FLASHLAB

Method

How to make resources in a FlashLab

The FlashLab Method

Is there something you need for your ministry or team? A curriculum, Bible resource, or manual? Or you might want a video, song, new version of an older resource, a training session, game, info kit, graphic, PowerPoint, or diagram. Or do you need to develop a strategy, a vision statement, or something else!

A FlashLab is a guided method that helps you collaborate with others to create a new resource together. It's a simple, defined process that guides you from start to finish.

This manual will get you started. It's free to use. Take it, use it, and share it!

KidsGames

Refugee Like Me

DANIEL, JESUS and NAAMAN'S SERVANT GIRL

KidsGames

Play the Game of your Life

5 sessions on Peter & Jesus

4 Stations

prayerfit

4 prayer activity stations for families individuals teams training groups all ages everyone!

KidsGames

Football Academy

Top 10 ideas

prayerfit

for families individuals teams training groups all ages everyone!

Family Challenges

7 weeks to help strengthen your family

Easter in your Street

Neighbourhood gatherings and building bridges

KidsGames

Brawl Stars Esports Tournaments

Reaching gamer kids.

KidsGames

Daniel

5 sessions on Daniel

All Abilities adaptation guide

KidsGames

A guide to making your KidsGames as inclusive and accessible as possible.

Fun and Discovery Games

22 Games for Refugees

Jesus' rescue plan

5 sessions about Easter for KiG

God's Christmas Gift

Christmas | Kids Group

5 sessions about the birth of Jesus

Top 10 Easter Ideas

For families and intergenerational services

KidsGames

God's Christmas Gift

Christmas | Family Pack

5 sessions about the birth of Jesus

TIPS FOR LEADERS SERVING CHILDREN WITH TRAUMA

GUIDELINES TO HELP LEADERS/VOLUNTEERS MAINTAIN A CHRISTLIKE FOCUS AND HEALTHY BALANCE WHILE SERVING CHILDREN

1. Pray

2. Gather information

3. Stay focused on the mission

4. Team

5. Your body

Get more tips at

SERVING IN CRISIS AND DISASTER (MAX7.ORG)

Soccer CUBE

Passing
Shooting
Defending
Dribbling
Monkey in the Middle
Coach Questions

families in crisis

familyfit

You are God's special gift

Impossible Easter Challenge

EASTER ACTIVITY STATIONS LEADER GUIDE

Family Fit Christmas

12 days of Fitmas

familyfit christmas

7 minutes to help grow your family fitness faith fun

www.family.fit

familyfit

Family Fitness Faith Fun

World Refugee Day

family.fit

3D Easter Cube

Your King Comes!

Easter

five pre-school bible sessions

He isn't here GOD HAS RAISED HIM TO LIFE just as Jesus said he would

FlashLab Overview

What is a FlashLab?

A FlashLab is a guided and collaborative process to rapidly create strategies or resources for communities worldwide. Everyone can offer their unique blend of gifts, passions, skills and interests to benefit the Body of Christ.

Why do a FlashLab?

There are many ways to make new tools and resources. FlashLab helps bring focus, energy and, most importantly, a short deadline to see it completed! How many times have we seen good ideas start, but never finish? FlashLab is designed to help you start, create and finish a new resource.

Where did it come from?

The FlashLab method developed globally as an experiment in March 2022, initially for *family.fit*, as:

- A way to create new resources …
- Across a team of volunteers …
- That was spread across the world

In a month, 55 new *family.fit* resources were created and the FlashLab method was born!

New every morning

FlashLab is a process and method for making new ministry tools and resources.

You might ask why? We know that:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16 NIV

So why do we need more tools and resources?

At the heart of FlashLab is a desire to see people everywhere engaged with God's Word. Making new tools and resources is a way of training, equipping, engaging, inspiring and communicating God's Word in many languages. Maybe it's a Bible curriculum or a video or a training session or an experiential game. Any one of these can be used by God to help others engage with His Word and meet Jesus.

The Lord's love is fresh and new each day.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
   his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
   great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV

Bible Reflection

As part of this FlashLab, take some time to read the Bible and reflect on how the Lord has made us:

In being creative

Read about the first person in the Bible said to be "filled with the Spirit of God" – Bezalel (Exodus 31: 1-5). What creative gifts can we offer?

