And now listen as Jesus responds to what you have shared with him. Just be aware of any actions or feelings or images or words that he may choose to respond with. Hear him speak your name [pause 3 seconds] and wait for his response.

[pause 30 seconds]

5. CONTEMPLATION

Hold on to anything that Jesus has shared with you, hold on to your feelings - and
EITHER

be still in God's presence, resting in the warmth of His love, gently bringing yourself back to that place of peace each time you notice your mind has wandered,

OR

return to the story and ask yourself who you might be, how that might feel and what is God showing you through that experience.

So, either rest in God's presence or return to the story.

[Pause for 2 to 10 minutes depending on time available]

6. COUNT UP

Now very gently and very slowly bring yourself back to this time and this place as I count us back up from 1 to 10

One [pause 3 seconds], two [pause 3 seconds], three [pause 3 seconds], ten.

7. CLOSING MUSIC

[Either fade in the closing classical music such that it ends at the appointed finishing time or fade it out so that the session ends on time]

4.4 Mark 1:35-39 Praying in the night c HA 02

1 a). INTRODUCTION FOR WHEN THERE ARE NEWCOMERS

Welcome to Taketime Together, in which we will have space in which to rest your body, calm your mind and nourish your spirit.

My name is and I will guide us through the next minutes, so that we finish atam/pm

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Our session will commence with a simple relaxation exercise and then I will then count us down from 10 to 1, into a state of relaxation.

This will be followed by a guided Ignatian meditation in which we imagine an encounter with Jesus. Even if you know very little about Jesus, your imagination will fill in the gaps.

I will then explain how you can spend the following several minutes, either resting in God's presence or returning to the story.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

At the end of the meditation I will bring you back to this time and this place by counting back up from 1 to 10. The session finishes with a few minutes of gentle music which will take us up to am/pm.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 35-39.

1 b). INTRODUCTION WHEN EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR WITH TAKETIME TOGETHER

Welcome to Taketime Together, in which we will have space in which to rest your body, calm your mind and nourish your spirit.

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 35-39.

2. RELAXATION EXERCISE c (Pulling hands apart and pulling feet apart HA)

Now close your eyes if that feels comfortable, - or lower your gaze so that it falls, unfocussed, on the candle or the floor - and focus your awareness on your breathing. You are not trying to alter it but to become aware of each part of your body that is involved in the process. Notice the movement of the muscles in your stomach - and in your chest. Notice also the sensation of the moving air as it enters and leaves your body. [pause 18 seconds]

Notice how your body is already beginning to relax.

There are many tensions in our bodies, minds and spirits and we are going to focus them all into two physical tension exercises.

Firstly, join your hands together by interlocking your fingers. Whilst holding your hands together with your fingers apply pressure to pull your hands apart.

Continue that pressure, and feel the tension in your fingers, [pause 3 seconds] your hands, [pause 3 seconds] your wrists, [pause 3 seconds] you lower arms, [pause 3 seconds] your upper arms, [pause 3 seconds] your shoulders [pause 3 seconds] and in the muscles across your back.

Just hold that tension for a few moments [pause 7 seconds]

Now gently and slowly release that tension [pause 3 seconds]

Return your hands to where they are comfortable and just enjoy that sense of release [pause 7 seconds]

Now without crossing your legs, cross one foot over the other and press your feet together.

Continue that pressure, and feel the tension in your feet, [pause 3 seconds] your ankles, [pause 3 seconds] your calf muscles, [pause 3 seconds] your knees [pause 3 seconds] and your thigh muscles. [pause 3 seconds]

Just hold that tension for a few moments. [pause 7 seconds]

Now gently and slowly release that tension [pause 3 seconds]

Return your feet to where they are comfortable and just enjoy that sense of release [pause 7 seconds]

3. COUNT DOWN

So, I count us down from 10 to 1. At each step just allow yourself to sink a little deeper into the support offered by your chair.

Ten, [pause 4 seconds] nine, [pause 4 seconds] eight, [pause 4 seconds] etc. one.

4. MEDITATION Mark 1:35-39 Praying in the night

It is dark. Picture yourself waking up at the home of Simon and Andrew in the town of Capernaum. Jesus and some of his followers are asleep on the floor around you.

It must be nearly dawn and your mind is running over the excitement of the previous day.

You picture Jesus in the synagogue commanding an evil spirit to come out of a man and you remember how, after sunset, he healed all the sick and those who were troubled by evil spirits.

Suddenly, you are aware of somebody leaving the house, and someone asks **"Was that Jesus going out?"**

“He’s probably gone out to pray” says one of the disciples.

But when he is still not back after breakfast, people decide to go and look for him.

