

# FIRST STEPS

Get Started On Your Journey With God



# Dear Brothers & Sisters in-Christ,

Welcome to the Hope Church family!

Having a personal relationship with Jesus is the best decision you can ever make for your life. I rejoice with you as you join God's family.

Embarking on this new relationship with Jesus is exciting. I pray that 'First Steps' will help you get started and answer some questions you may have. In this book, you will find 10 short chapters that will help you grow in your understanding of who God is and how much He really loves you.

Keep turning the pages and enjoy your first steps with Jesus!

Blessings,  
Jeffrey Chong  
Senior Pastor

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# How to use this book

This book has 10 sessions and each session is divided into 4 sections as follows:

## **READ**

This section is designed to give you a bite-sized understanding of the Christian faith. You can read and discover how you can respond to God personally.

## **REFLECT**

This section is for you to reflect upon what you have read and discover how you can apply the principles into your life.

## **RESPOND**

This section provides practical steps for you to take.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

Every Christian can testify about the rewards as a result of memorising Bible verses. It is a blessing in good times and a powerful antidote in trials and temptations. This section will include a verse that you can memorise. You can also tear out the perforated memory verse card at the back of this book to remind yourself of God's Word regularly.

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## Share your story

Your story of how God came into your life is one that cannot be refuted, and one that can inspire many! We encourage you to pen down this journey you have had with God so you can share it to your friends and loved ones. You can also bless us by submitting it via email to [stories@hopelsingapore.org.sg](mailto:stories@hopelsingapore.org.sg).

Here's a short story structure you can follow (read Paul's testimony in Acts 26):

- What were you like before you came to know Jesus
- How you encountered God / How God became real in your life / How you came to accept Jesus as Your Lord & Saviour / How you came to Christ
- What has changed in your life since then

We look forward to hearing your story!

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## Feedback

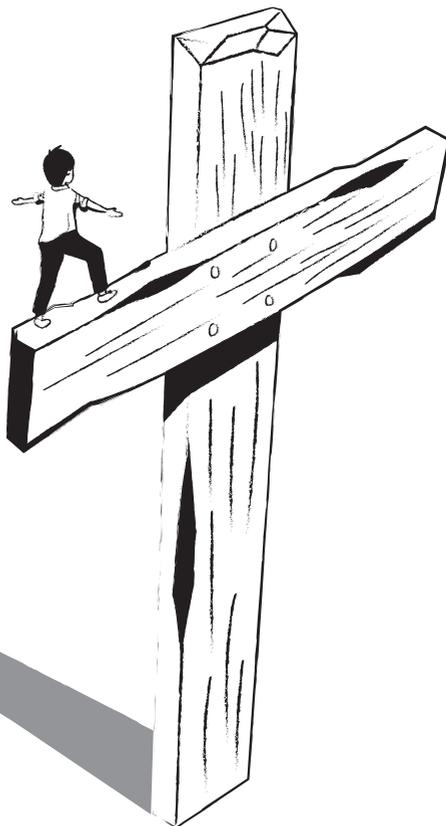
If you have any feedback or suggestions on how we can improve First Steps, please write in to [edu@hopelsingapore.org.sg](mailto:edu@hopelsingapore.org.sg). We would love to hear from you.

**SESSION 1**

# How can I be assured of my salvation?

Congratulations! You have received the best gift you can ever receive in your life – a relationship with the Creator of the universe! God is the creator who determines the number of stars in the skies yet He is also a personal God who numbers the strands of hair on your head (*Psalm 147:4, Matthew 10:30*).

God is great and mighty, yet He loves you and desires to relate with you. Do you feel a void in your heart sometimes? God designed us with this void so that we may desire to connect with Him, know Him and be loved by Him. Only a relationship with Him can fill this void in our heart. This session will help you to understand why we are separated from God and how the void in our heart can be filled up when we are connected back to God again.



## WHY ARE WE SEPARATED FROM GOD?

God is a holy God. He alone is perfect and without sin.

### ***Leviticus 20:26***

*You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.*

What is sin? Sin is anything that falls short of the perfect standard of God. Have you ever lied? Have you had bad thoughts of others? Have you looked at someone with lust? Have you ever lost your temper? Such acts are examples of sin. We are all sinners before God, with none holier than the other. God is holy and sin separates us from Him. Even though God loves us, we cannot have a relationship with God.

This may sound sad but we have good news! God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross for our sins. Jesus is sinless and perfect; this is why His sacrifice on the Cross is sufficient to pay for the penalty of our sins.

Through Jesus, you receive forgiveness for your sins and have a close relationship with God. You are able to talk and relate with Him anytime and anywhere. For when you believe in Jesus and put your trust in what He has done for you, you are saved.

### ***1 John 1:9***

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

## WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Repentance is to confess your sins and make a decision to turn away from your sinful ways to God's ways.

We should repent by acknowledging our sins to God specifically and sincerely. We should not only repent when it is convenient to do so or when there is an appropriate time. Instead, we should repent as soon as we are aware that we have sinned. We can also ask God to search our hearts to tell us how we have sinned against Him.

### **Psalm 139:23-24**

*<sup>23</sup> Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*<sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*



After we have repented, it does not mean we will never make the same mistake again. Instead, God can help us to commit lesser mistakes as we continue to grow in Him.

### **Matthew 3:8**

*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*

*Repentance is to confess your  
sins and make a decision to  
turn away from your sinful  
ways to God's ways.*

## HOW CAN I BE ASSURED OF MY SALVATION?

Salvation is from God and is not based on our own human efforts. We respond to God by placing our trust in Jesus who conquered death and rose to life again. We are assured of our salvation once we have repented and accepted Jesus into our life as our personal Lord and Saviour. When we put our trust in Jesus, we can have confidence that our salvation is certain and eternal.

### ***Romans 10:9-10***

*<sup>9</sup> If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

Some may think that salvation is determined by our feelings; however our feelings can change, so we cannot rely on them. Our salvation is based on God's Word and what Jesus has done.

*When we put our trust in Jesus, we can have confidence that our salvation is certain and eternal.*

This train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience) (*John 14:21*).



The train car (Fact) will run with or without the passenger cars (Faith and Feeling). However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the passenger cars. In the same way, we do not depend on feelings to determine our salvation, we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

### ***Ephesians 2:8-9***

*<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Salvation means more than just having an eternal life and living forever with God. In fact, you have a new life in Christ now! With gratitude towards what Jesus has done for you, you can now choose to live your life in a way that is pleasing to God. As you walk with God to discover your identity and your purpose in Him, you will be transformed into who God created you to be. It is a wonderful adventure with Him every day.

### ***2 Corinthians 5:17***

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

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## REFLECT

Who is Jesus in my life?

Why must I repent  
from my sins?

Am I confident of my  
salvation? Why?



## RESPOND

Make repentance  
my daily habit.