David, so creative, wanted to "sing a new song" to the Lord (Psalms 96 & 98). What can we offer to the Lord that is fresh and new today?

In our giving of time

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. How can we be generous in our time, encouragement, and work for the benefit of others?

In sharing our gifts in unity

Each member of a team has different gifts to offer, but we are all one under Jesus. Read Ephesians 4:1-16 or 1 Corinthians 12:12-19. For FlashLab to work, there will be different people serving in different ways.

How to Start

The goal of the FlashLab process is to take ideas from their overwhelming and "impossible beginnings" into do-able steps so that more great Kingdom ideas can be shared widely across the whole body of Christ.

The process will be rapid (the "Flash" part) and it is experimental, so it's okay to test, fail, and try again (the "Lab" part).

Here are a few ways to start:

1. **Begin with a team** – use an existing team or create a FlashLab team from your church, ministry or others with a shared interest.
2. **Share the vision of the FlashLab** and ask what you could make that would help others.
3. **Start the process** – this manual will guide you and give you pointers along the way.
4. **Keep talking** – a quick "feedback loop" is important to keep your team updated on what each person is doing.
5. **Grow your strengths** – some parts of this process you will be good at and find easy.
6. **Work in your weaknesses** – try new things and don't be afraid to fail. Even trying will help you improve.
7. **Share what you make** with others!

FlashLab Process

5 stages of a FlashLab

These two pages give you a big picture view of the whole process of a FlashLab. This guidebook will then take you through each of these steps in more detail.

1 **Look & listen**	In this stage you will: • Look around you • Listen to needs **Ask:** What would be helpful to create? What do your people need? What is the problem you are wanting to fix? Or what opportunity could you serve?
2 **Think & explore**	Taking what you discover above, you then: • Come up with lots of ideas (Try brainstorming as many ideas as you can!) • Take time for your brain to rest • Play with the ideas • Choose the best idea to take forward

3

Make & create

Once you have something to make:

- Start creating it
- Edit and complete a draft
- Complete any design elements

4

Test & refine

Test your draft – it does not need to be the final version:

- Test it in a real setting
- Get feedback
- Refine it based on feedback
- Finish it

5

Share & multiply

FlashLabs are all about equipping and resourcing others, so the final stage is:

- Share it
- Translate it
- Celebrate!

Different Models

FlashLab Variations

Since the initial experiment, FlashLabs have been tried in many ways, both face to face in organizations and conferences, as well as virtually and in a hybrid mix of virtual and face to face.

Time variations

Mini FlashLab	*20 mins - 1 day*	A quickfire process to develop one simple idea from start to finish.
Typical FlashLab	*1-5 days*	Enough time to create a few resources with a team or in a conference.
Extended FlashLab	*1-6 weeks*	Enough time for a global group to collaborate virtually or to develop more complex resources.

Location variations

Face to face	With people all in the same room.
Virtual	With people in different locations connected via technology.
Hybrid	A mix of face to face and virtually.

1
Look & listen

Learn and discover what you would like to make by understanding who you are making it for.

1.1 | Get started

The first stage of the FlashLab process is about identifying one or more of these examples:

Is there something you want to make?	*You might already have a project in mind, or you may have been asked to make something.*
Is there a problem you are trying to solve?	*You might have an area that needs addressing and would like to make a resource to help train your leaders.*
Is there a need you would like to address?	*As you look around you, you may find a pressing need no one has addressed in your context or language.*
Is there an opportunity you would like to take?	*You might have a great opportunity coming up, a big event or a special invitation and you need a plan, strategy or resource to make the most of the opportunity.*

FlashLab is about helping you create a new resource to assist with your need. What you want might be very clear or may only be a vague idea. That's okay as the process will help to sharpen your focus.

1.2 | **Ask questions**

Do some 'looking and listening' and ask good questions, of yourself and others.

Look & Listen

Make sure you understand the people whom you are wanting to serve through the FlashLab process:

- Who are they (age, gender, groupings)?
- Where are they?
- What are their needs? How can we help them?
- What do they need to know about God?
- What is God's message to them?

Keep these answers, and the faces of the people you serve, in your mind. Make a chart or page of your audience with the answers, any helpful pictures, and information.

FlashLab is about creating resources for a purpose and to serve the target audience you have identified. So ask:

- What kind of resource would best serve them?
- What different types of resources could they be?
- What types might be most useful in the context?
- What gap might this resource fill?