You take the road up the hill, past the synagogue, along the hillside with its beautiful view looking out across Lake Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee, to the distant hills beyond.

It is on this path that you find Jesus. He is just finishing praying. You tell him that everyone has been looking for him.

Jesus stands and greets you. He says, “We must move on from here to the nearby towns so that I can tell the good news to those people too. This is my mission.”

He invites you to sit with him for a few minutes before you return together.

Just picture yourself sitting there, looking out over the Sea of Galilee. Jesus invites you to share with him whatever is on your mind, whatever is in your heart. Take this opportunity now.

[pause 60 seconds]

And now listen as Jesus responds to what you have shared with him. Just be open to his response, whether it be in actions, or as a feeling, or an image, or in words. Hear him speak your name [pause 3 seconds] and wait for his response.

[pause 30 seconds]

5. CONTEMPLATION

Hold on to anything that Jesus has shared with you, hold on to your feelings - and EITHER

be still in God’s presence, resting in the warmth of His love, gently bringing yourself back to that place of peace each time you notice your mind has wandered,

OR

return to the story and ask yourself who you might be, how that might feel and what is God showing you through that experience.

So, either rest in God’s presence or return to the story. [Pause for 2 to 10 minutes depending on time available]

6. COUNT UP

Now very gently and very slowly bring yourself back to this time and this place as I count us back up from 1 to 10

One [pause 3 seconds], two [pause 3 seconds], three [pause 3 seconds], ten.

7. CLOSING MUSIC

[Either fade in the closing classical music such that it ends at the appointed finishing time or fade it out so that the session ends on time]

4.5 Mark 1:39-45 Healing a leper a HD 02

1 a). INTRODUCTION FOR WHEN THERE ARE NEWCOMERS

Welcome to Taketime Together, our opportunity to pause in the busyness of life, to quieten our mind and allow our spirit some sanctuary.

My name is and I will guide us through the next minutes, so that we finish atam/pm

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Our session will commence with a simple relaxation exercise and then I will then count us down from 10 to 1, into a state of relaxation.

This will be followed by a guided Ignatian meditation in which we imagine an encounter with Jesus. Even if you know very little about Jesus, your imagination will fill in the gaps.

I will then explain how you can spend the following several minutes, either resting in God's presence or returning to the story.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

At the end of the meditation I will bring you back to this time and this place by counting back up from 1 to 10. The session finishes with a few minutes of gentle music which will take us up to am/pm.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 39-45.

1 b). INTRODUCTION WHEN EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR WITH TAKETIME TOGETHER

Welcome to Taketime Together, our opportunity to pause in the busyness of life, to quieten our mind and allow our spirit some sanctuary.

We begin by making sure that we are sitting comfortably with our back supported by our chair.

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Often it wanders to places that bring insight or healing. If it wanders somewhere unhelpful, gently bring it back.

The meditation today is based on Mark, chapter 1 verses 39-45.

2. RELAXATION EXERCISE a (Pressing hands down and pushing feet together HD)

Now close your eyes if that feels comfortable, - or lower your gaze so that it falls, unfocussed, on the candle or the floor - and focus your awareness on your breathing. You are not trying to alter it but to become aware of each part of your body that is involved in the process. Notice the movement of the muscles in your stomach - and in your chest. Notice also the sensation of the moving air as it enters and leaves your body. [pause 18 seconds]

Notice how your body is already beginning to relax.

There are many tensions in our bodies, minds and spirits and we are going to focus them all into two physical tension exercises.

Firstly, put your hands palm down onto your legs and press down. Continue that pressure, and feel the tension in your hands, [pause 3 seconds] your wrists, [pause 3 seconds] you lower arms, [pause 3 seconds] your upper arms, [pause 3 seconds] your shoulders [pause 3 seconds] and in the muscles across your back.

Just hold that tension for a few moments. [pause 7 seconds]

Now gently and slowly release that tension. [pause 3 seconds]

Return your hands to where they are comfortable and enjoy the sense of release. [pause 7 seconds]

Now push your feet together [pause 2 seconds]

Continue that pressure, and feel the tension in your feet, [pause 3 seconds] your ankles, [pause 3 seconds] your calf muscles, [pause 3 seconds] your knees [pause 3 seconds] and your thigh muscles. [pause 3 seconds]

Just hold that tension for a few moments. [pause 7 seconds]

Now gently and slowly release that tension. [pause 3 seconds]

Return your feet to where they are comfortable and enjoy the sense of release. [pause 7 seconds]

3. COUNT DOWN

So, I count us down from 10 to 1. At each step just allow yourself to sink a little deeper into the support offered by your chair.

Ten, [pause 4 seconds] nine, [pause 4 seconds] eight, [pause 4 seconds] etc. one.

