

**THIS
IS OUR
FAITH**



This Is Our Faith

St Andrew's Community Chapel

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton, IL: Standard Bible Society, 2016.

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FOREWORD

Ask a Believer to engage in “Follow-Up” – that process of helping someone learn more and grow in their Christian Faith and Walk – and you are likely to receive a negative reply along the lines of: “Who, me? I don’t know how and am not qualified.” The fact that most Follow-Up material currently available are presented in a “Bible Study” format intimidates many Believers, despite our conviction of the importance of Follow-Up of New Believers.

With the view that those who first introduced the New Believer to the Faith are best placed to help them begin their first steps with Christ, *This Is Our Faith* seeks to provide a simple discussion tool with which every Believer may engage in personal Follow-Up of their loved ones and neighbours who make the joyful decision to receive our Lord Jesus Christ into their lives.

The personal engagement of all Believers in this process is meant to: a) help each of us keep the Commission to “Go therefore and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19-20); b) personally grow in our walk with God as the process of discussing with and caring for New believers stretch up; and c) make Follow-Up a little more comfortable for a New Believer. Every Believer should have experienced the various aspects covered in *This Is Our Faith*, and should be able to share our discoveries and understand the challenges.

Follow-Up cannot get any simpler than *This Is Our Faith*, so step out in faith and take up the challenge to engage personally in the Follow-Up of a loved one or friend. Do not give up should you falter on your first steps. Persevere, for practice will grant you greater confidence. Remember: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

Go therefore and make disciples!

Daniel Tong
Vicar
St Andrew’s Community Chapel

HOW-TO GUIDE

THE PROCESS is simply for us to engage in conversation with regard to our Assurance (of salvation), Building a Relationship (through prayer, study of the Bible, and worship), Walking the Talk (so to be renewed and transformed under the power of the Holy Spirit), and Sharing the Faith (as part of the world-wide Community of Believers testifying to the goodness and grace of God). The focus being to have a Conversation with another about our Faith.

TO BEGIN, arrange to meet regularly (as convenient but no longer than weekly) for around 45 minutes to an hour – which may be over lunch (especially if you are colleagues) – at a reasonably quiet place where your conversation may not be disturbed.

NEXT, read together the assigned Scripture, and share the provided discussion starter – if a video or audio link, you might wish do view or listen to the same prior to coming together. Open a conversation over the topic of the session by asking what the New Believer think, and share your own thoughts and experiences. Keep the Learning Point of the session clearly before you.

Be careful to listen and not simply push your own ideas. Be honest if you do not know the answer to questions raised. Simply acknowledge the question and say that you will check and get back to the individual, and please ensure that you do! Do note that it is okay to extend your conversation over any the topics over a few sessions.

THIRD, set forth little achievement targets related to what was discussed – for example, for Building a Relationship: Pray, purpose for you both to pray daily for each other. Remind each other of your next meeting, and close your time together in prayer.

1

Assurance of Salvation

a. Scripture:

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13)

b. Learning Point:

Confidence in the fact of our being saved, here and now; not on the basis of anything we have done or are required to do, but solely on the basis of our having Jesus in our life.

c. Discussion:

It is said that while reviewing his army one day, Napoleon's horse became frightened and went away at full speed. The Emperor's life was in danger as he had lost and could not get hold of the reins. A private in the ranks saw it, and springing out of the ranks got hold of the horse's head at the peril of his own life. The Emperor was very much pleased. Touching his hat, he said to him, "I make you Captain of my Guard." At this, the soldier threw away his gun, stepped out of the ranks of the soldiers, and went up to where the bodyguard stood. The captain of the bodyguard ordered him back into the ranks, but he said "No! I won't go!" "Why not?" "Because I am Captain of the Guard." "You Captain of the Guard?" "Yes;" replied the soldier. "Who said it?" and the man, pointing to the Emperor, said, "He said it." That was enough. Nothing more could be said. He took the

Emperor at his word. My friends, if God says anything, let us take Him at His word. (*Napoleon and the Private* (abridged), D.L. Moody's Anecdotes)

d. Sharing:

What do you think of God's promise in 1 John 5:11-13 that He has given us eternal life in His Son, Jesus? Do you believe in this promise? How might we grow in confidence in this promise?

2

Building a Relationship: Pray

a. Scripture:

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15)

b. Learning Point:

We speak, He will hear us. We ask, He will answer. We have the confidence to know that God is always with us.

c. Discussion:



View “How to Pray Step by Step”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgFFGXNhvXU>

God is neither ‘Santa Claus’ nor ‘The Scrooge’,¹ He may not always give you what you ask for it is pure foolishness to ask God contrary to what He teaches us in the Holy Scriptures.