2
Think & explore

Take time to come up with good, fresh and helpful ideas. Choose one to take forward.

2.1 | Explore ideas

The second stage is about engaging your brain and heart in different ways to come up with ideas that will help serve the needs discovered in stage 1.

Produce many ideas

In your team, take 20-30 minutes to produce as many ideas as you can. Stop.

- Don't discuss or judge ideas yet – just allow the group to write down or share their ideas.
- Build on everyone's ideas (For example, one person suggests an idea, and others take up the "Yes! And ..." challenge, offering something that builds upon the original idea).
- Keep pushing your brain for more ideas. Your 10th or 30th idea might end up the best one!
- Add a random object or word into the brainstorm (examples: blue, sandwich, cloud, octopus). Try to create more ideas using this word as a launching pad.

Capture everyone's ideas in a visible way. Use what you have: boards, small notes, large sheets of paper. *Google Jamboard* is a good free online tool for brainstorming ideas. It is especially useful for virtual FlashLabs.

2.2 | **Rest and forget**

Your brain has been made by our God to be incredibly creative. What is amazing is that your brain is at its most creative, when you are NOT trying to be creative!

The next step in this stage of the FlashLab is to leave the brainstorm and focus on something else!

- Rest
- Go for a walk or play sport
- Do something different

Let your brain do its work while you are focused elsewhere. You may discover that you produce your best ideas in the shower, when you are running, or when you wake up. This is your amazing brain doing its work in the background.

Write down any new thoughts or modifications to build on existing ideas that 'pop' into your mind.

2.3 | **Play with ideas**

Play is a valuable exercise for the ideas your team produced in step 2.1.

Choose 3 of the ideas:

- One that seems easy and practical
- One that seems outrageous or difficult
- One in the middle – not too easy or too hard

Here are some ways to play with ideas. *You can find more information in the FlashLab Toolkit.*

<u>**Bend** an idea</u> by imagining what it would be like if:

- **It was upside down** – for example, instead of one big event, you had many small events.
- **If it was shrunk** – instead of a 50-page manual, you made one with only 2 pages.

<u>**Break** an idea</u> by dividing the idea into its parts and:

- **Rearrange the parts** back into a new order.
- **Discard one part** and see what you have.

<u>**Blend** ideas</u> by:

- **Blending two of your different ideas** together. Juggle these two ideas around in your mind and see what they might become.
- **Look at an idea through a different lens** such as the perspective of a child, an ant, or from high above.

2.4 | Choose ideas

Once you have played with the ideas, take time to pray, think and choose what you will develop.

How to choose a good idea

Some of these aspects might be helpful in choosing which idea to take forward:

- After prayer, can you identify which one God would have you make?
- Which idea is going to best serve the needs and the people you identified in stage 1?
- Which idea excites you most?
- Which idea is achievable in the time you have?
- Which idea stretches you and takes you into creating something unique?

3
Make & create

It's time to make your resource.
Share the work around your
team, communicate often, and
finish a draft quickly.

3.1 | **Before you start**

The third stage of the FlashLab is about making something together. As you begin, take some time to:

A. Define the project

1. What type of product are you making?

   Is it a document, video, audio, visual, something else, or a combination of different things?

2. What is the size and format?

   How many pages would be good? How long?

3. What knowledge or content is needed to begin?

   Is research needed? More conversations? More ideas? More exploration?

B. Define what skills are needed

4. What production skills are needed to complete your project?

   Do you need writing, graphics, editing, filming, or something else?

5. Do you have these skills in your team?

   Who else could you invite to help?

C. Discuss your working process

6. Discuss and let team members choose tasks/roles and work out how to do tasks they don't usually do.

   Expect to be stretched! Work with a partner to encourage and support each other.

7. Set progress deadlines and team expectations.

   Break down the project into small steps with short deadlines.

8. How will you communicate? How often?

   Are you face to face? Will you use Telegram/WhatsApp? Zoom for calls? What is most helpful for everyone? What time zone works for all?

Remember to have a tone of encouragement and support one other!

3.2 | **Start making it**

Get making!

