



There are two really important dates in our lives – the day we're born, and the day we understand why.



Every day of our lives, whether we are one or 101, we are all children of God, and God our Father loves us so much that he has given us all we need to play our unique role in life.

There are some parts of our purpose that are common to all Christians...

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself'.

JESUS CHRIST - MATTHEW 22:37-39

And there are others that are unique to us.

God plays his part in our lives and the lives of others. Now it's up to us to play our part – by finding and fulfilling our unique role in life.

To play your part we need a relationship with God. This simple guide encourages you to take time out to look at your life and free yourself up from what might be limiting you. It will help you to think: Why am I here? What has God created me for? What does this mean for me as a Christian today? How can I become more like Jesus in every aspect of my life?



PLAYING YOUR PART IN LIFE

We are all children of God. Remember as a child the enjoyment of going to the playground with all its exciting possibilities?

There were swings, roundabouts, climbing frames, seesaws, and slides – all sorts of fun and fulfilment combined with challenges, fears, bumps and bruises.

These experiences are similar to the roles we fulfil in adult life – we face all kinds of ups and downs, good things as well as difficulties

This guide allows you to take some time to stop, think and then act in a way that fulfils your purpose as a Christian.

It encourages you to work your way through a number of activities that remind you of the things you did in the playground. It will prompt you in many different ways to consider your role in life.

At the end of the guide you'll find an activity that helps you to play your part.

We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Ready to play?

Riding the ups and downs

The swing helps you to explore your life so far. What have been the highs and lows? What important lessons has God been teaching you?

The seesaw helps you learn in a fun way about getting the balance right in your life. Which dimensions of your life are just right? Which are out of balance? How does your faith link with this?

Getting a grip on your skills

The climbing frame challenges you to review and discover those skills that God has placed within you. It will help you pinpoint the skills you're good at and love using, and show you how to apply them more purposefully.

Building back-up on your bench

We all need people sitting on our bench to keep an eye on us, supporting us when we need help. This activity helps you to reflect on who supports you and, more importantly, whose bench you yourself are sitting on. How as a Christian can you be active and purposeful in supporting others?

Jumping off the roundabout

We can all get stuck on the roundabout of life, or fly around faster and faster, failing to see or missing out on what we are born to be. This activity helps you to jump off and create an inspiring picture that can give more purpose and direction in your life.

Taking the plunge

This activity helps you reflect from the top of the slide on the steps you've taken and the choices you now have. It encourages you to take one brave step to playing a more purposeful role in life today.

'For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life'.

ST PAUL – EPHESIANS 2:8-10

How to use this guide...

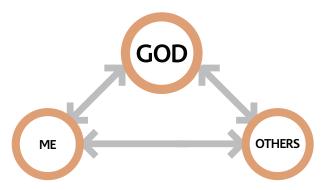
Each of these playground activities is split into three steps:

- 1. Pause for thought and reflection.
- 2. Have a go at the activity.
- 3. Worship and reflection commit your thoughts and actions to God.

This guide may present you with more questions than answers but that is OK. We encourage you to seek the answers through reading the bible and prayer. If you are unsure how best to do this you may wish to seek further help. It will help if you use this guide with others, share the experience, enjoy the fellowship of Christians and reflect on the things you have learned.

You can use this guide with a small group, with your family, as a course in your church or as a self-study book.

As well as asking questions, make sure you listen carefully for the answers. They may come directly from God, or they may also be sent through others.



You will find it helpful to have with you a pencil and paper in order to have a go at the activities. Some will take longer than others.

For it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

PRAYER

We recommend that you pray your way through this guide. Before each section invite the Lord to guide your mind and thinking.

Dear Lord, I woke up this morning and will go to bed tonight and I will never have this day again. Help me to be mindful of all the blessings you have given me so far in my life.

I pray you would enable me to be honest with myself as I think about my life through these exercises. Create in me an enquiring mind and help me to see your plan and purpose as I explore this guide.

Lord please help me to seek your face in all that I do.

Amen.



1

RIDING THE UPS AND DOWNS

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven – ECCLESIASTES 3:1

Pause

Life can be like playing on a giant swing. It's full of ups and downs – joy, excitement, success as well as fear, upset and uncertainty.

Remember when you were on the swing? Getting to the highest point, pushing yourself up to that limit? Perhaps someone even gave you a hand. Did you stand up on the seat to just get that extra height? Did your stomach churn when you thought you might fall off? Those ups and downs on the swing can mirror our own lives.