Ideally prayer should be woven into the fabric of our lives until it’s the fabric.

To pray is to communicate with God. Prayer starts with a confidence that there is hope in whatever we ask for and ends with an assurance that whatever we ask shall be done.

d. Sharing:

“Pray like little children.”² Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

What happens if God does not answer your prayers the way you want or expect?

Notes:

1. He is a selfish and miserly old man who works as an Investment Banker and Commodities broker in London. Scrooge has no appreciation for fun and kindness, seeing it as a waste, and is hated by everyone else due to his nature.
2. Children approach God with humbleness. They know they are dependent on God. They are trusting, teachable, open to love, responsive to love. Children know they need help from God. They respond with joy and love. Sometimes little children see a bigger picture when their prayers are not answered the way they have asked for originally. Yet, children are thankful and open to learn from God.

3

Building a Relationship: Read

a. Scripture:

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

b. Learning Point:

The Word of God is to be read with diligence, preparation, and prayer; so that we may accept it with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

c. Discussion:

In George Foreman's book, *God in My Corner*, the former boxing champion writes:

“In 1974, before I went to Africa to fight Muhammad Ali, a friend gave me a Bible to take along on my trip. He said, ‘George, keep this with you for good luck.’ I believed the Bible was just a shepherd's handbook, probably because the only verse I knew was ‘the Lord is my shepherd.’ But I was always looking for luck, so I carried that Bible with me. I had lucky pennies and good luck charms, so now I added the ‘lucky’ Bible to my collection of superstitious items. After I lost the fight, I threw the Bible away. I never even opened it. I thought, The Bible didn't help me win, so why do I need it? I thought I'd get power simply from owning it; I didn't realize that I needed to read it and believe what it says.

Since then, I've come to understand that the Bible is my road map, not my good luck charm. It's like a light that shines on the correct path, and it has never led me down the wrong road. It has helped me make right decisions, particularly when I've read the books of Psalms and Proverbs, which are tremendously practical guides. When I've read the teachings of Jesus, I've learned the right way to respond to people. Sometimes I'll find examples in the Bible of people who were faced with decisions similar to the ones I've had to make.”

d. Sharing:

What do you think of the fact that God speaks to us through the bible?
What do you think will be a good attitude to have while reading the bible?

4

Building a Relationship: Worship

a. Scripture:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100:1-5)

b. Learning Point:

The LORD is God. We are created to worship God. Worship involves the giving of our whole being, to our loving, kind, faithful, and everlasting God.

c. Discussion:

Have you seen young children performing in any setting? It could be a kindergarten graduation concert, or a simple presentation at a mall. The children who are performing, will do their act, in their varying levels of ability, and confidence. No matter, how well or how badly they do, you will see parents, grandparents, and family members clamouring to get up close to video the occasion, giving their full attention and support, and enjoying the moment with their young child.

That is how it is like when we worship God together in church on a Sunday morning. We are like the little children before for our Parent, our Father God. In a worship service, we are giving a concert to God, filled with our praises, thanks, shouts of joy, moments of silences, prayers, and listening. We, like children, can be confident that God is receiving and enjoying the moment with us, when we are fully present in our worship to God as a church. Beyond Sunday, we also worship God every day. Christians call this practice, “Quiet Time” or “Devotion”. Each day, we take time out to worship God, by spending time to pray, and read the bible.¹

d. Sharing:

Psalm 100:1-2 calls out to all creation to worship God. How will you worship God every day? In Psalm 100:4, there is also a call to worship God with others in church. How do you commit to worshipping with others in church regularly?

Notes:

1. You can consider following a devotional guide, like Our Daily Bread (<http://odb.org>) or Wordlive (<http://wordlive.org>), to provide a structure for prayer and bible-reading.

5

Walk the Talk: Change

a. Scripture:

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. (Romans 6:5-7)

b. Learning Point:

God has forgiven us and given us the power to change to live in His truth.

c. Discussion:

In her book “Breaking the Power”, author Liberty Savard related an incident after she became a Christian. She was pretty rough in her youth, but God transformed her and so, at her parent’s 50th Wedding Anniversary, she wanted old friends and family to hear what God had done for her. She prayed that this day would reveal to everyone in her family how God can change a life. She got ready in plenty of time, except that she grabbed bug spray from under her sink instead of hairspray. Quickly she showered again, but now there was no time to do her hair. As she drove, she found that her car kept overheating. She turned off the air conditioning but had to keep adding transmission fluid every few miles. She got to the party a tiny bit late—frizzy hair, oily hands, red face. She would just take a few moments to freshen up. However, her large jar of face cream had exploded in the heat, and everything in her overnight bag, including

makeup and hair brush and hair spray, was covered in it. Her only option was to just go out and enjoy the party. There was nothing else she could do, but she had a great time anyway!

