

## Leaders' guide

### Who is my neighbour? Faith, housing and the local community.

London Citizens is an alliance of churches, schools, and other faith and community groups, working together for justice and the common good. In the lead up to the election for Mayor of London in May 2016 and the mayoral election assembly on April 28<sup>th</sup> in the Copperbox, London Citizens is working with communities to tackle London's housing crisis. This series has been put together by members of Lambeth Citizens, a local alliance of London Citizens, and explores the issue of housing and the role of faith in responding to the housing crisis.

This course is for churches who wish to look at what the Bible has to say on housing, to listen to the perspectives of our neighbours from London Citizens, to pray and to act for change. There are five sessions:

- 1) The Good Samaritan and what the parable tells us about being a good neighbour.
- 2) The relationship between tenants and landlords as one aspect of the housing crisis.
- 3) The impact of housing on our communities.
- 4) How housing affects our society and the relationship between the rich and the poor.
- 5) Moving into action together.

Each session should last approximately an hour to 90 minutes and consist of the following elements:

**Opening prayer (five mins):** this is an opportunity to lift the course and the life of your community before God in prayer in your own way.

**Feedback (five mins – if you did a session the previous week):** this is an opportunity to share what you have learnt as a group from your action and reflection over the last week.

**Introductory rounds question (15-20 mins):** this course is intended to build relationships by learning more about each other and our communities, so each session starts with a rounds question. Ask the question, give people some time to think, and explain that each person has one minute each to answer. You may wish to invite people to introduce themselves at the start of their answer. Be strict with time.

**Scripture (10-15 mins):** we take a text from the Bible each week to reflect on how God views housing and communities, and how we might act in light of that. We use one question at the end of each scripture to help us reflect on the text. You may wish to prepare someone in advance to read the scripture.

**'Listening to our neighbours' video (five mins):** each video explores a different aspect of housing and faith from the perspective of London Citizens members in Lambeth.

**Reflection questions (10-20 mins):** continue to listen, reflect and build relationships as a group. Ensure there is enough time to discuss all the questions.

**Action questions (10-20 mins):** "Faith without action is dead" (James 2.17). Each session suggests ways to turn our reflection into action together.

**Closing prayer (five mins):** this is an opportunity to pray for the actions you have decided on and to give thanks for what you have learnt about God, each other and your community.

We would recommend groups of four up to 12 people but it is also possible to have a larger group which splits up for the discussions. You might like to include worship and/or food if you have more time.

As a group leader, you will have responsibility for taking your group through each session and facilitating discussions. Try to keep the discussion open and informal but be prepared to gently bring people back to the question or topic where necessary. The timings for each section are approximate so don't worry if you go over or under time, just try to keep the whole session to time.

Finally, if you have any questions about the course or any feedback you'd like to give, please feel free to contact us at [hello@theology-centre.org](mailto:hello@theology-centre.org)

Follow the conversation and share photos of your discussions and actions on Twitter:  
#whoismyneighbour @citizensuk @theologycentre

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### Further resources

London Citizens Housing Manifesto 2016: [http://www.citizensuk.org/housing\\_manifesto\\_2016](http://www.citizensuk.org/housing_manifesto_2016)  
(Printed copies available from Citizens UK or your local organiser)

Citizens UK: <http://www.citizensuk.org/>

Finding housing for refugee resettlement: <http://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/calling-landlords/>

The Robes Project (Night Shelter): <http://www.rob.es.org.uk/>

"What is Community Organising?": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddBjb-xRPOk>

Housing Justice: <http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/>

Building Something Better: Reflections on Theology & Housing: [http://www.theology-centre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/BuildingSomethingBetter\\_V21.pdf](http://www.theology-centre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/BuildingSomethingBetter_V21.pdf)

Our Common Heritage: [http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/data/\\_\\_resources/645/Our-Common-Heritage.pdf](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/data/__resources/645/Our-Common-Heritage.pdf)

Shelter (housing charity who give advice and campaign for those in housing need):  
<http://england.shelter.org.uk/>

Prayer resources: <http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/prayers.html>