Through all these peaks and troughs, God puts within us his holy spirit to make change happen but he's also standing by at every moment to help us along the way, even when he seems absent or we think his power is beyond us.

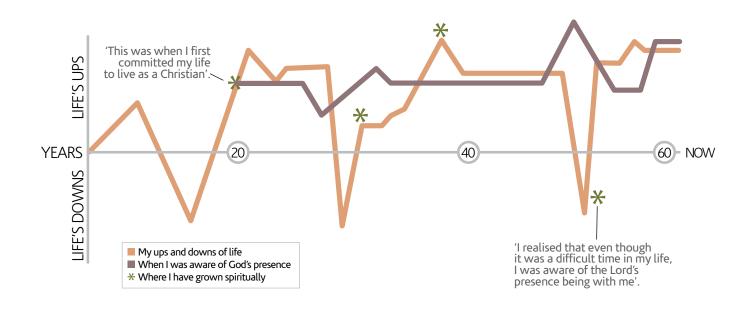
He watches the heights we gain but is also aware of when we fall and when we experience the lows.

Have a go

Looking back on the ups and downs of your life journey so far can help you think about your future. There will have been some special moments. Times of pleasure and pain, times of real joy and maybe also misery. Remember the moments that were particularly good or where you felt you did really well? Are you aware of the 'mid-air' – those bits between the ups and downs where you actually spend a lot of time, but often take for granted?

Use the example below as a guide.

- 1. Get a piece of paper and, by drawing a line, map out the ups and downs of your life so far. Highlight any key milestones. How old were you?
- 2. Next, draw a line when you were aware of Gods presence.
- 3. Pinpoint the times on your first line where you grew spiritually and understood more about why you were created your purpose.



'My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance, and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing'.

Play your part

When you have done this consider:

- What have you learned from this?
- How can you apply it to your life as a Christian?

Worship and Reflection

Share your positive moments with others and thank God for the whole of your life journey so far. What are you really grateful for?

Discuss in what ways you have experienced the presence of God and grown spiritually in your journey so far?

In the Bible many of the stories show how people grew spiritually through hardship and difficulties, is this something you can relate to? If you feel it is appropriate, share some of your tough times. What have you learned through these difficult experiences about God?

Has he helped you to make sense of your life?

Where have the turning points been?

What clues does this give you about your future roles in life?

PRAYER

Whilst you're praying, reflect on the times God has been with you. Give thanks that we all have the ups and the downs and that God holds us during all of these experiences.

Lord God.

Thank you for sustaining me during the ups & the downs of life. Help me to celebrate the journey I have taken so far.

Over these coming days, please help me to trust you more and develop in my relationship with you.

Help me to see my strengths and weaknesses and to do something positive with them.

Open my eyes to recognise you are with me so that I may travel forward with you.

Amen

'But strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well'.

JESUS CHRIST - MATTHEW 6:33

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

THESSALONIANS 5:16-18



GETTING LIFE INTO BALANCE

It is the wisdom of the clever to understand where they go, but the folly of fools misleads – PROVERBS 14:8

Pause

Playing on the seesaw with a friend, did you ever try and get the see-saw to balance?

Getting a balance in our adult life can at times seem just as challenging. We only have a finite amount of time, 24 hours a day and this adds up to 1,440 minutes or 86,400 seconds.

We use our time in different ways, to do different things. Some of this may be working or learning. Or it could be playing or giving.

This changes according to our priorities but we do often try (sometimes in vain) to balance out these four key dimensions of our lives.

God is at work within all dimensions of our life to give it purpose and direction. He works within the 'whole' of our lives and provides us with choices to change to become more Christ-like. Life is about giving of ourselves, and having a fruitful life as God measures it.

It also helps if we can keep the balance and create harmony between the four key dimensions of our life, which can be categorised as: working, learning, playing and giving – in short our WLPG.

Our life and WLPG have different rhythms; for example, although Jesus was intensely busy, he always made time to reflect, pray and recuperate. Prayer brought him to an understanding of what was needed: His work sprang from his prayer.

You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

What does WLPG mean?

WORKING

Today's range of work options and styles are far wider than ever before. In addition to traditional forms of employment, they include self employment, portfolio careers, part-time working, job-sharing, home working and flexi-work. You may not generate income from an activity but you may still view it as work.

LEARNING

This should be seen in the wider sense – every kind of learning whether for faith, work or life in general. It may range from formal classroom study or training for qualifications to formal or informal learning experiences.