## MEMORY VERSE

**Romans 10:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup> If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

**SESSION 2**

# Why and how do I read the Bible?

The Bible is inspired by God and written through men. God guided the thoughts of these men and spoke to His people through them (*2 Peter 1:21*).

Do you know that the Bible is most commonly described as God's love letters to man? Do you want to know how God's love for you unfolds? Have you ever wanted to hear God's personal message for you? Reading the Bible is one primary way God speaks to us. This session will help you to get started and tell you how you can receive God's personal message for your life.

**WHAT IS THE BIBLE ALL ABOUT?**

The Bible is God's message for His children. When we become Christians, we also become children of God (*John 1:12-13*) and we have a relationship with God, our heavenly Father. Just like our earthly parents, God loves us and wants to bless, protect and guide us. The Bible holds principles from God not to restrict us, but to teach us how we can live a life that receives God's protection and blessings.

As new Christians, we are like newborn spiritual babies. Just as the newborn baby requires food to grow and stay healthy, the spiritual baby also requires spiritual food. Our spiritual food comes from the Bible. Receiving regularly from the Bible helps us stay alive, grow and mature in God.

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**1 Peter 2:2**

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.*

**Matthew 4:4**

*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

The Bible is not an ordinary book. It is God's truth and has the power and authority of God to transform us to become the kind of person God created us to be.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

*<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*The Bible is God's truth and has the power and authority of God to transform us to become the kind of person we are created to be.*

## WHY SHOULD I READ THE BIBLE?

### 1. The Bible guides us

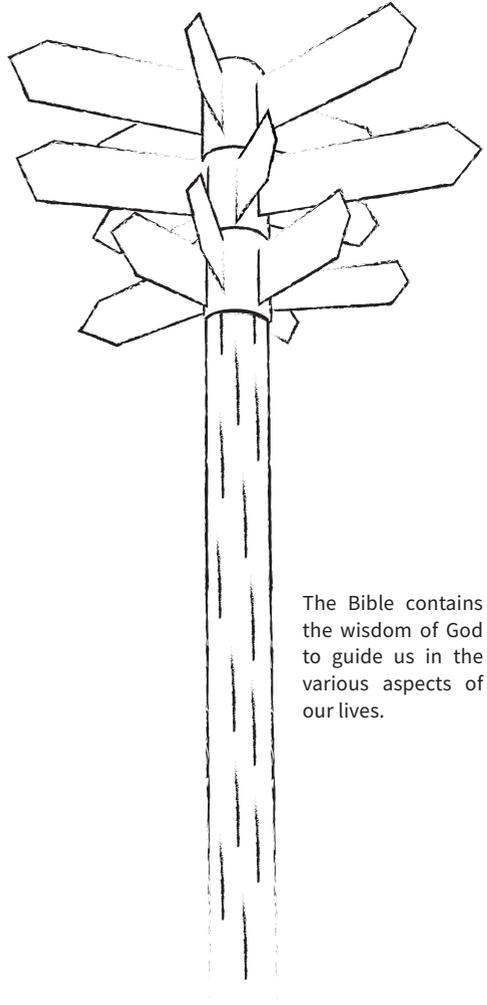
The Bible contains the wisdom of God to guide us in the various aspects of our lives. For example, the Bible contains principles on how to manage our finances, handle relationships with people and make good and wise decisions that honour God. Reading the Bible is like receiving a roadmap for our lives. It helps us understand who God created us to be and His purpose for our lives. Trusting in what God says and living it out can lead us to fulfilling God's plans for our lives.

***Psalm 119:105***

*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

***John 15:5***

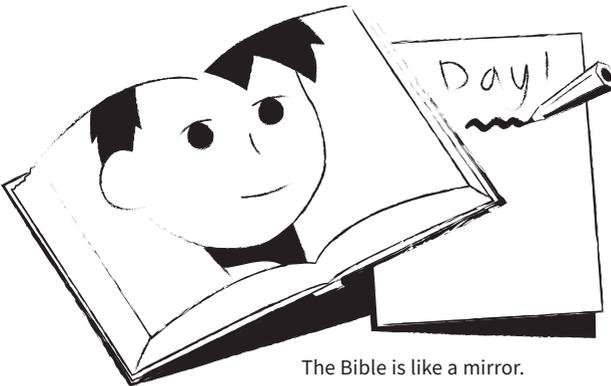
*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*



The Bible contains the wisdom of God to guide us in the various aspects of our lives.

## 2. The Bible reveals the areas we need to grow in

The Bible is like a mirror. It reveals the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man at the same time. Most of us will look into the mirror to ensure that we look presentable before we begin our day. In the same way, we should also check ourselves with the Bible daily so that we know our condition and the areas we need to grow in to become more like Jesus.



The Bible is like a mirror.

### **James 1:23-25**

*<sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror<sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it — not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it — they will be blessed in what they do.*

### 3. The Bible strengthens our faith

According to a study, the Bible contains about 3,500 of God's promises for us. When we read the Bible we know of God's promises and our faith can be strengthened when we experience the fulfilment of God's promises in our lives.

The Bible is so important to a believer! But, how do we know that we can trust in God's ways? Just like how we grow to trust an old friend more than an acquaintance, when we start to know Him more personally, our faith in Him grows too. When our faith in God grows, we learn that God can be trusted and we will desire to obey His Word and follow His ways.

#### ***Romans 10:17***

*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.*

*“The Bible contains insights to principles on how we can live our lives.”*

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## HOW SHOULD I GET STARTED?

We benefit most from the Bible when we read it with an attitude of faith, hunger (to receive a personal message from God) and a desire to obey God. If this is the first time you are picking up a Bible, start by reading the Book of Mark in the New Testament.

## WHAT IS SPENDING QUIET TIME (QT) WITH GOD?

Christianity is about having a meaningful relationship with God by knowing Him as a close and personal friend. Quiet time refers to an unhurried time, set aside to be spent alone to know our heavenly Father who loves us. When Jesus was on earth, He also spent regular time alone with God. Hence, daily quiet time is a very important habit of every Christian.

*Quiet time refers to an unhurried time, set aside to be spent time alone to know our heavenly Father who loves us.*

For our QT to be meaningful, we must have:

### 1. Right attitude

#### *1 Samuel 16:7*

*The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

### 2. Faith and expectation that we will meet God

#### *Psalms 5:3*

*In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.*

### 3. Desire to be filled by God

#### *Psalms 42:1-2*

*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?*

**Here is an example of how you can do your QT.**

1. Read the Bible and pray for God to help you understand His Word (5-15mins)
  2. Record what you learnt from your reading in a journal or electronic device
  3. Reflect by considering how you can apply
  4. Respond by applying what you have read
-



## REFLECT

What can I gain from reading the Bible?

What will be one challenge for me when reading the Bible? How can I overcome it?

When is the best time and where is the place for me to spend time with God?



## RESPOND

Spend 15 minutes to read and write down what you learnt from the Bible as you spend time with God each day.



