



Rooted in Jesus

A discipleship course for Africa

Rooted in Jesus started in 2002 in the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

It was the initiative of their Diocesan Missioner, Stanley Hotay, who is now bishop of that diocese.

The problem Stanley identified was that many people were accepting Christ as their Saviour but they were not growing as the family of God either in their knowledge of the faith or in their ability to live it out in practical ways. Our task as leaders is not simply to make converts, but disciples – people who will not just attend church, but who will live transformed lives and reach out to those around them.

Rooted in Jesus seeks to address this problem and is proving an effective tool in many African countries. Produced at Stanley's request by Revd Dr Alison Morgan and Canon Roger Morgan, working with a team of experienced pastors and teachers in the Diocese of Leicester, it is published and supported from the Rinj International office in the UK. Available in 38 languages, it is now in use in 80 dioceses or networks in 16 countries, involving some 100,000 people. There is a separate Junior course for use with children aged 8-14.

Why is God blessing those who use this course?

- It covers the key issues of faith and life
- It builds up the local churches into a family of God's people
- It arises from African life and culture and meets the needs of African people, whatever their religious background

Key facts

Developed in Africa

A group course

16 countries

80 dioceses

38 languages



Used for

Discipleship groups

Confirmation classes

Training of catechists, evangelists, lay leaders

Evangelism and church planting

Sunday Schools

Aims

Matthew 28.18-20
2 Timothy 2.2

Making disciples who will teach others also

The course lasts two years and is contained in 4 books. The leader needs a Bible and the course book. Other members of the group do not need any books or materials. The course is designed so that it may be easily used with people who are illiterate, but so that it also challenges those who are more highly educated. It has been used both in rural areas where few can read and write, and in urban centres by bishops with their staff team.

Each course book contains 12 lessons and takes up to 6 months. So the group does not need to meet every week, which allows a break for church festivals, sowing and harvesting and so on.

At the end of each book the participants are given an oral examination. The leader usually sets aside a session before this test to revise, as he and the participants are keen to obtain the certificate that is given for a successful pass. Each person is tested on the memory verses and asked to give a short testimony of what God has been doing in their life.

The first two books, covered in the first year, focus on the individual, with such issues as – What is a Christian and how do I become one? Who is Jesus? How can the Bible reveal God's truth to us? How does God enter and work in my life through the Holy Spirit? The second year focuses on the Church and on Christian character, on developing in ministry, on sharing the good news and on living in the community. This last section encourages groups to identify the needs of their own local situation.

"I have no doubt that God has commissioned and anointed this course for Africa in much the same way as he is using Alpha in more urban and 'western' settings. We are already starting to see remarkable things in this Diocese as people and congregations are set on fire with the love of Jesus"- Bishop Martin Breytenbach, Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist, South Africa

What are the sessions like?

Each group of 12-15 members meets in an informal way, usually with seats in a circle. They may begin by sharing their news, telling one other of the joys and problems of their day and praying together. The group then recites the memory verses that they have learnt – there is one for each week of the course. The lesson follows with teaching, including visuals and drama. So, for instance, in



the lesson about temptation, groups of three will be asked to produce a 3 minute drama. They may produce one about a man having a lot of money from selling his harvest, his wife urging him to use it for food, clothing and educating the children, while his 'friend' urges him to buy a new cell phone. These dramas help relate the sessions to daily life. During the session the members divide up into smaller groups and at the end they pray in these groups over what they have learnt. The session ends with worship.

How is Rooted in Jesus introduced in a diocese?

The bishop contacts the RinJ international office and invites an experienced team to facilitate one or two 4 day conferences to train the clergy and other key leaders such as catechists/evangelists. If possible all the clergy should attend so that the course may be introduced in every parish. Only those who have attended the training seminar are qualified to lead a group. On returning home, each leader invites 12-15 others to join his or her group – where possible choosing people who will have the potential to lead future groups. For example a pastor may choose his catechists/evangelists, meeting with them before or after their regular staff meeting. A catechist/evangelist may choose members of the youth, the Mothers Union or Sunday School teachers. Leaders are also encouraged to use the course at home with their own family.

After a year, the team returns to lead a follow up seminar for the group leaders. At this seminar progress is reviewed, testimonies shared and challenges addressed. Group leaders are encouraged to identify those in their groups who may become leaders when the course is finished. Sometimes additional leaders may be trained at this point – especially in a large diocese where not all the pastors, catechists or evangelists were able to attend the first seminar.

After two years, the groups should be completing the course. At this point each group leader will begin the course again with a new group of people. And he will appoint some of his existing group members to lead groups of their own, meeting with them regularly to support and encourage them. This way the number of groups begins to multiply within the diocese.



There is also a *Rooted in Jesus Junior* course for use in Sunday Schools with children aged 8-14. Sunday School teachers who have completed the adult course may be trained to use this material with children.

How is the course organised within a diocese?

It is vital for the bishop to appoint a diocesan coordinator. It is helpful if this person is of some standing in the diocese and able to work closely with the bishop. Structures within dioceses vary, but the coordinator needs to be able to give a regular progress report both to the bishop and to the RinJ office. One of his tasks will be to communicate regularly with the group leaders – perhaps using a cell phone, or appointing deanery coordinators to help him. He needs to make plans for future seminars and arrange for the group oral examinations and certificate ceremonies. He may find it helpful to travel with the bishop on his confirmation visits, as this is a good time to present members with their certificates.

Rooted in Jesus is available in the international languages of English, French, Portuguese and Arabic, but dioceses are invited to translate the leader's booklets into local languages. The international office helps with formatting and illustrating the books ready for printing.

How do you get started?

By getting in touch with the *Rooted in Jesus* director, Revd Dr Alison Morgan, who will give you more information and, if you decide to go ahead, send an experienced training team to help you establish the course in your diocese. You may wish also to visit the RinJ website, www.rootedinjesus.net, where you will find commendations, testimonies and practical information about how the course is introduced and implemented.

"This is the most joyous day in our Diocese. I didn't think this Conference would bring such blessing. It will have a big impact" -
Bishop Godfrey Sebaba, Diocese of Morogoro, Tanzania



Rooted in Jesus is endorsed by the Anglican Communion
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