PLAYING

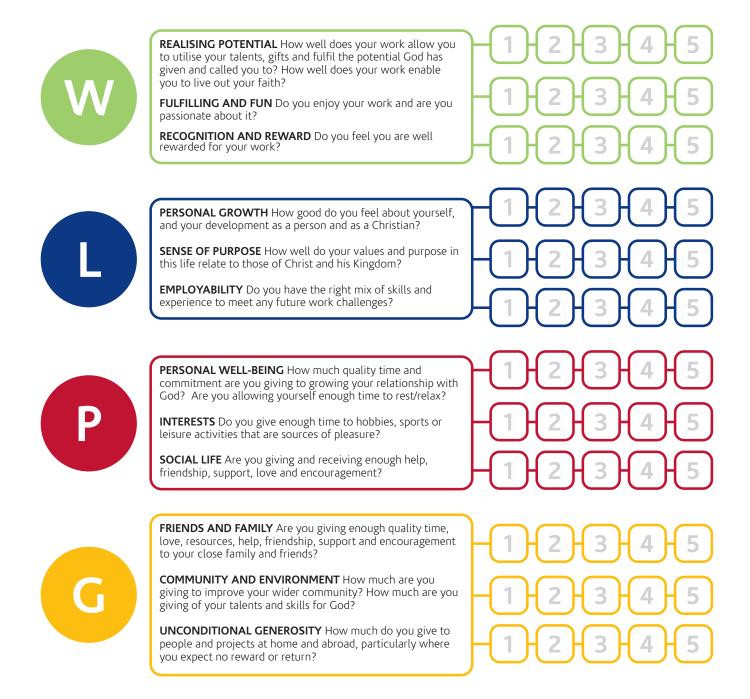
This is as much about our mindset and attitude to play as the activity itself. It's important not to see playing as relegated to evenings and weekends. It can be about loving what you do, doing interesting things, spending time with people you like and generally lightening up your life. Even work itself may be play when the conditions are right.

GIVING

This is to be seen in its widest sense – it is more about giving of yourself than about donating money to good causes. It may include supporting your family or friends, helping colleagues, sharing your skills and experiences or being a good friend or neighbour within your community.

Have a go

Life is made up of these different dimensions. Have a go at the WLPG questionnaire, tick the boxes below and give yourself a score as to how you would rate each section of your life currently -5 is very high and 1 is very low.



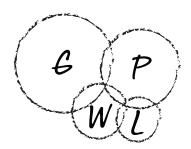
When you have done this, consider: Where do you score highly? Are there any areas for development? What actions do you need to take?

Once you have done this, you can make a sketch of your four WLPG dimensions.

Look at the example overleaf then have a go at your own.

Getting a more purposeful life blend

- 1. Take a piece of blank paper and draw four circles at the top of the page representing your working, learning, playing and giving (WLPG).
- 2. Consider two things when you draw each circle. Firstly, the size of the circle represents the amount of time and energy you currently spend doing it eg. lots of time spent giving would be a big G circle. Secondly, think about the overlap between each circle eg. how much LPG is overlapped with your W?
- 3. Consider what this sketch is telling you about your life today. Are you allowing God to impact on all four aspects?



- 4. Now imagine yourself in five years time you're leading a really purposeful, well blended life. Sketch on a page what this WLPG diagram would look like. How would the sizes and overlaps between the circles have ideally changed?
- 5. Finally, draw a vertical line down the middle of the page. On the left-hand side list all the things that would stop you (ie. the barriers) moving from the blend diagram at the top to the sketch at the bottom eg. time, work/family commitments, money, motivation. Now creatively challenge each potential barrier and on the right-hand side list practical ideas (ie. the solutions) that would help you overcome these barriers. If you struggle for ideas, talk it through with friends.



6. You now have a choice. Do you focus your time, energy and mindset on the list on the left or that on the right? What one thing can you do today to move closer to your ideal blend?

Play your part

When you have done this consider:

- What have you learned from this?
- How can you apply it to your life as a Christian?

Worship and Reflection

Some people try to separate the 'spiritual' from the 'secular' or natural. But Jesus never did this. Everything he did was spiritual, whether eating and drinking, healing or feeding people in need, or spending a night on the mountain talking with God. He never considered any part of life to be outside of God's sphere of interest or influence.

Do you compartmentalise your relationship with God into an hour or two every Sunday? How can you make sure God influences the whole of your life?