## MEMORY VERSE

*Psalm 119:105*  
*Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.*

## BIBLE READING JOURNAL

Distribution of chapters per Gospel book:

Book of Matthew - 28 *chapters*

Book of Luke - 24 *chapters*

Book of Mark - 16 *chapters*

Book of John - 21 *chapters*

Total: 89 *chapters*

By reading seven chapters a week, you will be able to complete reading the book of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John within 13 weeks.

Here is a sample of a Bible reading journal:

Week 1	Passage Reading	Lessons learnt from the Bible	How can I apply into my life	Prayer points
Day 1	John 1	Verse 12 - to all who believe his name, he gave the right to become children of God... I believe in Jesus, I am God's child...	Know that I am God's child.	God, help me to overcome my insecure feelings that I am unworthy or not good enough.
Day 2	John 2			

**SESSION 3**

## Why and how do I pray?

Think about a friend whom you are very close to. How was the bond developed? It probably started off with regular phone calls and frequent outings, which eventually progressed to a stage where the deepest thoughts are shared, and you both know that you can count on each other in times of need. Likewise, our relationship with God needs nurturing. God is not just the God of the universe, He is also our heavenly Father. In this session, you will learn how to go into God's presence confidently to talk to Him about everything and anything that is on your mind.

**WHAT IS PRAYER?**

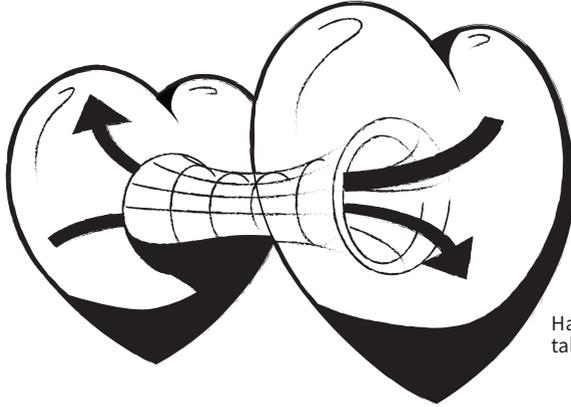
Prayer is simply talking to God. As a child of God, you share a relationship with your heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. God loves you and He desires to connect, hear, talk, and respond to you.

Prayer is not a monologue but a dialogue with God. When we pray, we can expect God to be listening and responding to us.

***Matthew 7:7-8***

*<sup>7</sup> "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."*

Anyone can pray and talk to God because there is no special formula in prayer. God looks at our heart when we pray. When we set aside time to share honestly and vulnerably about our lives with Him, it puts a smile on His face! Therefore, do not be anxious about the words you choose when you pray because God looks at your heart.



Have a heart to heart  
talk with God.

**Matthew 6:5-7**

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”

“Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the One who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.” – Max Lucado

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## HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

Our conversation with God is like a 24/7 Wifi connection. God is always online and He is always available to respond to us. You can pray anytime and anywhere. Your prayer life is not restricted with your time alone with God. You can pray when you are studying, while you are talking to a colleague, or even when you are on the bus. Just like with a friend, the more we interact with God, the more our relationship with Him grows.



Our conversation with God is like a 24/7 Wifi connection.

Even Jesus himself set aside time to pray!

### **Mark 1:35**

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

*Prayer is not a monologue but a dialogue with God. When we pray, we can expect God to be listening and responding to us.*

So how should you get started? Here's a simple guide (P.R.A.Y.) to help you to pray:

### **P: PRAISE**

God is good. He sent Jesus to save us and gave us a new life in Christ. If you do not know how to start, just begin by thinking about how good God is and begin praying by adoring God and praising Him for who He is.

*“Dear God, I praise you because You are \_\_\_\_\_!”* (Start off each prayer by telling God how great, holy, awesome and mighty He is.)

### **R: REPENT**

Praying can also be a time when we repent of our sins specifically and ask God to forgive us and help us to change. Sin separates us from God. If we love God and cherish our relationship with God, we will want to be repentant over our sins.

*“I am sorry for \_\_\_\_\_! Please forgive me and help me to change.”*

### **A: ASK**

God is a generous Giver. When you are praying, you can ask God to provide for your needs, protect the ones you love, help you in your weaknesses, enable you to overcome obstacles, etc.

*“Please be with \_\_\_\_\_!” or “Please help \_\_\_\_\_!”*

## Y: YIELD

Praying includes yielding to God. Yielding means in whatever we pray for, we trust God to answer in His way and His timing.

“God, I trust you for \_\_\_\_\_!”

### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;* <sup>6</sup> *in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

## WHY SHOULD I PRAY?

Have you seen a child talking to his dad? Whether he’s asking curious questions or just sharing his thoughts, his dad is delighted to listen to him. Similarly, our heavenly Father also delights in us as we share and converse with Him. Christians pray because we share an intimate relationship with God. Start praying today, God desires to hear you.



## REFLECT

What are some answered prayers I can give thanks to God for?

What are some things I can pray for myself as well as for the people around me?

Why do I need to pray?



## RESPOND

Practice P.R.A.Y. as you spend time with God every day.



## MEMORY VERSE

***Matthew 7:7***  
*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

**SESSION 4**

## What is worship?

Have you seen a child singing and dancing for her parents? The way she sings and dances so freely, she seems to have little concern about how well she is performing because she feels safe and comfortable around them.

This brings the biggest smile to her parents' faces. It is a delight to watch the child be who she is regardless of how well she sings or dances. The same can be said as we sing songs of praise and dance joyfully before our heavenly Father. It brings God great delight when we express ourselves freely before Him.



## WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship is the act of offering our lives to God as an expression of our love for Him. We can worship God with all facets of our lives, from performing our professions with honesty, being diligent and responsible in school, obeying the authorities God placed over us, to responding to life circumstances with godly attitudes – these are all acts of worship.

### **Romans 12:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Worship is also expressing our devotion, gratefulness and thanksgiving to God. We commonly do so through singing songs to Him. We proclaim His goodness for who He is and praise Him for what He has done.



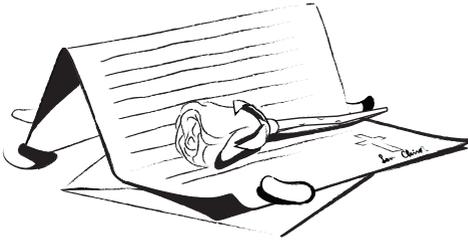
*When we are eager to express our love for someone, it is only natural for us to demonstrate it through our words and actions.*

We regularly worship God together with other believers during weekend church services and Life Group meetings. You can also worship God alone when you are in the office, while travelling or taking a walk. No matter the time, place or how you are feeling, you can always have a song in your heart for God!