She later told God that though she had prayed, and it felt like it all had gone terribly wrong. God told her, “Most of your family and friends remember how angry you used to be. They may never hear your testimony, but they saw living proof today of My power to change a life by the way that you handled this situation with humour and grace. I answered your prayers. Well done, daughter.”

d. Sharing:

If you could ask God to change one thing in your life, what would it be? Do you believe that he can change it?

6

Sharing the Faith: Community

a. Scripture:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

b. Learning Point:

No man is an island. As part of a Christian community, we should be each other's keeper, watching each other's back and spurring each other to good works, so that our faith in God would be strengthened.

c. Discussion:

In his sermon "What does biblical encouragement look like?", Ps Mark Tonkery shared this anecdote:

"A young woman came to a pastor for counselling one day and revealed that she had lived with so much sin in her life that she decided to quit attending Sunday service. But she went one last time on a Sunday evening. Arriving late to avoid the congregation, she walked into the hall when a church elder saw her and said, "Mary, I am so glad you are here". Seeing her looking for a seat, he said, "Come, sit with my wife and me." She did. In the counselling session, she revealed that during that service she decided to try attending Sunday service again because somebody really did care about her. Today Mary is faithful and active along with her husband. For Mary, the sermon that Sunday night was delivered not by the minister, but by a couple who cared enough to spot her need and minister to it."

d. Sharing:

Do we have to hear God's calling to serve before doing so in Church?

How do we identify the ministry where we can best serve in the Church using our gifts and talents?

Sharing the Faith: Testify

a. Scripture:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

b. Learning Point:

Sharing the faith involves words and works that will bring glory to God.

c. Discussion:

A city on a hill is obvious from a distance. A life that is transformed by God is just like that, obvious. People can't help but take notice of a changed life. Kelvin Soh, a gospel singer and song writer, is one such example.

Born in a broken home and abandoned by his mother as a baby, Kelvin grew up watching his father tormented by drug addiction. Unsurprisingly, Kelvin, soon found himself inevitably trapped in a world of drugs and gangs by the age of 13. Going in and out of prison for the next over twenty years, it wasn't till he was dealt three strokes of the cane for repeated drug offenses that he started to cry out for a release from his despair. Handed a Bible by a non-Christian prison warden, Kelvin, still steeped in pain, began to read the verses within. Experiencing the love of God for himself within the hard prison walls, Kelvin became a Christian. Soon, he began writing songs,

inspired by the love he has encountered, and expressing his joy in the hope and grace he has found. After his release from prison, Kelvin began travelling all over Asia to minister in song and share his life story to share hope with the hopeless.¹

d. Sharing:

What was your life like before you became a Christian, and what has changed now? How are you living a life that will shine for Jesus and bring glory to God?

e. In your own time:



Full video “Starting Over: A Testimony of Kelvin Soh”
(37'55")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONfQQFWPcQ>

Notes:

1. Mabelle Yeo, “Trailing Yell0w: Singing Hope into People’s Hearts,” The Home Team News, September 13, 2013, https://www.hometeam.sg/article.aspx?news_sid=20130913H8a1JXmiqExT (accessed September 8, 2017).

8

Walk the Talk: Empowered

a. Scripture:

[F]ear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand... For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." (Isaiah 41:10 and 13)

b. Learning Point:

We do not have to fear because the Lord is with us. He is all-powerful, all knowing, and His ways surpass our human understanding; and He is our God, who promises to help us when we are afraid.

c. Discussion:

Shohoiya Yokowai spent 28 years of his life in prison. It was not a prison of bars and locks and wardens, but a self-imposed prison of fear. He was a Japanese soldier on the island of Guam during World War 2. When the American forces landed, he fled into the jungle and found a cave in which he hid for 28 years because he was afraid of being captured by the Americans. He learned that the war was over by reading one of the thousands of pamphlets dropped into the jungle, but he was afraid. For 28 years he lived in the cave, coming out only at night to look for roaches, rats, frogs and mangoes on which he survived.

We have all encountered situations and events that cause us to be afraid or to feel like you no longer have control over your life. Fear and anxiety is powerful and can override logical thinking and produce irrational behaviour. Remembering that God is with us to

strengthen and uphold us can help to give us hope and overcome fear.

d. Sharing:

What do you think of God's promise to be with us and help us when we are afraid? Do you believe in this promise? How might knowing this promise affect the way you deal with fear and worry in your life?

