

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the TLS Local Introductory Training Experience or TLS LITE for short!

This general introduction aims to provide an overview of some of the principles underlying TLS LITE Courses and to give some guidance on their operation.

Origins

TLS is not so much a programme, more an experience. There are a variety of courses offered through TLS, some of which require several years' commitment. LITE was originated however, to provide learning experiences contained in smaller blocks of time at a more basic level of study in local contexts.

It was primarily though not exclusively developed to equip students for more thoughtful participation in and/or leadership of corporate worship at a local level without leading to formal accreditation denominationally. More recently however and with the gradual transition of TLS into a new programme, it has also become possible to use LITE as the first stage of study towards accredited ministries including URC Assembly Lay Preaching Accreditation.

The two approaches to LITE which we call **BASIC LITE** and **LITE+PLUS** are outlined below.

Approaches

BASIC LITE

The word 'basic' except in one respect is not meant to imply easier. Taking the Basic approach you will:

- study the same materials as others
- engage in the same study groups
- attend the same study days
- be expected to participate in a self-appraisal process.

However on this approach

- written work is voluntary and if it is completed, it will be assessed locally.

LITE+PLUS

LITE+PLUS differs in two ways:

- Formal registration is required using the form at the end of this Introduction section. Please note that this may be in addition to any registration process arranged locally.
- Written work, which is different to that required in the Basic approach, is mandatory and will be assessed centrally by TLS. You will need to gain a pass grade in this work if you wish to progress to the next stage of your studies.

Purposes

You need to decide as soon as possible which approach you wish to take and to a large extent this will be determined by the purposes for which you are engaging in LITE. These may include:

PURPOSES CONNECTED TO WORSHIP

LITE is a tool for

- those who are called on to plan and/or lead worship in their own congregations or clusters/groups
- those who just want to learn more about worship and its background
- those who would welcome some 'refresher' opportunities.
- those who seek recognition or accreditation as lay preachers. If your objective is either of these, the approach you take will be determined by whether you are seeking Local Recognition or Assembly Accreditation.

USING THE **BASIC** APPROACH

LITE Units formulate the sort of standard that the United Reformed Church thinks is a minimum if you are seeking to be a **Locally Recognised Lay Preacher** and if this recognition is sought, it is recommended five courses should be tackled in the following order:

- Introductory Course: You, the Bible, God and Worship (3 Units)
(A basic introduction to theological study)
- Getting to Grips with the Bible (5 units, 1 Study Day)
(A basic course about understanding the Bible)
- Talking about God (5 units, 1 Study Day)
(A basic introduction to theology)
- Leading Worship (10 units, 2 Study Days)
(Applying the Bible and theology in the design and conduct of worship)
- God's Word for Today (5 units, 1 Study Day)
(Proclaiming God's Word and making it relevant)

However it should be noted that the final authority for determining the requirements for local/Synod recognition as a Lay Preacher rests with the Synod and it will be wise to consult your Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner or Training Officer before embarking upon LITE studies with this purpose in mind.

USING THE **LITE+PLUS** APPROACH

Completing the following LITE Units is the first stage in a three year process if you are seeking to apply for **URC Assembly Lay Preaching Accreditation**:

- Introductory Course: You, the Bible, God and Worship
- Getting to Grips with the Bible
- Talking about God
- Leading Worship

Completion of these modules will need to be followed by completion of the TLS One-year Course Gateways into Worship and completion of a year of mentored Reflective Practice.

Please note the final authority for Lay Preaching Recognition or Accreditation rests outside TLS. Completing the study elements is only the ground for an application not a guarantee of its acceptance.

PURPOSES CONNECTED TO COMMUNITY WORK

LITE is a tool for

- Volunteers already involved with church-based community service, projects or activities. e.g. Luncheon Clubs, Toddler Groups, Neighbourhood Projects,
- Ministers of Word & Sacraments involved with community work as part of their ministry.
- Those interested in knowing more about or becoming active in Community Work, especially using Community Development principles.

If you are studying with the aim of just understanding more about Church-related Community Work, a **BASIC** approach will be adequate and it is recommended, though not mandatory, that you tackle the courses on

- Getting to Grips with the Bible
- Talking about God

before you embark on the Valuing Community Experiences course.