By now you will be realising that your WLPG can hold an important key to your future. But before you can make the most of your WLPG, you need to firstly acknowledge that if God is really important to you, then he should be involved in the decision–making processes about each aspect of your life.

Why not stop and talk with God now?

PRAYER

After each paragraph of the prayer below, pause and reflect, allowing God to talk to you.

Dear Lord, as I look at these different aspects of my life, please help me to understand what your will for me is.

Help me to see if my life is out of balance, where I might be living selfishly, or where I am not being faithful to you.

Please give me the courage to change my approach as I give my life and my future to you. In Jesus name.

Amen.



3

GETTING A GRIP ON YOUR SKILLS

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us - ROMANS 12:6

Pause

Playground climbing frames can be exciting but also daunting. They hold various challenges which mean you need lots of skills to cope.

Life too has its ladders to climb, tunnels to scramble through, ropes to hang off and platforms to rest on.

We can develop the skills we need to do this by learning from others, using these skills frequently and trying new ones out. Sometimes we even forget that we have certain skills. We often take our ability for granted once we have mastered a skill.

There are some parts of the climbing frame we run straight to because we enjoy them so much. The same is true with our skills and talents

Which are the skills you love using? Do they come to mind at once?

These skills are transferable and can be transformed – we only have to look at the fishermen who applied their teamworking, exploring, sensing and relating skills to turn them into fishers of men

All of the skills, gifts and talents God has given us have equal value when used in the right place and in the right way.

We all have hidden talents – skills that we have yet to find and use. To find these, we must start understanding ourselves and our own abilities. Knowing the gifts and skills God has given us – and then taking personal responsibility for them and using them to bring glory to him is a clue to living out our purpose.

To think about your skills more, re-read the parable of the talents – MATTHEW 25:14.

The key messages in this are:

- If you use your talents you will get more
- If you don't use your talents you will lose them
- If we bury our talents we will be condemned not for failing to use them as such – but for fear of not using them

Deal with the dangers

There are three equal dangers we face in using our skills and talents.

The first is to be a pretender – trying to be someone that we are not. This can be damaging to us and to our potential. We need to mix hope and ambition with a realistic appraisal of our current skills and abilities. To pretend or to boast that we have skills and gifts that we do not have does not help anyone. It's like empty rain clouds during a drought.

The second danger is to be negative about ourselves. Most people struggle with this in one form or another. Sometimes we find it hard to think well of ourselves. But that's not how God sees us. We are unique. We have an exclusive collection of skills and abilities; gifts from God that we can discover, polish and use in a way that pleases him and that brings us great personal fulfilment too.

The third danger is to misuse our skills. The greatest model we have is Jesus. Born into the world as King of all, he did not exert his authority over those who followed him. He used his enormous skill, talents and abilities for the good of others rather than himself. He served others rather than expected to be served by them.

Our skills have an impact not just on ourselves but also on others in our communities. The use of our skills should be marked out by this Christ-like servanthood.

Have a go

This next activity is designed to help you remember what skills you have... and to think about where and how you could be using them.

YOUR GOD-GIVEN SKILLS

- 1. Have a look at the following families of skills interpret the skill as is appropriate for you.
- 2. Place a tick in the first column to indicate those skills you love using most.
- 3. Go back and review the skills you've ticked as 'love'. Then use the last two columns to tick the ones you are either good at or need to develop further (or both). Are there opportunities to develop skills you love but are not so good at?

Think about how you can apply the skills you love and are really good at. Record on a piece of paper how you could use these in a more purposeful way within your:

- CHURCH
- NEIGHBOURHOOD
- WIDER COMMUNITY
- WORK
- DAILY LEARNING. PLAYING AND GIVING

Remember your spiritual gifts too, read 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-12.

