

London District Synod, 10th September 2011

LEADERS FOR CHANGING TIMES

Interactive Bible Study on 2 Kings 5:1-19

Preparation:

Materials needed :

- on each table, one each a4 page with name of character, numbered 1-5 (1. Hebrew servant girl, 2. Naaman's wife, 3. Naaman, 4. King of Hebrews, 5. Naaman's servants) and 4 questions on one side, 2 Kings 1-19 printed on other.

eg:

1. Hebrew Servant Girl

Questions to discuss:

- **What is going on in this passage FOR YOU the character?**
- **How does that feel?**
- **What do you want to happen next?**
- **Do you have anything you want to say to any of the other characters?**

- on each table, feedback sheet – one action the Circuit or individual can take forward, to be collected and several read out in closing worship.

Introduction

Our theme in today's synod is leadership, in times of crisis - who does it, how we can do it, what it means to lead for change and new life in a community. We have heard from some who are at work in our city, and some of our young people – now we want to take it home and ground the question 'what should we do' in scripture.

We have heard so much analysis – enough to know there is no magic bullet for healing in our city. We know many different people and groups must work together to make a difference – and sometimes the ones who are named as leaders are not actually the ones who know what to do.

That's why we are looking at the story of Naaman, to ask how can our churches be part of healing, what role can we play in leadership – We are **using the scripture to reflect on how leadership works during a crisis, where it falls down, and how we can do it better. Not by learning some new theory or programme, but by deeply rooting ourselves in scripture, and working together.**

We're using a technique of Bible study that involves role play, taking on the role of a character and really getting inside the story. Trust the process!

As you listened to the story of Naaman from 2 Kings, we asked you who you identified with, in the story. All the characters we see lead in some way – all are needed to make the healing happen.

We're going to look at five characters in this story - and five names are on papers on your table.

Within the story as you hear it, with whom do you personally identify today?

- *Do you identify with the **Hebrew slave girl** - in a strange land, stolen and alone from her family, who actually has some leadership to give, but low in power? Why should anyone listen to her?*
- *Do you identify with **Naaman's wife**, who never gets to speak in the text, but acts as a bridge to put her husband together with the knowledge that will heal him?*
- *Do you identify with **Naaman**, the middle manager warrior with a secret sore that won't go away? Everyone expects Naaman to be a big man, but he is desperate with this disease. And responsible for everyone else's safety - if he is ill, they are all in trouble.*
- *Do you identify with the **Hebrew King**, who feels overwhelmed and knows he will get the blame if Naaman doesn't get healed, but with no power?*
- *Or do you identify with **Naaman's servants**, who convince him to try washing in the foreign river when he gets angry?*

Read the passage

Read the passage out loud 2 kings 5.1-19 (you may like to use 5 voices, if so the script can be found in the worship section of the synod notes)

Interactive role play

If a large group, get into working groups of around 10-15 people

Within those groups, form small groups based on the character who have chosen to identify with: i.e. all the Hebrew servant girls gather together in a small group, all the Naaman's wives gather together but you must have at least 2 people for each character – and it may be that not all the characters are represented – leave some out if you need to.

TAKE ON THE ROLE you have chosen as much as you can, and when you speak, say I feel or I think as that character - not as yourself.

On the character card on your tables are four questions. In your character pairs or groups, talk about these in character for ten minutes. Make sure everyone gets a turn, but keep it within your character group for now. Silence is ok.

Questions to discuss in character groups:

- **What is going on in this passage FOR YOU the character?**
- **How does that feel?**
- **What do you want to happen next?**

- **Do you have anything you want to say to any of the other characters?**

Remain in Character and rejoin the others in your working group.

In your larger table groups, take turns in order - each character by number, so Hebrew servant girl first - and if there is anything you want to say to another character, about how they behaved in the story, or what they need to know, say it. Remember, we are asking how leadership happens in time of crisis, and ultimately, how can our churches act as community leaders, and us within them.

If another character wants to respond, to explain themselves or whatever, they can do that when their turn comes. No fighting please, but stay in character.

Response to the passage

Now come out of character.

What you have been doing is using the scripture to reflect on how leadership works during a crisis, where it falls down, and how we can do it better. Not by learning some new theory or programme, but by deeply rooting ourselves in scripture, and working together.

We're going to apply this to London, and to our District/Circuit now. We know we have problems with people who are cut off socially and economically from the mainstream of our society, from pressures with different cultures, nationalities. We know we can't do everything.

Moving from the scripture, how can your church make things happen in your community? What is your role? What does the scripture have to say to your church, about making things happen? Who do you think your church is like, from the story of Naaman? Who will be your collaborators in leadership?

There is a feedback sheet, on which you are asked to write one action you, or your circuit can take in response to this morning. These we will collect, and a few will be read out in our closing worship.

Conclusion –

Many different agencies and people need to work together to bring healing to our city – if we leave it all to the Naamans and Kings, we aren't going to get very far. We need all the voices to speak and work together. Take this away, pray, and think about it.