### ***Ephesians 5:19***

*...speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.*

## **HOW DO WE WORSHIP?**



When we are eager to express our love for someone, it is only natural for us to demonstrate it through our words and actions. Imagine a suitor pursuing the girl of his dreams – not only will he tell her “I love you”, he will also do things to express his love for her. He may buy her favourite food, write her a love note or give her flowers. Similarly, it is natural to express our worship to God when we love Him. As you profess your love for God, this love will naturally be translated into words and actions.

Singing songs of praise to God, clapping and lifting your hands, bowing down, dancing with joy and making music with musical instruments in His presence are all natural forms of expressing our worship.

Worshipping God is not about how loudly we clap, how gracefully we dance, how well we sing or how good the music is. What matters most is a heart that places God at the centre of the worship. True worship does not depend on the music, the place of worship or even the songs sung. It depends on the attitude of the worshipper.

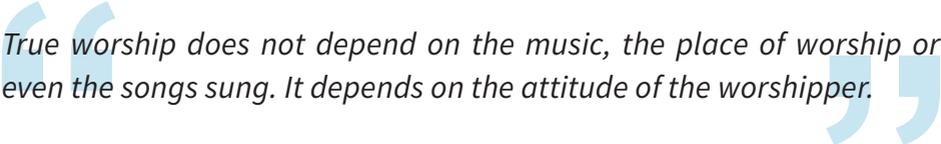
The Bible teaches us to worship in spirit and in truth. We should worship God wholeheartedly and with an understanding of who we are worshipping.

**John 4:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.*

<sup>24</sup> *God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.*

*True worship does not depend on the music, the place of worship or even the songs sung. It depends on the attitude of the worshipper.*



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Let's praise and worship God with these songs!

Praise	&	Worship
<p><b>Hillsong</b> For All You've Done Love Enough Your Name High Running</p>		<p><b>Hillsong</b> The One Who Saves This is Our God How Great is Our God Power of Your Love At the Cross</p>
<p><b>Planetshakers</b> Nothing is Impossible</p>		<p><b>Passion</b> Whom Shall I Fear One Thing Remains</p>
<p><b>Desperation Band</b> Counting on God</p>		
<p><b>Chris Tomlin</b> Sing, Sing, Sing</p>		<p><b>Matt Redman</b> 10,000 Reasons</p>



## REFLECT

What can I praise and thank God for in my life, especially for what He has done in my life recently?

What song can I sing to express this thanksgiving to Jesus?

Describe how God has touched me during a worship session.



## RESPOND

Take some time to worship God through a song that expresses your love for Him.



## MEMORY VERSE

### *Psalm 92:1*

*It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High.*

**SESSION 5**

# What is the spiritual family?



One of the greatest needs of the human heart is relationship. When you were born, God placed you in a biological family where you share a relationship with your parents. When you accepted Jesus, you became a child of God.

God is your heavenly Father and the other believers are brothers and sisters in your spiritual family. The church is neither a building nor a place of worship. It is the gathering of believers who have been “called out” by God from darkness into the His wonderful light. In fact, the word “church” means “called out ones”. Our relationship with God and the church is inseparable. In this session, you will learn about the blessings of belonging to a spiritual family.

## WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL FAMILY?

In the Bible, God's people gather together for the purpose God has given to them. The first church in history, referred to in the book of Acts, the believers supported one another by meeting up regularly to do life together, learn from the Bible, pray for one another, encourage one another in their faith and share everything they had. We do the same today too!

In Hope Church, Life Groups are our immediate spiritual family to whom we belong and meet regularly. In our Life Groups, we do life together and help each other grow in God. Everyone in our church is encouraged to be connected to a Life Group so that we will not miss out on what God has for us through the spiritual family.

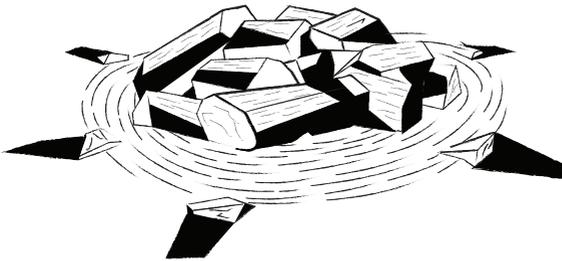
### **Acts 2:42-47**

*<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

*The church is neither a building nor a place of worship. It is the gathering of believers who have been “called out” by God from darkness into His wonderful light.*

## WHY SHOULD I BELONG TO A SPIRITUAL FAMILY?

Just like in a barbecue, charcoal pieces in the fire burn longer and stronger together but loose pieces of charcoal burn out easily. When a believer is connected to a Life Group, there is not only belonging but also strength, support and encouragement in our walk with God. Our spiritual family supports us during challenging times and encourages us to press on when we are feeling weak spiritually. We celebrate breakthroughs in our faith together and support each other during the difficult times.



Charcoal pieces in the fire burn longer and stronger together but loose pieces of charcoal burn out easily.

It is such a blessing to belong to God's spiritual family!

### ***Ecclesiastes 4:9-12***

<sup>9</sup> *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: <sup>10</sup> If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. <sup>11</sup> Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? <sup>12</sup> Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

In our Life Groups, we will meet people from all walks of life who are different from us. We may have different personalities, belong to different nationalities, work in different professions or be in different life stations, but we can still belong to the same Life Group and love one another because God first loved us. The foundation of every spiritual family is our relationship with God. It is through Jesus that each one of us is able to come and belong to this spiritual family.

### **1 John 4:7-12**

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Besides receiving blessings in the spiritual family of God, we are also called to be a channel of blessing to those who are in our spiritual family. We can be a blessing by serving them and looking out for their needs. God can use us to bring His blessing to the ones He placed around us in our spiritual family.

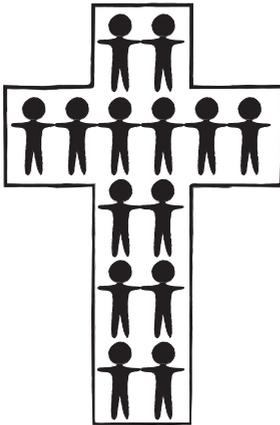
 *The foundation of every spiritual family is our relationship with God.* 

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## HOW CAN I PLAY MY PART IN MY SPIRITUAL FAMILY?

Here are some ways to be a blessing in the spiritual family:

1. Help and serve one another (*Galatians 5:13*)
2. Do good to one another (*Galatians 6:10*)
3. Meet up together (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)
4. Love one another (*Hebrews 13:1*)
5. Offer hospitality to one another (*1 Peter 4:9*)
6. Share what we have (*Acts 2:42-46*)
7. Encourage one another to grow as believers (*1 Thessalonians 5:11*)



The church is not just a social group or a gathering place. It is the place God wants us to be! God loves us too much to see us worship Him in isolation. Instead, He desires us to reap the spiritual blessings of belonging to a spiritual family.

The church is where we will testify about God's goodness, witness the transformation of lives, see the power of God move and collectively shine Jesus' light. The church is where every believer should belong!