		LOVE USING GOOD AT DEVELOP			LOVE USING GOOD AT DEVELOP			LOVE USING	GOOD AT DEVELOP
E SKILLS	RELATING Creating Rapport Building relationships Valuing others	000	G SKILLS	PROCESSING Carrying out procedures Following instructions Working structurally and systematically	000	SE SKILLS	LEADING Directing people Planning and targets Driving change	0	00
PEOPLE	COMMUNICATING Presenting Listening Liaising	000	PROCESSING	ADMINISTRATING Overseeing Completing Delivering	000	ENTERPRISE	NETWORKING Support community Growing relationships Sharing your talents	000	00
	HELPING Supporting Volunteering Sharing	000	PR	MAINTAINING Controlling quality Managing information Updating	000	Ш	STRATEGISING Forecasting Researching Financial and business planning	000	00
	EMPOWERING Encouraging Developing others Inspiring	000		COMPUTING Utilising up-to-date IT packages Technical IT skills Setting up IT systems	000		SELLING Negotiating Influencing Following up	000	000
	MANAGING Realising potential Optimising Co-ordinating	000		WORDS & PICTURES Writing Drawing Translating	000		SELF-MANAGING Motivating self Seizing opportunities Promoting self		000
	UNDERSTANDING Having perspective Empathising Valuing differences	000		REVIEWING Monitoring Evaluating Action planning	000		CHAMPIONING Advocating Pioneering Promoting new ideas	000	00
	TEAMWORKING Working collectively Sharing skills Balancing interests	000		FINANCES Budgeting Accounting Auditing	000		MARKETING Assessing needs Generating possibilities Enhancing profile	000	00

Play your part

When you have done this consider:

- What have you learned from this?
- How can you apply it to your life as a Christian?

Worship and Reflection

Thank God today for all the gifts he has given you. Reflect on the parable of the talents in your own life. God your Father takes no delight in seeing you bury your skills – he loves to see you use them in a purposeful way. What can you do today to please yourself and others, thereby giving pleasure to God?

PRAYER

When you made me in your image Lord, you gave me so much – much more than I could ever use for myself alone. Help me to use my gifts and abilities to serve others as well as to meet my own needs. Help me to put you first in my life so that I can live in a manner that honours you in all ways. Amen.

		LOVE USING GOOD AT DEVELOP			LOVE USING GOOD AT DEVELOP		LOVE USING GOOD AT DEVELOP
r skills	OPERATING Precision working Using machinery Using multi-media	000	SKILLS	EXPLORING Investigating Identifying possibilities Generating alternatives	000	THINKING LATERALL Taking fresh perspectives Using intuition Seeing new angles	
PRACTICAI	CO-ORDINATING Multi-tasking Organising Delegating	000	EXPLORING SKILLS	INTERVIEWING Questioning Listening Selecting	000	THINKING LATERALL Taking fresh perspectives Using intuition Seeing new angles DESIGNING New ideas into practice Developing products Drafting	000
<u>a</u>	SENSING Hearing Seeing Touching	000		OBSERVING Assessing people Comparing Learning from data LEARNING	000	MEDIA Using multi-media creatively Exploiting different medi Art and design	000
	FIXING Servicing Repairing Maintaining	000		Reflecting Experimenting Improving RESEARCHING	000	ADAPTING Enhancing Translating Combining	000
	WELL-BEING Exercising Relaxing Thinking positively	000		Gathering information Collecting and recording Drawing conclusions SOLVING PROBLEMS	000	CONNECTING Seeing links Synthesising Building on ideas	000
	PRODUCING Crafting Making Constructing	000		Analysing Seeing patterns Developing solutions REALISING POTENTIAL	000	CREATING Innovating Developing Conceiving	000
	NURTURING Tending Growing Fostering	0000		Uncovering Personal strengths, passions and purpose Seeking feedback Taking action	000	VISIONING Imagining the future Seeing the whole picture Turning failure into succ	



4

BUILDING BACK-UP ON YOUR BENCH

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift the other up; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. – ECCLESIASTES 4:9

Pause

It's not the most obvious piece of equipment in the playground and often overlooked. But it's one of the most important – the bench.

It's placed to give a good view of the whole playground and often surrounded by helpful things such as prams, toys, packed lunches and bikes. It provides a resting place for those who care deeply for you.

Who sits on your bench? Who is ready to jump up and encourage you when you're stuck, give you a helping hand when you're scared, pick you up when you fall, hug you when you cry, guide you when you are lost and support you whether you succeed or fail?

We need to remember that as Christians we are part of the body of Christ, the Lord wants us to be part of our communities serving one another.

For all of us, God sits on our bench – smiling when we please him and carrying us when we fall off the swing, get bumped off the seesaw, hang off the climbing frame and get spun off the roundabout.

The Lord is our constant companion, but as you play different roles in life, who else sits on your bench? Also, as you think about playing your part, ask yourself whose bench do you sit on? Remember, it is likely that the people sitting on your bench will change over time.

Have a go

It is great to know that there are people on our bench looking after us. We also have a responsibility to sit on other people's benches and to support them when they need it.