Some helpful tips on your process

- Pray often. Commit the process to the Lord at every stage.
- Make a quick and *imperfect* first draft of your project – if possible, within a few hours.
- Have a fast *feedback loop* within your team – where team members can give their thoughts to help develop the draft.
- Allocate small tasks with short deadlines. Create parts of the project quickly and build them together.
- Save your files with a version number and have some way of sharing your files easily (Google Drive or similar).
- All resources need to be translatable. Share your files in an editable file format (like WORD) that will help translation, as well as providing "finished files" (like PDFs).
- REMEMBER: It is okay to fail!   [FAIL – First Attempt In Learning]
- REMEMBER: It is okay not to be perfect – perfection is God's role.

3.3 | Writing

Most projects will involve some writing. Here is what we have learned so far ...

Some helpful tips on writing

- It helps if your team has a *production pipeline* – for example, a person writes a segment, and then passes it to someone else for editing. That person sends it to the next person to lay out the document. When writing is complete, it can be proofread for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Keep sentences clear and short to serve translation.
- Avoid technical and localized terminology.
- Make sure your language is consistent (for example, person and tense).
- Tone of voice needs to match/suit the audience.

See these capacity building kits for help with writing:

https://www.max7.org/en/resource/guideonwritinginteams

https://www.max7.org/en/resource/guidetowritingcurriculum

3.4 | Editing

An editor advocates for the end user and refines the ideas of the writing team.

Some helpful tips on editing

- Ensure you understand the vision and purpose of the resource.
- Know the target audience and the intended context for the resource.
- Rewrite sentences to make them simple and understandable. Change the order for better flow of ideas or learning design.
- Check for consistency in words and concepts – is something described the same way throughout the document?
- Check how the Bible is used in the resource.
- Not all editors can proofread, and not all proofreaders are good editors.
- An editor is ideally working in their first language.

See this capacity building kit for help with editing

https://www.max7.org/en/resource/aguideonhowto editresources

3.5 | Design and graphics

Most projects will involve some aspect of design. Here are some learnings from previous FlashLabs.

Some helpful tips on design and graphics

- Save time by using a template *(FlashLabs have some already).*
- Stock images/footage save a lot of time – free options include *pexels.com*; unsplash.com; pixabay.com; gratisography.com; freeimages.com.
- Free Christian images include: *freelyphotos.com; creationswap.com.*
- Make sure your designs can be translated – do not embed text into pictures.
- Use software/programs that are readily accessible (or free).
- Keep designs simple.
- Get help by asking experts.
- Learn more by watching tutorials on YouTube.
- Use fonts that are accessible and free to others (ie. Google fonts or similar).
- Limit use of fonts to a maximum of two per resource.

3.6 | Audio and video

Some projects will involve audio or video. Here are some learnings from previous FlashLabs.

Some helpful tips on video

- Mobile phones are powerful tools to capture both video and audio.
- Keep the camera steady (if possible, use a tripod or rest on something solid).
- Limit camera movement – avoid zooming or panning. If you need to get closer, move your body.
- Generally, shoot video with the light behind you, and with the light shining at an angle to the subject or person you are filming.
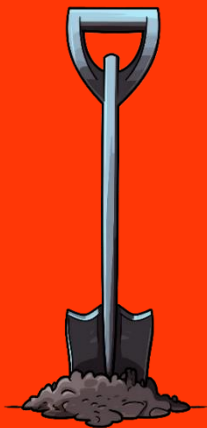
Some helpful tips on audio

- If recording audio, get as close as you can to the person speaking and move to a quiet place.

4

Test & refine

Test your resource in a real situation, learn from this, and then refine it.

4.1 | **Test your product**

Remember your product is being made for real people to use. Now is the time to test it in real situations.

First ask, what area of the resource needs to be tested? (The theology? Learning design? Content? Function? Other?) What needs to be tested will determine if peer reviewing, field-testing with a group or expert feedback is best.

Field testing

Testing your resource with a sample target audience will help you refine it. Some of these options may help:

- You may want to test one session of a curriculum with a group, even if more sessions are being written.
- Ideally try it with a group who does not know you are producing it, and who will give reliable, honest feedback.
- Test with a small group of people.
- Use feedback from surveys, or observation, or feedback from the leaders/users of your resource.

4.2 | **Survey Feedback**

To get helpful feedback, ask what you need to know, and offer space for thoughts and ideas you have not considered. Set a short time limit to get fresh thoughts and ideas quickly. One way to gather feedback is via a survey.