## REFLECT

Why should I connect myself to a Life Group?

What are some challenges I face in attending Life Group sessions? Are there ways to overcome these challenges?

How can I be a blessing to my Life Group members?



## RESPOND

Join a Life Group this week if you have not.

You can log on to [www.hopesingapore.org.sg/imnew](http://www.hopesingapore.org.sg/imnew) to find out more.



## MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 10:25**

*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

**SESSION 6**

# What does it mean to be empowered by the Holy Spirit?

Have you ever seen someone “Windsurf” before? While paddling is possible when the sea is calm, it is tough work when the seas become choppy. Most of the time, the boat will just end up being tossed about by the waves. Changing directions is even more difficult. However, these challenges can be overcome easily by opening up the sail. The sail enables the boat to be “empowered” by the wind to move swiftly even in the midst of the choppy waters. The sail does not dictate the direction of the wind but merely decides whether it wants to “catch the wind” and be carried along in the direction where it is already blowing.



In the same way, this is like our relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us towards what is good and pleasing to God. We cannot see the Holy Spirit so we may sometimes doubt His presence or ability to help us. But once we choose to trust Him, just like opening up our sail, we will be able to testify to His empowerment in our lives!

## WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit, is called the 'Advocate'. 'Advocate' means one who provides support, defends and pleads on another's behalf. When Jesus ascended to heaven, He promised His disciples that He will send them the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Advocate because the Holy Spirit helps us, empowers us to witness, teaches us the truth and convicts us of our sins.

### **John 16:7-11**

*<sup>7</sup> But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> about sin, because people do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

*The Holy Spirit, is called the 'Advocate'. 'Advocate' means one who provides support, defends and pleads on another's behalf.*

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**John 16:13**

*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*



*Our God is a Father who loves to give good gifts to His children.*

Although you cannot see or touch the Holy Spirit because He is Spirit, you can certainly witness His Presence and power at work in your lives. The Holy Spirit dwells in every believer the moment they invite Jesus into their lives. To experience the fullness and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, you need to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.

## HOW CAN I BE BAPTISED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Our God is a Father who loves to give good gifts to His children. In fact, as long as we desire to surrender ourselves to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, open our hearts to ask God, He is more than willing to bless us with this gift!

Just like the sail analogy, the only way for the boat to move swiftly despite the choppy sea is to allow the wind to empower it. In the same way, the way for us to be baptised and experience the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is fully surrender ourselves to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. All you need to do is to focus on why you need the empowerment from God in your life, confess your weakness and choose to yield yourself to the Holy Spirit's enablement. As the Spirit leads and moves within you, take a step of faith to trust and move with Him!

**Here are 3 practical steps you can begin with:**

1. Pray and ask God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit
  2. Desire to be baptised in the Holy Spirit and choose to surrender yourself fully in your heart
  3. Have faith and receive it from God
-

**Luke 11:9-13**

*“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

**HOW DO I KNOW I AM BAPTISED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

In the Bible, when the disciples were baptised in the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in new tongues as the Spirit enabled them. This ability to speak in tongues or a new language, is the tangible evidence that you are baptised in the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 2:1-4**

*<sup>1</sup>When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

## WHAT ARE SOME WAYS WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN US?

- We will be empowered to share Jesus with others (*Acts 1:8*)
- We will receive help in times of weakness. This is especially helpful when we do not know what to pray for (*Romans 8:26*)
- We will be uplifted and encouraged (*1 Corinthians 14:4*)
- We will have spiritual gifts to build God's church (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11*)
- We will grow to become who God created us to be (*Galatians 5:22-25*)

When we are baptised in the Holy Spirit, we can expect the Holy Spirit's help when we partner with Him in the growth of our character to become more like Jesus. The Bible refers to this transformation as bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

### ***Galatians 5:22-23***

<sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* <sup>23</sup> *gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

*When we are baptised in the Holy Spirit, we can expect the Holy Spirit's help when we partner with Him in the growth of our character to become more like Jesus.*



## REFLECT

Why is it necessary for believers to be Holy Spirit baptised?

What is one area of weakness you personally face & desire to overcome though the empowerment of the Holy Spirit?

Is there anything that might hinder you from desiring to be Holy Spirit baptised?



## RESPOND

Get baptised in the Holy Spirit right away.



## MEMORY VERSE

**Acts 1:8**

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

**SESSION 7**

# What does it mean to share about Jesus to others?

We cannot help but share good things we find around us. Just like discovering a fantastic deal, we will be excited to share so that others can enjoy too. Similarly, we cannot help but share how good God is. We want to tell others our new relationship with God and help them know Him too! In this session, we learn what it means to share Jesus to others and how we can do it so that many others will come to enjoy this wonderful gift we have received from God.

## WHAT IS SHARING ABOUT JESUS TO OTHERS?

Perhaps you have heard of terms like ‘Witnessing’, ‘Outreach’ and ‘Evangelism’. They all refer to the same thing: sharing with others about who Jesus is and what He has done for us. When we share a relationship with Jesus, we experience Him personally and are able to tell others who He is and how good He is.

**Mark 5:19**

*“Go home to your family and tell how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”*

---

Sharing about Jesus to others is a natural overflow of the Christian life. Just like how we are excited to share a fantastic deal, we should also be excited to share how good God is and what He has done for us. When we share about Jesus to others, we invite them to experience God's goodness so that they will also be able to enjoy the goodness of God in their lives.

**Psalm 34:8**

*Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.*

Sharing to others about Jesus is not just about telling others how good God is. It is also about being the vessel of God's love to others who have not come to know Him yet. God loves every one of His creation and He does not want anyone to be lost. When we share about Jesus, we partner with God to show His love for others.

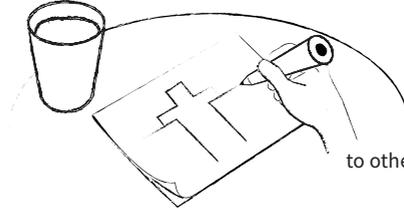
*'Witnessing', 'Outreach' and 'Evangelism'. They all refer to the same thing: sharing with others about who Jesus is and what He has done for us.*

**Luke 15:3-7**

<sup>3</sup>Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders <sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'<sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

There are many ways we can share to others about Jesus.

Here are some ways:



Sharing about Jesus to others is a natural overflow of the Christian life.

### 1. Sharing testimonies

We can tell others about the positive transformation we have experienced after having Jesus as our Lord and Saviour (see page 3 for an example of how to write a testimony).

### 2. Inviting others to church or Life Groups

We can invite our friends, family members, colleagues, schoolmates, neighbours to join us in church.

### 3. Sharing the Bridge Diagram (see page 48 - 50)

### 4. Being a salt and light

We also communicate share Jesus with others through the way we live our lives. How we make decisions, treat others in school, at home or in our workplaces and respond to the difficult circumstances can cause others who do not know Jesus be curious about our relationship with God as they see His goodness reflected through our lives! Living our lives as salt and light can point others' to Jesus.