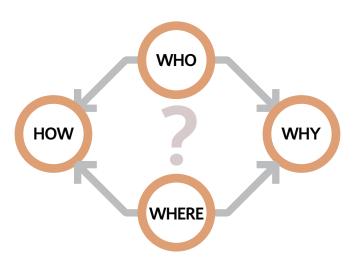
Whose bench are you sitting on?

You can review who's bench you are sitting on by looking at the different roles you play in life. What impact do you make? Here are some examples:

WORKER, VOLUNTEER, CARER, COLLEAGUE, NEIGHBOUR, FRIEND, LEARNER, RELATION, CHILD, PARENT

Don't forget your roles may be in organisations or for causes which you support.

You may find the following process useful in reviewing who you are helping through life.



Use a piece of paper to record...

WHO Whose benches do you currently sit on? (List all the people you currently give to)

WHY Why are you sitting on these benches? (For what purpose are you there?)

WHERE Where are you making the greatest difference?

HOW How can you use your skills and talents to meet real needs?

Remember you have only a limited amount of time, energy and skills to devote to others. What is your unique role that nobody else can perform as well? How can you be more purposeful in your actions?

Though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken'.

ECCLESIASTES 4:12

Who sits on your bench?

Try reflecting on the following questions:

- Who are the people who have made the greatest difference in your life to date?
- Why have they made such an impact?
- How has this influenced your purpose?
- Who else do you need on your bench to fulfil your potential?
- What relationships (new or old) do you need to grow?

Do I realise God has brought these people to me for a purpose? It is not a coincidence.

'Beloved, since God loved us so much we also ought to love one another. No-one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us'.

1 JOHN 4:11

Play your part

When you have done this consider:

- What have you learned from this?
- How can you apply it to your life as a Christian?

Worship and Reflection

Think of one person today you can encourage or share your love with – in prayer or in person.

You finally become an adult when you realise your life is more about what you give than what you get.

BOB BUFORD, HALFTIME

PRAYER

Dear Lord, help me to be thankful for all the people who have been there for me in my life so far, especially... (name these).

I pray that I may not take people for granted. Soften my heart Lord to see and feel what you want me to do for the poor and needy, the weak and vulnerable.

Help me to be generous with my time, talents, energy and my money. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.



JUMPING OFF THE ROUNDABOUT

The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established. PROVERBS 19:21.

Pause

The roundabout helps us to see the whole playground with a 360° view of the world around us.

Sometimes though our roundabout can get stuck and we're left with just a very narrow view of the world around us. We can end up so focused on our home, street or community – or perhaps our own views, worries or opinions – that we fail to see anything else.

Another time we might find ourselves spinning round so fast that the world becomes a blur. We're unable to find any meaning or purpose in what we are seeing. The speed we're going at may be dictated by life events or different agendas and priorities – our own or other people's. We may even be afraid to slow down in case of what we will see. Going round and round on the roundabout may allow us to avoid facing what life is really about.

For a Christian, life finds its real meaning in serving the purposes of God.

We have to discover our purpose in life if our time on earth is to be fulfilled. But this can only be done effectively if we firstly decide who God is to us. How involved do you believe God is in your life?

Secondly we must understand and trust in God, his plans and purpose for our life. We need to think about the future and not just let it happen.

As Christians we may find that God asks us to give up our own plans, particularly if they are contrary to his. At times he will take us out of our comfort zones.

It is not until we are willing to pursue God's plan for our lives that we will see his purposes fully at work in and through us. At times it can feel that our life is going round in circles. When was the last time you stopped pushing or stopped others pushing you on the roundabout of life and asked God to point you in the right direction? The activity on the next page will get you thinking about this.

Have a go

Our growth as a Christian relies on our relationship with God. As we travel through life, we need to stay close to him to check our journey is taking us in the right direction.