A survey for participants/leaders/users

Structure your feedback questions to explore different areas of usefulness like:

- What was helpful/useful?
- What worked best?
- What did not work so well?
- What surprised/delighted/shocked you?
- What is missing?
- What would you change to improve this?

4.3 | **Feedback by Observation**

Another feedback method is by your team or someone else observing how the resource is received, and then writing it down. Write notes about:

- At what times were people most engaged?
- When did they lose attention?
- How well did they understand the instructions/main points/message?
- What do you want to keep or change now you have seen it in action?
- What additional questions do you have for the leaders who tested your resource?

Expert feedback

For areas like theology, learning design, medical or specialist content – list specialists the team can ask for help to create the most useful and accurate resources.

4.4 | **Refining & polishing**

Once you have tested your resource and gathered feedback, it's time to make any last changes and do final checks.

Refining and final editing

Decide as a team what feedback you will implement –

- What is critical and must be changed?
- What is important and should be changed?
- What might be helpful to change if there's time?

Polishing and checking the final product

Final checks would involve:

- A final proofread and layout check.
- Check you have permission to use images.
- Make sure all internet links function and are correct.
- Quote the Bible accurately, with proper references.
- Acknowledge all sources.
- Make sure the overall quality and layout looks okay.
- Check that your final product can be translated.

4.5 | **Finishing**

You are close to finishing! Congratulations!

Finishing well

In many FlashLabs the resources are shared widely on resource websites (like Max7 or ReadySetGO) and through social media (like Telegram and WhatsApp). Here is a checklist to consider:

- Output your product in different formats (for example, Word and PDF; or videos, video stems, audio/SFX stems; PowerPoint etc).
- Gather the resource files together and share the final published version with the whole team.
- Upload your resource to where it is needed, making translatable files easy to access.
- If uploading to a site like Max7, also remember to upload files for translators, blank copies, or wordless versions of videos.

5
Share &
multiply

Once your resource is finished, share it with others. Help it get translated, evaluate the FlashLab process, and celebrate!

5.1 | **Sharing your resource**

Making something to share is at the heart of a FlashLab. We're giving our creativity away for the sake of Jesus' Kingdom.

Where to share

FlashLabs recommend sharing resources freely and widely. How you share is up to your team. You may already have a network, organization, church, denomination, or movement with which to share your resource. We have found that many people all over the world need resources they cannot afford to buy, so consider sharing freely - see the impact multiply!

You could also share it:

- On Max7.org – a free resource sharing site – see the FlashLab toolkit on how to upload to Max7.
- On global sites – social media, chat apps, YouTube, etc. Be aware of any security implications or places where best not to share.

5.2 | Translating

Your language is just one of 7,100 languages. Imagine how many more people would benefit from your hard work if it was available and shared in one other language? WOW!

How to translate

- As you share your resource, invite those in your network who speak other languages to volunteer their time to help translate it!
- Resources that are simple, and in a file format that is easy to translate, are much better for translators. Max7 has a team of volunteer translators who generously translate into over 40 languages.
- Some resources in FlashLabs have been created without words. They can be used in any language!

Things to remember

- If your resource is long and complex, it is less likely to be translated.
- Avoid using difficult metaphors, idiomatic language, acronyms, or *word and language related* jokes. These are difficult to translate.

5.3 | Evaluate

Learning and evaluating is a valuable last step. We need to keep observing and learning to improve the methods we use. Next time, our work will be better.

Short term

Take some time to discuss the FlashLab process:

- What worked?
- What could be improved?
- What surprised you?
- What new idea could we do next time?

Share your feedback with the facilitators of your FlashLab.

Longer term

Some of the team should be given the task of tracking how the resource has gone over time:

- Is it working? Is it achieving the goal you had? How?
- Is it multiplying?
- Is it being used in a way you did not intend?
- Has it led to new ideas?

5.4 | Celebrate

Your FlashLab should finish with a celebration!

Some ways to celebrate

- Have a meal together if you are all in the same place.
- Pray to the Lord and give thanks for the work done and for each team member's part.
- Celebrate the difficult parts and share encouraging words with each other.

Thank you for being a part of FlashLab. Please share this booklet with others who might find it useful. We hope you are encouraged enough to do another FlashLab and see more tools, resources and translations serving the Kingdom worldwide.

Thank you for reading the FlashLab Method booklet. If you want to go deeper, have a look at:

- **The FlashLab Toolkit**
- **Other Toolkits on Max7**