If you are studying with the aim of becoming more fully equipped in Church-related Community Work, a **LITE+PLUS** approach will be necessary which includes the following courses:

- Introductory Course: You, the Bible, God and Worship
- Getting to Grips with the Bible
- Talking about God
- Valuing Community Experiences (10 units, 2 Study Days)
(A basic introduction to community development work)

Completion of these modules will need to be followed by completion of the TLS One-year Course Developing Community Experiences and completion of a year of mentored Reflective Practice.

A similar pattern of study may be agreed with the LITE Course Manager for the following areas of discipleship and ministry:

- Pastoral Care
- Prayer
- Evangelism
- Other Faiths

PURPOSES CONNECTED TO CANDIDATING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

LITE may be used to acquire the basic qualifications necessary to candidate for ordained ministry. This will involve completion of:

- Introductory Course: You, the Bible, God and Worship
- Getting to Grips with the Bible
- Talking about God
- Followed by:
- Either Leading Worship
- Or Valuing Community Experiences.

Individuals will then complete one of the TLS One Year Courses on Pathway 2. They will undertake a further assignment set by the Education & Learning Committee and assessed by one of the Resource Centres for Learning during the candidating process.

PURPOSES CONNECTED TO PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

LITE is a tool for helping people to develop in their own spirituality and discipleship.

The applied learning approach, the content of the units and the group encounters all encourage personal reflection and growth.

For this purpose particular courses may be selected as appropriate if an individual does not want to tackle them all. Additionally the units may be used for personal study, although from experience, the opportunity for group encounter is crucial to getting the best out of LITE.

Methodology

ABOUT APPLIED LEARNING

LITE encourages participants not only to reflect upon the subjects they are studying but also to apply their reflection in the context of their service and mission, in order to stimulate action and further reflection. The Introductory Module introduces this approach.

ABOUT STUDY UNITS

These are designed to take about an evening's work at home, and contain exercises to help your private learning, together with the preparation of exercises for the Study Group. The units include essential reading, although we do suggest books for those who want to delve further.

ABOUT STUDY GROUPS

The interaction and mutual support of Study Groups are very important.

- Typically they are sessions of approximately two hours in length based locally with a tutor, addressing material in the preceding unit.
- The sessions should be arranged at mutually convenient times perhaps weekly or fortnightly.
- The appropriate venue is for you to choose but should be accessible for all students and be conducive to learning.
- The advisable number of students in each group is between 3 and 12 with between 6 and 8 students being ideal.
- Group sessions should include a brief act of worship which may initially be led by the tutor but may eventually be apportioned on a rota basis to course members.
- Anybody is free to set up a LITE group, however with it comes the responsibility of organization and leadership. It is important therefore from the beginning to establish who does what. It is especially important that the 'leader' sees their role as a facilitator of learning rather than a teacher. LITE aims to help people to come to their own understandings rather than to be a recipient of somebody else's opinion.
- To support anyone who undertakes the leadership role each booklet comes with a tutor guidelines supplement.

ABOUT STUDY DAYS

Typically running from 10am-4pm, the Study Days concentrate on practical work and discussion in a larger forum.

ABOUT SELF-APPRAISAL

For each course except the Introductory Module, course members are asked to write a self-appraisal reflecting on how they feel they are developing through the course. In the Valuing Community Experiences Course this is required in the form of a journal

ABOUT ASSESSED WORK

LITE+PLUS assignments are mandatory and will be centrally marked. **BASIC** approach assignments are voluntary and locally marked. If you are following the **BASIC** approach part of the organizational detail to be addressed will be the need to find somebody who will monitor and mark the assessed work. They should be carefully chosen not only for their skills and knowledge but also for their sympathy to the aims of the course

ABOUT KEEPING IN TOUCH

Other than for **LITE+PLUS** students, LITE courses do not need to be registered. However for purposes of quality control it will be helpful for us to know who is doing what courses and

how they have gone. We would be extremely grateful therefore if at the end of this course **ONE** person from the group would complete the evaluation form at the end of this booklet and return it as requested. Pro-forma certificates will be provided for all members of the group on receipt of this form.

If you have any queries about the running of these courses please contact:

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