



FAITH *Pictures*

SESSION 4: TALKING PICTURES



This session brings us to the heart of the course. We combine what we've learned about the challenge of communicating about faith in our culture, with ideas about our own story of faith to create an image that helps sum up our own faith journey.



DISCOVER:

Video: Talking Pictures

- *What do you think about the idea of having a picture that summarises your faith story?*



DIVE IN:

The idea of using images to try and communicate deeper truths about the world around us is not new. Throughout the Bible there are examples of this, from prophets like Nathan and Daniel, to Paul and Jesus. Below are three examples of ideas of faith being communicated by images. Discuss what you think the deeper idea being discussed is. If your group is large enough, you could split up and discuss all three. Alternatively it may be good to pick one to focus on.

- Nathan's parable to David (2 Samuel 12:1-13)
- Jesus' parable of the Wise and Foolish Builder (Matthew 7:24-27)
- Jesus' parable of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. (Luke 15:1-10)

The great strength of images is: they can sit with us and reveal new aspects to us; they remain with us when we forget words; they are grippy where abstract language can be slippery.

- Apart from the ones above, do the group have any favourite parables?
- What is it about them that has stuck with you?

When we start to think about our own story of faith, and an image that might represent it, we might feel the pressure to come up with something profound and timeless, but that is not the case. Our image of faith only needs to be two things:

1. True to our story.
2. Easily graspable.

Give the group plenty of time to reflect on this, first individually and then together. First have everyone think back to last week and the timeline of their faith that they made and have (hopefully) reflected on this week. If they have it with them, even better.

- Have everyone look over their own timeline for a few minutes, and think about an image that would encapsulate their story. Have them make a note of it, and why they have chosen it.
- Once they are ready, have everyone share their picture with another person in the room. They don't need to explain it at this point, just tell what their picture is.
- Once everyone has shared their image (but NOT why), come back together as a group and anyone who is comfortable can share what their image is with the wider group. If you do this, it would be good to ask everyone what impression they get from the image.
- **IMPORTANT:** the aim at this point is NOT to critique the image, or offer suggestions on improving it, simply to gather impressions.



GOING DEEPER:

- For the next activity you will need a large piece of paper, or a whiteboard or flipchart.
- Go around the group and get everyone to simply say what their faith picture is, and make a note of them together.
- When you look at them all together, is there a common theme or do they seem very different? It doesn't matter if there is or isn't; what is important is seeing the diversity of stories and pictures across the group.
- What does the diversity or similarity of images mean? Are you all very similar, or do you have wildly different experiences?
- Have everyone choose someone they haven't previously spoken to, and get them to share their picture with that person, and why they have chosen that image. Make sure that everyone simply listens to the other person, rather than asking questions. Sharing your story of faith can feel very vulnerable, and people need to have a positive experience of this.

At Church Army we think pictures are powerful, and we'd love to hear what yours are. Why not get in touch via Twitter or Instagram [@churcharmy](https://www.instagram.com/churcharmy) to tell us about your Faith Picture.



DRAW NEAR:

It is important that we take the things we have been talking and thinking about to God in prayer. For this course, the prayers at the end of the session will be split into three parts; feel free to use as many or as few of them as you want.

HEAD - THOUGHT

Are there any ideas that have been challenging, comforting, or are completely new to you? Bring these thoughts to mind and spend a moment talking to God about them.

HEART - FEELINGS

What has been the strongest emotion you have felt over the course of the session? What caused it? Is it positive, negative, or are you not sure?

HANDS - ACTIONS

Is there a thing that you feel you want to do as a result of what has been chatted about during the session? Is God telling you something through that? If it feels appropriate, you could ask people to put on a communal piece of paper what they feel this is, but make sure it's clear that they don't have to.

If you do this, take a picture of it or save it some other way, and if it feels appropriate, ask next week how this went.

DRAWING IT TOGETHER

If you are comfortable doing so, say the Lord's Prayer together:

*Our Father in Heaven
Hallowed be Your Name
Your Kingdom come
Your will be done
On Earth as in Heaven
Give us today our daily bread
And forgive us our sins*

*As we forgive those who sin
against us.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For the Kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
Now and for ever.
Amen*