Approach your purpose positively

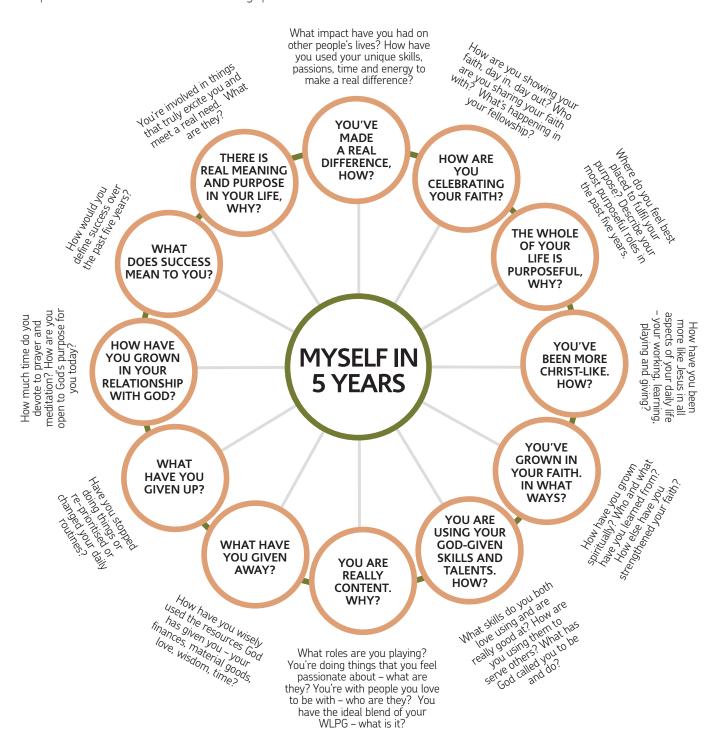
When we consider where we are going with God, it is useful to think about the future – it is the way that we approach it that is important to God.

It is clear in the Bible that we are to be content with what we have each day and to not worry about the future. In the Gospels Jesus said "Look at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field" – Matthew 6:25–28. Yet the female bird still thinks ahead. She builds her nest in preparation for the future – so she is thinking about tomorrow, but she is not worrying about it. It is not wrong to think about the future – it is thinking anxiously about it that Jesus warms us about.

Psalm 37 declares 'Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart'. God is no genie, thankfully. But if we seek what he wants, we will have a better idea of what we should do both for ourselves and others.

Identifying God's direction for me

- 1. Make sure you have a piece of paper to record your thoughts and ideas.
- 2. Imagine yourself five years on from today celebrating with God the most amazing five years of your life. Think big, let all your prayers come true. Be creative make your picture as big, bold and imaginative as possible.
- 3. Write this date at the top of the page and for the rest of this exercise imagine you are really at this date in the future.
- 4. As you imagine yourself five years on, look back over the time between now and then and write down your spontaneous answers to the following questions.



Play your part

When you have done this consider:

- What have you learned from this?
- How can you apply it to your life as a Christian?

Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

EPHESIANS 4:1

Worship and Reflection

Talk your answers through with others and consider what your first priority can be to begin to make this five year picture happen. What can you do to make your ideas turn into reality?

PRAYER

Lord, I praise you that you been with me through all that I have experienced.

You know my dreams and hopes, the things I fear and the concerns I have.

I entrust my life to you. Keep me focused and help me to live in a manner that pleases you and advances your purposes on earth.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

Lord let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days: let me know how fleeting my life is.

PSALM 39:4

There is an old Christian tradition that God sends each person into this world with a special message to deliver, with a song to sing for others with a special act of love to bestow. No one else can speak my message, or sing my song, or offer my act of love. These are only entrusted to me.

'CALLED OR COLLARED?' - Francis Dewar (1991), London SPCK



'Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.' JESUS CHRIST - MARK 16:15.

Pause

We hope you've enjoyed your visit to the playground. You've had a go at the activities and talked with others. You've also prayed and reflected on God's word and your own thoughts and feelings.

TAKING

You've had a chance to have a go on the following activities. Have a think about what the different activities in the playground have led you to consider: The lessons:

- from my ups and downs that will help me in my future are?
- from my blend of working, learning, playing and giving that will help me in my future are?
- from the skills I'm good at, love using and need to develop more of in the future are?
- I've learned about who I need to help in the future are: I need to be thankful for?
- I've learned about my future purpose are?

The final activity in the playground though is still there for you to enjoy.

The Slide

One of the most popular - but scariest - objects in the playground is the slide. You can view your journey to this point as being the steps of the slide, with each step representing an activity you have completed.

Each of these activities has moved you closer to the top of the slide, helping you learn more about yourself and your unique purpose. Now you're at the top of the slide, you need to think about moving forward. We have to push ourselves and take the plunge to make our faith real in a direction shaped by the Lord. We need to remember that God will be there for us and is with us as we go forward.

For some of us it may be scary. For others it's a leap of faith. But the more times we bring our faith to life, the closer we get to God. How are you going to take the plunge today?