#### **Matthew 5:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.



## REFLECT

Have I experienced Jesus in a personal way so that I can tell others about Him?

How can I be prepared to share about Jesus to others?

Who can I share about Jesus to?



## RESPOND

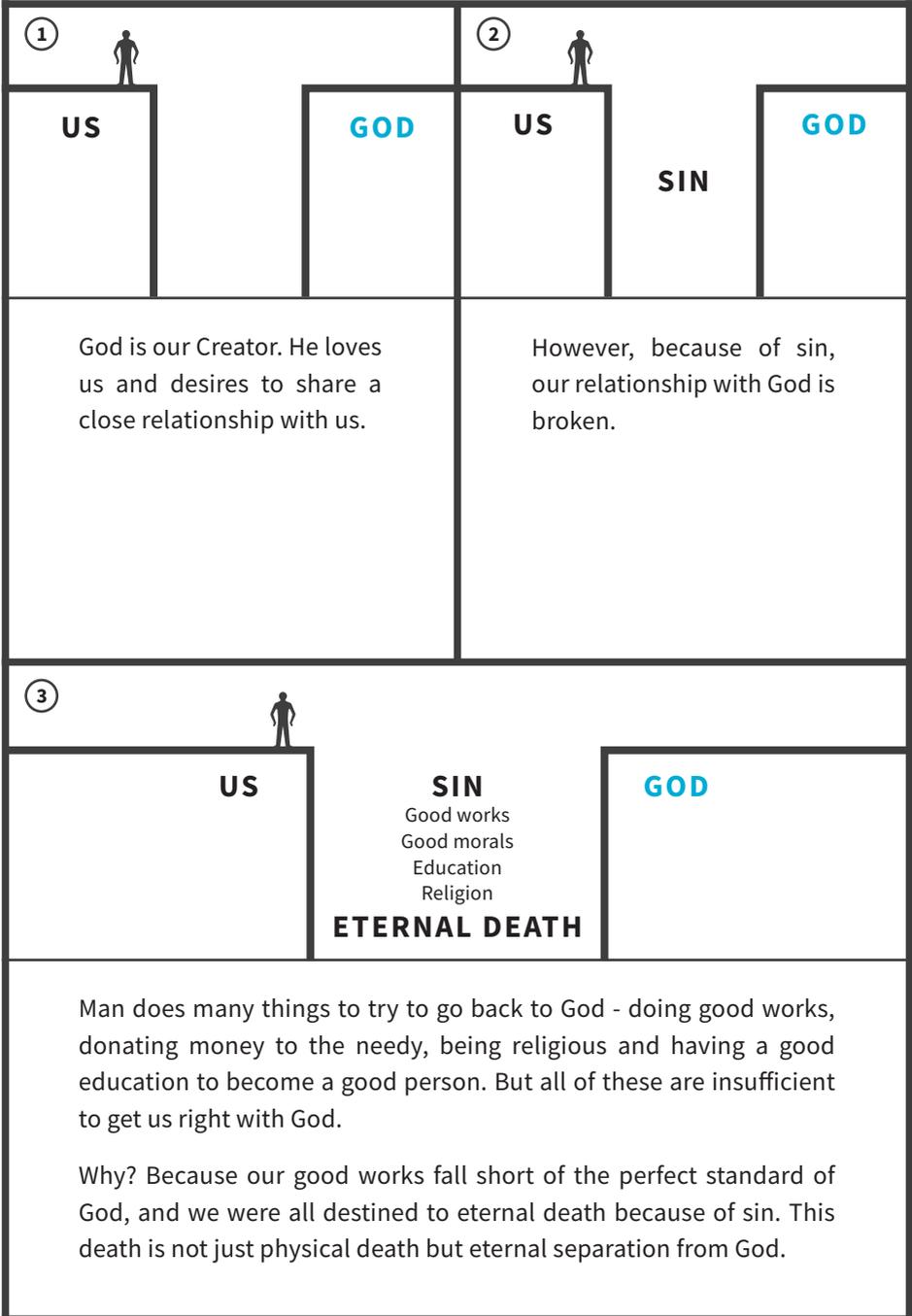
Pray for a person you can share about Jesus to and start finding opportunities to do so.

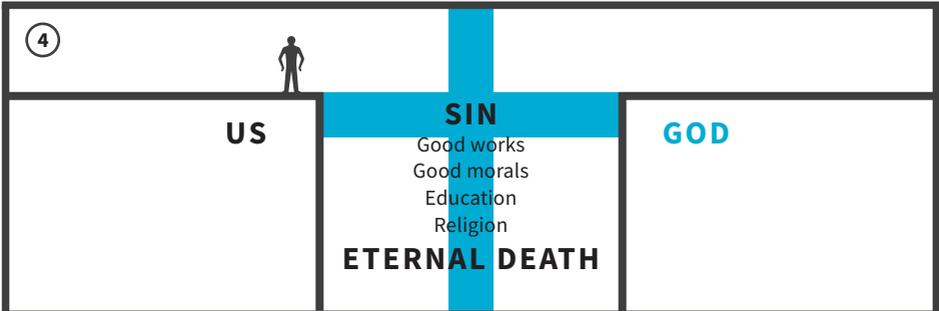


## MEMORY VERSE

### **Matthew 28:18-20**

*<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*





Despite the seemingly hopeless situation that man is in because of sin, God loves us and does not want us to remain in our sins. As God is holy and just, He had to punish someone for our sins. Hence, God sent His one and only son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice because He is sinless and comes from God. He is the bridge between God and us. Because of His death, the consequence of sin is paid for and those who believe in Him will not have to suffer eternal death. Jesus did not stay dead, but was resurrected by the power of God.

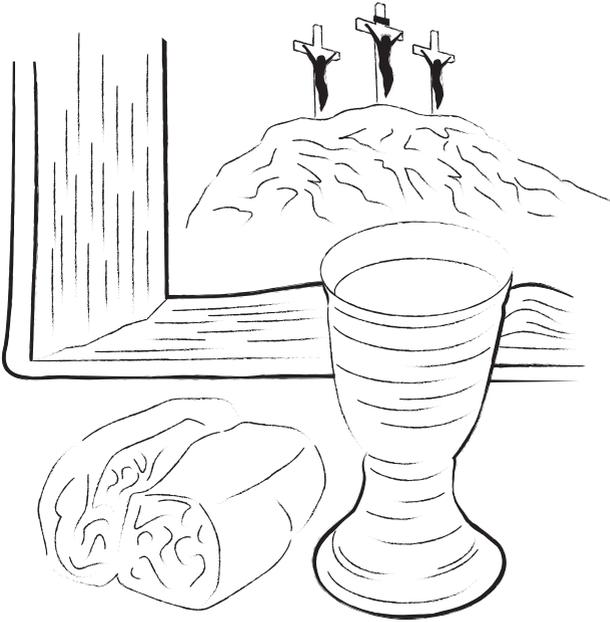
**Romans 10:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup> If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

