

Course hosts' notes

These notes are designed to assist the course host in facilitating *The Romans Course* by providing an overview and key information for each session. We've included some further ideas, suggestions and tips to help your course run smoothly and enhance the experience for everyone who attends.

Launching the course

Romans is a letter that has transformed many lives. *The Romans Course* is pitched at an introductory level so it's accessible for mature Christians and those newer to faith. So, why not throw the door open wide and invite everyone in your church, homegroup or friendship circle to check it out? Promote the start of the course a few weeks in advance using [The Romans Course trailer](#) and other **promotional resources**. Encourage everyone to come along, even if they are not sure the course is for them. Usually, people are reassured by the content and style of the videos and enthusiastic to come again for more! Why not have some 'Roman-themed refreshments for the first session to draw people in? Or some Italian pizza and gelati should do the trick!

Materials to order in advance

To run the course, you need to download the course videos and participants' guide (one for everyone). You might also like to order the course book [Romans: A Letter That Makes Sense of Life](#) by Andrew Ollerton.

Session structure

1 Welcome and introduction

- This is very important, especially at the beginning of the course. Make sure any new guests are welcomed and those feeling nervous are reassured that they won't be put on the spot! Distribute the resources and explain the format of the session. It's also helpful to note that we may not always agree but we will listen to and respect each other. Confidentiality is important, so ask that what is said in the room stays in the room.

2 Review

- From Session 3 onwards, you could ask someone to give a one minute recap of the previous session. We suggest you set a timer and model this yourself on week two. Then ask for a volunteer. Some people will quite enjoy the challenge! Andrew briefly reviews the whole route map each week, but from session 3 onwards, you could ask if someone would like to sketch the mountain motif that Andrew uses. The participants' guide will also help to remind people of the main points for review.

3 Discussion starter questions

- For each session we've included an optional question to get conversation going before the first teaching video. These are loosely connected to the theme of the session and are especially useful if your group are new to each other. Make sure you keep to the five minute time slot!

4 Group discussion

- If your group is large, it would be good to divide into smaller groups for discussion, so that everyone can contribute. Each group will need a host to keep the group on track and handle any possible issues that might arise (see below). Use the discussion questions outlined in the participants' guide. They focus on a passage in Romans and apply the teaching to our own lives. Try to give quieter members an opportunity to contribute, but don't put them on the spot.

5 Possible issues

- Sometimes topics may arise which could be divisive or distracting. We have listed some for each session and given a brief response you could use. Please don't introduce these topics yourself, but if they arise, respond briefly, offer to talk later and steer the group back to the discussion questions. We want the group to remain united and focused on the main points.

6 Personal reflection time

- At the end of each session, we have provided space for personal reflection (suggested ten minutes). This gives an opportunity to reflect on the session as a whole and the key verse of Scripture given in the participants' guide. We suggest allowing five minutes to reflect on the question provided and then five minutes in pairs or triplets to share some reflections and pray together. People may feel more comfortable if there is background music to avoid awkward silence.

7 Daily readings

- For each session there are five daily readings provided in the participants' guide which aim to establish a personal rhythm of reading Romans throughout the week. The daily readings build up to the following session. Each reading takes around five minutes. Some people prefer to listen to the readings on YouVersion or a similar app. When guests participate in the daily readings they get so much more from the course. So why not set up a digital group (WhatsApp/social media/text) and send the daily reading reference each day as a prompt and invite people to comment on what they are learning and experiencing together?

8 Weekly hosts' notes

- We have produced a sheet for each session to help you prepare. There are key themes, session outlines, possible issues and notes to guide you as you wrap up each week. It can be a bit daunting to host something new, but everything you need is provided and you will be surprised how much people enjoy it and grow more confidence in the gospel. Go for it!

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Refreshments

You can enhance your course experience by offering refreshments and hopefully some of the group will contribute as the weeks roll on.

Sound and vision

Being able to see and hear the videos is key to the success of your course. Consider the size of your group and how to project the videos appropriately. A smaller home group should be fine with a good quality TV. A larger group may require a video projector, screen and speakers. Viewing angles, comfort and appropriate volume are key issues that need to be considered.

Room set-up

Make sure the lighting, temperature and seating/viewing angles are comfortable for everyone to minimise distractions during the course.

Spare participants' guides, pens and Bibles

As well as emailing the pdf participants' guides, have some printed off in case some prefer to write on a hard copy. The course uses the New International Version (2011) so try and have a few spare copies to hand.

Prayer

As you prepare, why not gather your team of helpers? Plan and pray together so you are ready to make the most of each gathering. Perhaps use the key verse highlighted in each episode of the course and pray it over everyone who is attending.