4. MEDITATION Mark 1:39-45 Healing a leper

Picture yourself with Jesus and the disciples. You've been travelling all over the region of Galilee with Jesus as he teaches in the Jewish meeting places, the synagogues and heals people.

Today you are on the road again, when you see a man whose clothes are tattered, limping towards Jesus. You recognise from the state he is in that he has the dreaded skin disease leprosy. People's fear of catching the disease forces lepers to live apart from society. You feel that fear of contamination as you look upon the man.

This leper has apparently been looking for Jesus.

As he gets near to Jesus he falls to his knees and says **"You have the power to make me clean, if you want to."**

You can see that Jesus is deeply moved as he looks at the condition of the leper. To your horror he reaches out his hand and touches the man. Jesus says, **"I do want to, - be clean."**

At once the signs of leprosy on this man's skin vanish, and the man stands up straight and praises God.

Jesus warns him, "**Don't tell anyone about this. Just go and show the priest that you are well and take a gift to the temple as Moses commanded. Then everyone will know that you have been healed.**" Then with a blessing he sends the man on his way.

Jesus decides that we may as well stop here for a break and you watch the leper as he walks away towards reconciliation with family and friends, and a new life.

Picture Jesus as he approaches you, and invites you to sit with him just a little way from the others. Sit down beside him, looking out over the hills of the Galilean countryside. Jesus invites you to share with him, whatever is on your mind, whatever is in your heart, just take this opportunity to share with him now.

[pause 60 seconds]

And now listen as Jesus responds to what you have shared with him. Just be open to his response, whether it be in actions, or as a feeling, or an image, or in words. Hear him speak your name [pause 3 seconds] and wait for his response.

[pause 30 seconds]

5. CONTEMPLATION

Hold on to anything that Jesus has shared with you, hold on to your feelings - and EITHER

be still in God's presence, resting in the warmth of His love, gently bringing yourself back to that place of peace each time you notice your mind has wandered,

OR

return to the story and ask yourself who you might be, how that might feel and what is God showing you through that experience.

So either rest in God's presence or return to the story.

[Pause for 2 to 10 minutes depending on time available]

6. COUNT UP

Now very gently and very slowly bring yourself back to this time and this place as I count us back up from 1 to 10

One [pause 3 seconds], two [pause 3 seconds], three [pause 3 seconds], ten.

7. CLOSING MUSIC

[Either fade in the closing classical music such that it ends at the appointed finishing time or fade it out so that the session ends on time]

5 Sharing Script

Taketime Together - Sharing Session Guidance

1. Welcome people back from refreshments

2. The Welcome

Make sure people know each other's names, with introductions if appropriate.

3. Introduction to Sharing - suggested words:

Welcome to Taketime Together Sharing. Everyone is invited to share, but you are welcome to remain quiet if you wish.

The experiences we've had will range from feeling relaxed, through to a meaningful encounter with Jesus, and anything in-between. Whatever you experienced is ok.

The session works best if there are a few moments of reflective silence between contributions. This allows everyone to think about what has been shared and to process it, or just to enjoy the calm pace of the sharing.

To make it a safe place to share, let's agree that anything personal that is shared is confidential and stays with this group, barring the usual exceptions¹ relating to safety.

4. The Meditation Sharing Questions(15-20 minutes):

1. I wonder which part of the experience you enjoyed most, the relaxation exercise, the story, talking to Jesus, resting with God, returning to the story or the music at the end?
2. I wonder what part was the most important part for you?
3. I wonder where you saw yourself in the story?
4. I wonder how you felt in Jesus' presence today?

5. Explain the Bible text sharing - suggested words:

We are going to look at the words that the meditation is based on, and see what jumps out at us, what catches our attention. It may be a word, a phrase or a sentence.

We are then going to run that word, phrase or sentence through our minds again and again very gently - not trying to analyse it but to allow ourselves to reflect on anything that God might be saying to us.

We will then have a time in which we can share what occurred to us, what became real for us or how we felt.

6. Look at Bible passage for between 1 and 2 minutes.

7. The Bible text sharing questions:

1. I wonder which word or phrase or sentence caught your eye?
2. I wonder if you can see what God might be saying to you through the words that caught your eye?

8. Closing Prayer

The gracious healing power of our Lord Jesus Christ, the unconditional love of God and the experience of these things given by the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen

ⁱ It is important that the things people share are treated in confidence. There are three exceptions to this.

- If someone specifically gives you permission to pass on something they have said
- If a person discloses information that leads you to think that that person or another person is at risk
- If a person indicates that they have been involved in or are likely to become involved in the commission of a serious criminal offence