5		
<b>US</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SIN</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Good works Good morals Education Religion</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ETERNAL DEATH</b></p>	<b>GOD</b>
<p>Do you want to know Jesus Christ? You can choose to accept Christ as your Lord and Saviour and receive forgiveness for your sins.</p> <p>You can invite Jesus into your life by saying the sinner's prayer below. The sinner's prayer is a prayer a person prays to God when they understand that they are a sinner and is in need of a Savior.</p>		
<p>Dear Jesus,</p> <p>I confess that I'm a sinner and I want to thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Please come into my life to be my Lord and Saviour, and make me into the kind of person I was created to be.</p> <p>All these I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.</p>		
<p>If you have decided to repent of your sins and accept Jesus into your life today, we welcome into God's family!</p>		

**SESSION 8**

# What is Holy Communion?



On the night before He was betrayed and crucified, Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His impending death and resurrection by observing the Holy Communion. During the Holy Communion (also known as ‘The Lord’s Supper’), believers typically take a cup of red-coloured drink and a bread (or wafer) together. This session will help you understand why we gather for Holy Communion as a community of believers and what the cup and bread symbolise.

## WHY DO WE TAKE THE HOLY COMMUNION?

Jesus died on the Cross to pay for the penalty of our sins. When we repent and acknowledge what He has done for us, we receive His forgiveness and our salvation is secure in Him. But this is not all; Jesus also promised He will come back for us. The Holy Communion is thus a significant time that the community of believers specially set apart in order to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus as they await for His return. The Holy Communion can be taken whenever believers gather, commonly in a service or during Life Group gatherings.

### **Luke 22:17-20**

*<sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." <sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*

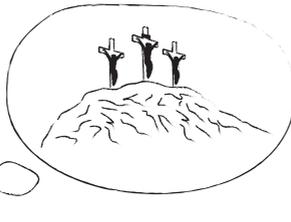
*The Holy Communion is thus a significant time that the community of believers specially set apart in order to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus as they await for His return.*

## WHAT DOES THE BREAD AND THE CUP MEAN?

Believers typically take a cup of red-colored drink (usually grape juice) and a piece of bread (or a wafer). The bread symbolises the body of Jesus that was sacrificed for us. He was beaten, whipped and pierced because of our sins. The cup represents the blood that Jesus shed when He gave His life for the penalty of our sins. Hence in taking the Holy Communion, we are reminded that though we are sinners, we have been forgiven through what Jesus has done on the Cross. In addition, it serves as a reminder to us that Jesus will be coming back for us.

### **1 Corinthians 11:26**

*<sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*



*The bread symbolises the body of Jesus that was sacrificed for us. The cup represents the blood that Jesus shed when He gave His life for the penalty of our sins.*

## HOW SHOULD WE TAKE THE HOLY COMMUNION?

### 1. With a sincere and grateful heart

Jesus gave thanks when He had the Last Supper with His disciples. The thanksgiving prayer signifies that the Lord's Supper is to be taken with a grateful heart. As we partake in the Holy Communion we participate in it sincerely with a heart of thanksgiving as we remember what Jesus has done for us on the Cross.

#### **Matthew 26:26-29**

*<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."<sup>27</sup> Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.<sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

### 2. As a community

The Communion meal is a community ritual and thus should not be taken alone. In the original practice, a loaf of bread was actually broken and divided among participants and partaken together, serving as a symbol of fellowship and togetherness among the believers. Therefore, as we take the Holy Communion, we should look out for another and seek to reconcile and connect back to the family of God.

---

**1 Corinthians 11:17-22**

<sup>17</sup> In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. <sup>18</sup> In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. <sup>19</sup> No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. <sup>20</sup> So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, <sup>21</sup> for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup> Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

The Communion meal is a community ritual and thus should not be taken alone.

**3. As often as possible**

We are encouraged to take the Holy Communion as often as possible, whenever we gather as a community of believers. Jesus instituted the ritual for the believers because humanly we are prone to wander and be forgetful. Jesus wants us to remember what He has done because one day He will return for us.

**Acts 20:7a**

*On the first day of the week we came together to break bread.*



## REFLECT

Do I know what the Holy Communion symbolises?

Have I participated in the Holy Communion meaningfully?

How should I respond to the differences or conflicts I have with others in the family of God when taking the Communion elements?



## RESPOND

Take a minute to remember what Jesus has done for you before taking the Holy Communion this week.



## MEMORY VERSE

**1 Corinthians 11:26**  
*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

**SESSION 9**

# Why should I be water baptised?



Water baptism is not just a time to get wet. The Bible records many early believers who were water baptised immediately after they believed in Jesus. During the Pentecost, many were baptised within hours after they accept Jesus (*Acts 2:41*). The Samaritans were baptised immediately (*Acts 8:12*) and the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptised on the same day after he believed (*Acts 8:35-37*). Some Christians may ask, “Is water baptism really necessary?” This session will help you to understand its significance and why you should make a decision to be water baptised as soon as you can.

## WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM?

“Baptism” comes from the Greek word “baptizo”, which means to immerse or dip fully in water. Water baptism holds a tremendous significance for every Christian to identify with Christ’s death and resurrection. As you are fully submerged in the water, you are saying ‘goodbye’ to the sinful self who has died. As you rise from the water, you have new life through your faith in Jesus Christ, whom God raised from the dead.

### **Romans 6:8**

*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

### **Colossians 2:12**

*having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

Here are some reasons why Christians get water baptised.

### **1. Water baptism is an expression of your gratitude for what Jesus has done for you**

Although water baptism is a command given by Jesus, it is not a command to simply “lord over” you. Rather, it is an instruction given by someone who loved you so much that He died on the Cross for you.

Going for water baptism is an outward expression of your gratitude for what Christ has done for you inwardly. True gratefulness is not just a warm fuzzy feeling but an active response to obey Him in what He commands us to do.

### **Matthew 28:19-20**

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

*Going for water baptism is an outward expression of your gratitude for what Christ has done for you inwardly.*

## **2. Water baptism is a personal confession of our belief**

Water baptism is a symbolic action that confesses that you are a new creation in Christ. The old is buried and gone, and the new is now alive and is coming to pass. Obeying Jesus' command to water baptism is a confession that sin is no longer your master as you have died to it. Now, Jesus is your Master whom you will follow.

### ***Romans 6:4-7***

*<sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.*

### 3. Water baptism is a public declaration of our commitment to Jesus

Our faith in Jesus being our Lord and Saviour is never meant to be a private matter. Water baptism is a time where you can declare your new found faith and commitment to follow Jesus. This explains why water baptism is a public event, where believers will invite their friends and loved ones as witnesses to their new commitment to Jesus. This is also a way we express our love for Jesus, by being unashamed of Him and what He has done for us.

