

## Australian Angles on Pilgrim - Follow Stage

Here are some extra resources for each of the sessions in the Follow stage of Pilgrim: a course for the Christian journey. They aim to contextualise the discussions that might take place in your small groups. None of this is mandatory; you don't need to use all or any of it! But as you plan your sessions you might find a question here or a discussion point there useful, so feel free to make use.

### Book One: Turning to Christ

1. Do you turn to Christ?
  - a. What is it about Jesus that might appeal to the sensibilities of Australians?
  - b. Attendance at church in Australia has declined over the last five decades. Is turning away from church the same as turning away from Jesus?
  
2. Do you believe and trust in God the Father?
  - a. Have a look at these images of God drawn by Australian schoolchildren. What strikes you? (see [www.formedfaith.org](http://www.formedfaith.org) for the powerpoint presentation)
  - b. Mateship is considered a great Aussie virtue? How might trusting a mate be the same as trusting God? How might it be different?
  
3. Do you believe in his son Jesus Christ?
  - a. Are there people in Australian public life that remind you of the person of Jesus?
  - b. If Jesus was in modern Australia do you think he would fit in?
  - c. Is the Australian trait of barracking for the underdog a Christian value?
  
4. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
  - a. What's an Australian image that comes to mind when you think about aspects of the Holy Spirit?
  - b. For prayer use in this session about the Holy Spirit, [have a skim though these liturgical resources provided by Australian author Bruce D Prewer](#)
  
5. Do you repent your sins?
  - a. What stories of forgiveness (or stories where forgiveness is needed) have you noticed in Australian culture lately?
  - b. Are there things considered unforgivable in Australian culture today, for instance, dobbing?
  
6. Do you renounce evil?
  - a. What darker parts of Australia's history would you consider "evil"?
  - b. Are there things that a newcomer to Australian cultures might see as "evil" that we generally accept? (e.g. Overuse of alcohol, tolerance of gambling, casual racism, treatment of refugees)
  - c. What's worse: overuse of alcohol or gambling?

## Book Two: The Lord's Prayer

1. Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name
  - a. There are many styles of prayer – (spontaneous, silent, liturgical, responsive, scriptural, singing etc). Are any more suited than others to Australian sensibilities?
  - b. How would you rewrite the first line of the Lord's Prayer in Australian vernacular?
  - c. Lifestyle.com.au recently reported that "One in ten Australian women surveyed revealed that their man has cried over the results of their favourite sports team." What moves you?  
(See more on the study at <http://www.lifestyle.com.au/health/what-makes-men-cry.aspx>)
  - d.
2. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven
  - a. How would Australians need to change corporately in order to serve the kingdom (or "reign") of God
  - b. How would you rewrite the first line of the Lord's Prayer in Australian vernacular?
  - c. Australians generally have a good lifestyle. What would they find attractive about the Kingdom of God?
3. Give us today our daily bread
  - a. What is 'daily bread' for Australians?
  - b. How would you rewrite the first line of the Lord's Prayer in Australian vernacular?
  - c. [Do Australians still believe in the idea of the "fair go"?](#)
4. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us
  - a. The word 'sorry' has been a more obvious part of the Australian landscape in the last decade or so. Watch this video and discuss your impressions. (RUDD'S SORRY SPEECH)
  - b. How would you rewrite the first line of the Lord's Prayer in Australian vernacular?
5. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
  - a. Our APBA version of the Lord's prayer has the line "Save us from the time of trial..." How is that different from "Lead us not into temptation"?
  - b. What is tempting for Australians? For you?
  - c. How would you rewrite the first line of the Lord's Prayer in Australian vernacular?
6. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen
  - a. Praise is central to Christianity. It is easy to argue that the 'Tall poppy syndrome' is central to dominant Australian cultures. Does the latter get in the way of the former? In what ways?
  - b. How would you rewrite the first line of the Lord's Prayer in Australian vernacular?
  - c. To whom or what do Australians give praise and glory? For what reasons?

## Book Three: The Commandments

1. Priorities
  - a. How would you define the term, “do-gooder”? How is this term symbolic of some things that might get in the way of Australians wanting to do good for others?
  - b. It is often said that Australians are good at responding to those in need due to natural disasters. Why might this be easier than helping someone who lives in your street?
2. Reverence
  - a. Who are our Australian ‘gods’? What earns them that status?
  - b. “Icon” is an overused term by our media outlets to describe everything from vegemite to Dame Edna. In what ways have you heard it used?
  - c. Are there sacred cows in Australian culture/s which are considered untouchable or un-criticisable?
3. Rest
  - a. In what ways is “taking a sickie” the same and different as ‘rest’ as it is described in this session?
  - b. Being busy is often seen as a virtue. Why might this be so? Can this idea get in the way of ‘rest’ as it is described in this session?
4. Respect
  - a. What kinds of things do some of our politicians do (without naming names!) that make it hard to respect them? What could they do that would lead you to respect them?
  - b. In Australian culture/s what earns respect?
5. Righteousness
  - a. As a country initially populated with convicts, stealing, whether from the stationery cupboard at work, or files over the internet, comes pretty easily to many Australians” Discuss.
  - b. In Australian culture/s what kinds of stealing or adultery can be justified?
6. Reliability
  - a. [Watch this video.](#) “First world problems”: heard of this idea? What are some of yours? How can you let go of these?
  - b. It is sometimes said that Australians generally have a high standard of living but often seem unsatisfied. If so, why?

## Book Four: The Beatitudes

1. Living with openness to God
  - a. Are there things that get in the way of you knowing daily that you are poor in spirit, as this session describes it? What are some of these?
  - b. Australians generally love to lend a hand but can find it difficult to be helped. How can this complicate a relationship with God?
  
2. Thirsting for what is right
  - a. Is putting others first the same as what some Australians call “mateship”? Compare and contrast...
  - b. Translate the word “meek” into 21<sup>st</sup> century Australian.
  - c. Thirst for justice? What needs attention in your community right now?
  - d. If [1965’s “Freedom Ride”](#) happened today, would you join? Why or why not?
  
3. Living transparently
  - a. What poor driving habits are hard to forgive? Which do you possess?
  - b. What’s easier: saying sorry or forgiving someone?
  
4. Peacemaking
  - a. Who are some noted Australian peacemakers? Nationally? More locally?
  - b. Here’s the ad for Lynx Peace bodyspray  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPR6U3kSnd8> Watch and comment...
  
5. Living as citizens in God’s kingdom
  - a. How much does your faith influence your political thinking and choices? Or, in other words, what comes first, living as a member of the kingdom or living as a citizen of Australia?
  - b. Do your Christian values ever conflict with the dominant values of Australian culture/s? If so, in what ways?
  - c. What are the values of your congregation and how are they expressed? Would an objective observer detect the same values you have listed?
  
6. Foundations
  - a. How would Australians finish this bumper sticker: Happiness is...?
  - b. [Watch some of Pharrell Williams’ song, Happy.](#) The song asks us to “Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth...” So... would you clap?
  - c. Is happiness a goal or a by-product?