Have a go

Make a list of all the actions ideas or different thoughts that this resource has helped you to consider. Which ones will help you play your part as a Christian and help you to fulfil your purpose?

You are now at the top of the slide and you have three options. You can:

- 1. Turn backwards and walk down the steps, ignoring what you have discovered from the work you have done in this guide. If you've come this far, we hope you won't take this option!
- 2. Stay where you are, holding on tight but not moving anywhere – something is stopping you. This is more possible than option 1, so be honest with yourself.
- 3. Take the plunge enjoy the ride knowing that God will be there to support you. This may mean acting on something you have reflected on or it may be about 'being' the person God has created you to be.

Which of the following barriers is proving difficult for you to get over - consider what steps you could take to overcome this?

That your way be known upon the earth, your saving power among all

PSALM 67:2 (LB)

10 things that could hold me back...

- **1. BUMPS AND BRUISES** Life can sometimes jolt us off the paths we have been walking. Being steadfast and having the tenacity God creates in us helps us to cope with the bumps and bruises of life and stay focused on our purpose.
- 2. FEAR We are sometimes fearful and consider turning away from the path ahead. Knowing God is our constant companion and walking that path with us can create the confidence and inner strength to overcome that fear and keep moving forward.
- **3. FRIENDSHIP FALLOUTS** People are very important to us, our family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Sometimes our relationships with them are challenging. Asking for God's help in all of our dealings with people will make a big difference.
- **4. CHALLENGE** We will always face new challenges some created by us and others that just come our way. We may doubt our ability to overcome these but God never does. He's always ready to provide the support we need (even when sometimes we don't know it) and never lets us down.
- 5. LOSS We know from the teachings in the Bible that there are seasons in our lives where we will one day face this. Losing people or facing other crises in life can be debilitating and we feel helpless. Knowing that God is carrying us through these times can bring real comfort. He knows when we really need him and will provide what we need. He promises that he will never leave us nor forsake us.
- 6. **FEELING SICK** Feeling unwell and incapacitated can cause us to look inward and focus only on our own issues. God knows when we are in need of extra support and will provide it in the way that only he can if we are ready to open up to him.
- **7. NEEDING COMFORT** God is our great comforter, embracing us in his love, compassion and care. He provides us with all we need.
- **8. LACK OF AWARENESS** Learning continues all our lives and as adults we may lose the awareness that we can learn every day. As Christians we will always be learning. This maybe about ourselves in our Christian journey, about others, about our faith and about how our uniqueness can be used for God's purpose now.
- **9. RUSHING ABOUT** So many other agendas and attractions can steal our time. What does God want you to spend more or less time on today?
- **10. FORGOTTEN FUN** As adults it is sometimes easy to forget that God has given us our life to enjoy. It could be decades since you last experienced that fun and excitement that you had as a child in the playground. Why not get out there and experience the excitement and fulfilment that being a Christian today can bring.

Play your part

When you have done this consider:

- What have you learned from this?
- How can you apply it to your life as a Christian?

'Preach the gospel every day. Use words if necessary'.

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Worship and Reflection

God knows we will all continue to experience challenges as we go through life, but he is constant. He is there supporting us as we fulfil his purpose and is ready to step in and help where and whenever the need arises. He plays his part, it's up to us to play ours.

PRAYER

Thank you Lord for your goodness to me.

Help me to continually strive to become more like you and fulfil my unique role in life.

Help me to set my sights on you and take a leap of faith; to take risks for others so that they may benefit as I have done.

May your kingdom come and your will be done in and through me as I play my part in the life you have given me.

Amen.

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

ISAIAH: 40 V 31

Let's celebrate!

You have spent some valuable time reflecting on your life; you may have been on your own or with others as you have used this guide, but at all times the Lord has been with you.

You are unique, blessed and loved by God.

We pray that this guide will help you to 'Play your part' and enjoy fulfilling your God-given purpose in life.





PLAY YOUR PART

This simple guide encourages you to take a fresh perspective and some time out to look at your life and consider: Why am I here? What has God created me for? What does this mean for me as a Christian today? How can I be more Christ-like in all that I do?

It will help you Play your Part by finding and fulfilling the unique role and potential you have in life as a Christian.

Written by Dr Peter Hawkins, Helen Wakefield and Sally Beyer.



If you are interested in knowing more about Windmills please visit our website:

www.windmillsonline.co.uk

Windmills has been developed in partnership by the University of Liverpool's GIEU and Dr Peter Hawkins