#### **Acts 2:41**

*Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*



Water baptism is a time where you can declare your new found faith and commitment to follow Jesus.

If it is your heart's desire to express your love and gratitude for Jesus because of what He has done for you, water baptism is definitely a significant decision in your faith that you cannot miss. Talk to your Life Group Leaders or your spiritual mentors and make arrangements to be baptised immediately just like how the early believers did.

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## REFLECT

Am I willing to be water baptised? Why?

How is water baptism significant to you personally?

What are some hindrances you have towards getting water baptised? How do you plan to overcome them?



## RESPOND

Get water baptised at the next available opportunity.



## MEMORY VERSE

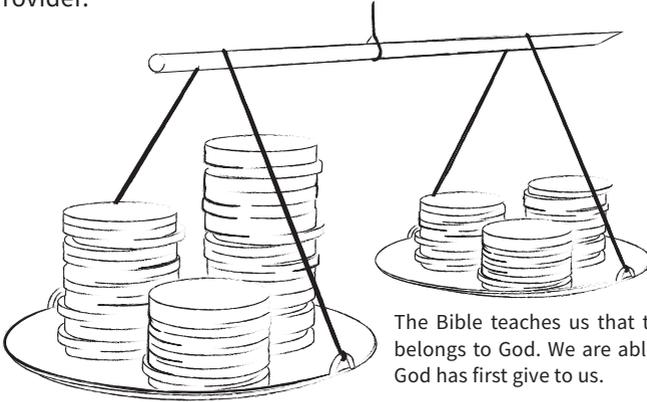
### **Romans 6:4**

*We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

**SESSION 10**

## Why should I give to God?

Do you know that everything in heaven and on earth belongs to God? God is the owner of everything, yet He is a generous Provider. What a great blessing it is to have a heavenly Father who loves us and provides for us! This session will help you understand why Christians tithe and how you can acknowledge God as your generous Provider.



The Bible teaches us that the tithe rightfully belongs to God. We are able to tithe because God has first give to us.

Having a relationship with God is the best gift we can ever receive in this life. We can express our gratitude for our relationship with God by putting our trust in Him for all the areas of our lives. This includes our material possessions too. Every believer should personally understand what tithing means and why God wants us to tithe. The Bible tells us that “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (*Matthew 6:21*) How we handle our ‘treasures’ can therefore reveal how much we trust in God!

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## WHAT IS TITHING?

Tithing refers to the act of giving back a tenth of what God has first given to us because the tithe belongs to Him. Many may perceive material possessions, including money as their own and by tithing they are giving to God what they have earned. However, the Bible teaches us that all that we have are from God. He is the one who has first given to us. Therefore, when we give our tithes as instructed by God, we are actually giving what belongs to Him.

### ***Leviticus 27:30-33***

*<sup>30</sup> A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. <sup>31</sup> Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. <sup>32</sup> Every tithe of the herd and flock - every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod - will be holy to the Lord. <sup>33</sup> No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.*

*How we handle our 'treasures' can reveal how much our heart trust in God!*

## WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO TITHE?

### 1. Tithing teaches us to depend on God

Humans are forgetful and God knows it! In fact, it is most easy for us to forget God when life is sailing smoothly. Material security is one of the most common reasons why people forget God. God wants us to tithe so that we will remember that He is with us and He is the one who enabled us to produce the wealth that is on our hands.

Through tithing, we acknowledge that God is our Provider and He enables us to produce the wealth. When we tithe faithfully, regardless of the amount we have or the circumstances that we are in, we are declaring in faith that God is the one will provide for us.

### *Deuteronomy 8:11-17*

*<sup>11</sup> Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. <sup>12</sup> Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>15</sup> He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. <sup>16</sup> He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. <sup>17</sup> You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."*

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## 2. Tithing to resource God's work

So what is the tithe used for? The Bible tells us that the tithe is given as an inheritance for the Levites for their full time contribution in the tent of meeting. In modern context, the tithe is used as an allowance from God to the church workers who are contributing full-time to the church. It is also a monetary source for financing the operation of the church and activities which contribute to helping people know Jesus more.

### ***Numbers 18:21-24***

*<sup>21</sup> I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting. <sup>22</sup> From now on the Israelites must not go near the tent of meeting, or they will bear the consequences of their sin and will die. <sup>23</sup> It is the Levites who are to do the work at the tent of meeting and bear the responsibility for any offenses they commit against it. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites. <sup>24</sup> Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the Lord. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites.'*

In Hope Church, we will put our tithes in a tithing envelope and drop it into the offering bag when it is passed around during service. We can also give our tithes at the payment counter at the Axis reception.

You can read more about how you can tithe here:  
<http://hopesingapore.org.sg/special/give/>

## WHAT IS GIVING?

Do you know that giving is different from tithing? While the tithe belongs to God, and we tithe according to what God has instructed, what we give (or offer) to God is voluntary. When we give to God, we reflect a heart of gratitude towards what God has blessed us with – be it the food on the table, the people in our lives, our jobs or any other blessings we receive. We can also give because of God’s goodness and His faithfulness in our lives.

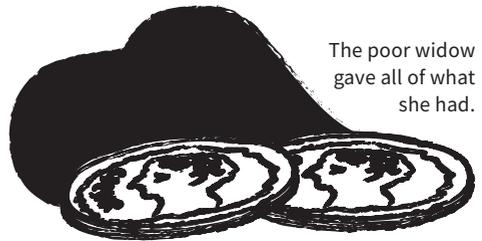
## HOW SHOULD I GIVE?

### 1. With faith

God is pleased when we give in faith. Our faith giving glorifies and honors Him as it expresses our acknowledgement that what we have belongs to Him.

#### **Luke 21:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. <sup>2</sup> He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. <sup>3</sup> “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. <sup>4</sup> All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”



The poor widow gave all of what she had.

## 2. With a cheerful heart

God delights in a cheerful giver. Instead of giving grudgingly, we can give cheerfully. We can share in God's joy of being able to give and be a blessing to others.

### **2 Corinthians 9:7**

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

## 3. Generously

God is a generous Giver. In fact, everything we own belongs to God. As God's children we learn to give generously as God does!

### **1 Chronicles 29:14**

*But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.*

## 4. With a pure heart

God looks into our heart when we give. Therefore we should as we give; we should give with a heart that seeks to honour God.

### **Matthew 6:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.



## REFLECT

Why is it important for me to cultivate the habit of tithing?

What are some factors which can hinder me from tithing regularly?  
How can I overcome them?

What kind of attitudes are pleasing to God when I tithe or give my offering?



## RESPOND

Start tithing to God this month.



## MEMORY VERSE

### *Malachi 3:10*

*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.*



[HOPESINGAPORE.ORG.SG](http://HOPESINGAPORE.ORG.SG)