



A gospel-based response to COVID-19
Resourcing and equipping the local Church

Church Training Program
Resource and Discussion Guide

MODULE 1:

Churches leading in the context
of COVID-19

For information and support contact international.covidequip@sim.org

MODULE 1:

Churches Leading in the Context of COVID-19

View the video for Module 1 at:
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7254895/video/437966094>

Introduction:

As this church training program seeks to see health ministries, churches and communities working together for a gospel-based response to COVID-19, this module focuses on the call of the church to respond and the opportunities to make Christ known amidst the challenges of a pandemic.

This Resource and Discussion Guide is intended to support the content presented in the video module by providing an overview of key concepts, as well as further questions for thought and discussion.

A list of referenced materials and recommended resources is provided at the end of this guide. We strongly encourage you to access these for further information, as well as some very practical tools for responding to COVID-19 in your community.

Module 1 Outline:

- **Section 1** – Disciples expressing Christ’s love [00:00 – 10:34]
 - **Section 2** – Spiritual Leadership: Theological reflections on COVID-19 [10:35 – 19:18]
 - **Section 3** – Equipping the Church: Understanding myths & barriers [19:19 – 25:51]
 - **Section 4** – Being community [25:52 – 27:33]
 - **Section 5** – Spiritual resilience [27:34 – 36:32]
-

SECTION 1 – Disciples expressing Christ’s love

KEY CONCEPTS:

- We are disciples called to make disciples (Matthew 28:18:20).
- We can express Christ’s love and compassion (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
- We can address wrong theology about healing and God’s sovereignty.
- Suffering gives us a perspective of God (lessons from the life of Job).
- We have a responsibility to do what Christ is calling us to do as His body.

NOTES:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who is a disciple of Jesus Christ? How does one become a disciple of Christ?
2. In what ways can we, as disciples, express Christ’s love to those who are most affected by COVID-19?
3. How can we extend comfort to those who are ‘in many troubles’ that have come upon them, on account of COVID-19?

SECTION 2 – Spiritual Leadership: Theological reflections on COVID-19

KEY CONCEPTS:

- COVID-19 is a disease, it is not a curse or necessarily a sign of end times.
- Spiritual leadership in the age of COVID-19 –
 - Esther 4:14 – “...for such a time as this.”
 - 1 Chronicles 12:32 – understand the times.
 - 2 Timothy 1:7 – stand firm, with a sound mind.
- Who is my neighbor? (Luke 10:25-37)

NOTES:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a Leader in your church or community, what is God teaching you – what are you learning as you reflect on the impact of this pandemic in your context?
2. Jesus faced hardship and suffering for us. Discuss how his example should affect our actions during the time of a pandemic?
3. Do God’s answers to prayer depend on how much faith the sick person has? Or how much faith the person who prays has?
4. “...from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do...” (1 Chronicles 12:32). What does this teach us about the times we are living in?
5. Who is your neighbor and how should you treat him or her?

SECTION 3 – Equipping the Church: Understanding myths & barriers

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Understanding myths about COVID-19 so that we can respond appropriately.
- Importance of being aware of – and following – guidance from government and medical experts.
- Responding to fear to overcome stigma about COVID-19.
- As leaders we must have, and communicate, correct information and knowledge.

NOTES:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Is God obligated to heal people if I pray for them?
2. “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32, NIV). Discuss the role of Jesus’ followers as ambassadors of truth during this time of COVID-19.
3. There are many myths that are associated with COVID-19. What are some of these myths? How do we overcome them?
4. Fear is one of the emotions that impacts COVID-19 patients. How can we support them to uphold “faith over fear”?

SECTION 4 – Being community

KEY CONCEPTS:

- The need to reframe our understanding of 'community'.
- Functional alternatives for staying connected and maintaining community during COVID-19 times.

NOTES:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. COVID-19 and 'social distancing' guidelines have disrupted our usual ways of being 'community'. How can we maintain connection and community despite the current challenges?
2. During COVID-19, we can stand together against intensified issues such as violence and abuse. What issues are you aware of in your church or community? How can you – and other leaders – address these matters?

SECTION 5 – Spiritual resilience

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Keeping hope alive –
 - Nothing will separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39).
 - Do not be anxious (Philippians 4:6-7).
 - Have faith for a positive end (Hebrews 11:1).
 - We carry the message of hope (Deuteronomy 31:8).

NOTES:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In your own words, from Philippians 4:6-7, how would you explain Christ's peace to someone who may be anxious?

2. How open are the people in your church and/or community to hear what God is teaching us through this season? How might you offer hope?

3. How do we maintain our spiritual fervor and vitality in this era of COVID-19?

Referenced materials and recommended resources:

- Dr Githinji Gitahi - Group CEO, AMREF Health, Africa in *Christian Journal for Global Health (CJGH)*
- Dr Matthew Santosh Thomas, “Leadership in Pandemics”, in *Christian Journal for Global Health. April 2020. 7(1)*
- Tearfund, “Guidance for the local church” (short video clip on the seven important roles the church can play), 2020 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A - B2uO6io&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3Xt8sXbbYJ_3NdEJ7MwFrdBlmqVLt6JscIcTnmEqiqvWKkgWtP8VS8Nio](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A-B2uO6io&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3Xt8sXbbYJ_3NdEJ7MwFrdBlmqVLt6JscIcTnmEqiqvWKkgWtP8VS8Nio)
- Tearfund, “Theological resources for COVID”, 2020 https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/covid-19/biblical_resources_for_covid-19/
- World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), “Caring for a Family Member with COVID-19 – Becoming the Accompanying Church”, 2020 <https://covid19.worlddea.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Caring-for-a-Family-Member-with-Covid-19-2.pdf>
- World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), “Forming Church, Community & Health Facility Partnerships”, 2020 https://covid19.worlddea.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Church_Community_Health_Facility_Partnerships_final.pdf

COVID-19: SEVEN IMPORTANT ROLES CHURCHES CAN PLAY

- 1 Promote correct and clear messages
- 2 Counter false and harmful messaging to resist panic and prevent stigma
- 3 Model safe behaviour
- 4 Care for the congregation
- 5 Care for the community, especially the most vulnerable
- 6 Support people to think biblically about how to respond to the virus
- 7 Intercede before God for an end to Covid-19

tearfund