



Canadian Badlands Passion Play, Drumheller, AB (used by permission)

Training Disciples to Follow Jesus in Mission

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Introduction

Christians are not born: they are made. This is a foundational truth of the Christian faith. You cannot be born a Christian: it is something you must become by your own choice and demonstrate in your own actions.

Once you have made the decision to follow Jesus, you are a *disciple*. That's what a follower of Jesus is called.

Once you have made the decision to follow Jesus, you are a part of the Body of Christ—of the community of the faithful dedicated to the *mission* of God. Mission is God's work in the world. It is his plan, goals and intent for his world. Mission belongs to God and the Body of Christ dedicates itself to that mission.

Ministry is what the Body of Christ (a.k.a. the *Church*) and its individual members do to carry out the mission of God. The actions, words and programs of the Church are the tools for the mission of God in the real world.

This booklet is a training manual for disciples carrying out God's mission in their local contexts throughout the Diocese of Athabasca. It will guide disciples through the understandings behind God's mission and through mission's practical application in our diocese. This content can form the basis for a workshop or other parish event. The Archdeacon for Mission Development will be happy to facilitate this process.

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For more information and support, contact
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Application guidelines

1. Learn your own salvation story: what did God do to encourage you to make the choice to become a disciple? What did that choice look like? What were the immediate consequences of that choice?
2. What are you currently doing that demonstrates you are a disciple?
3. No disciple ever has to work in isolation. Upon whom can you call for support?

Disciples

A disciple is a learner who both learns the content and follows the examples of a master. A Christian disciple

1. follows Jesus of Nazareth,
2. learns the content of the Christian gospel and
3. patterns his or her life according to the examples of Jesus, and
4. uses the reflections and traditions of other Christians to guide that implementation.

It is this definition we will explore in this booklet.

As Christian disciples our master is Jesus of Nazareth. We understand, believe and behave according to the reality that Jesus is God incarnate who shared in our humanity and lived among us in love and obedience to the Father.

We become disciples as we are saved by faith through grace as a result of our ongoing choices to surrender our lives to God. We express this choice in baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as directed by Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 28:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.¹

¹ Matthew 28:19-20a.

Most frequently in the Anglican Church we are introduced to this choice through infant baptism. Infant baptism lays upon us the obligation to affirm the presence of the Spirit in our lives and to confirm the choice of our parents at a later date through our own choices.

Christian faith is an active, life-changing and compelling relationship with God through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Believing in Jesus, trusting God and choosing to live in the power of the Spirit creates our faith relationship of love, trust and self-sacrifice. The disciple loves God, trusts God and sacrifices his or her own plans for the plan of God, just as our Master did. This process of love, trust and sacrifice is a result of our choice and that choice makes us Jesus' disciples.

The gospel is the Good News of the Kingdom of God. The most complete statement of the gospel is the Bible. We can summarize the gospel in these five statements:

1. God is real;
2. God loves you;
3. Jesus of Nazareth is the proof of 1. and 2.;
4. God wants to be involved in your life;
5. God wants you to be involved in his life.

We disciples use the reflections of other believers to guide our learning and behaviours. These reflections are in the Bible, the historic Creeds (Nicene and Apostles') and the centuries of Christian traditions.

Application guidelines

1. Since faith, love, trust, sacrifice and discipleship are on-going processes, it is helpful to reaffirm these choices on a frequent basis. You may find the support and guidance of a mature Christian to be of value in this. Try the following.

1.1. Develop a clear habit and discipline of prayer: morning or evening (but set a consistent time); extemporaneous or guided by a book; meaningful and intentional.

1.2. Pray for yourself:

Dear Lord, I surrender my life into your keeping. Renew your Holy Spirit within me and enable me to listen to his promptings. I reaffirm my choice to follow you as my Master. Guard my thoughts and guide my actions. Use me as is best for me and according to the will of our Father in heaven. Amen.

1.3. Pray for those with whom God is bringing you into contact.

2. Pray and work to remove any barriers to your discipleship. The greatest barrier is the lack of time and the overwhelming busy-ness of our lives. It would work best if you chose to set prayer and Bible study as priorities in your life, for which you create time.

Other barriers likely include persistent habits contrary to the plan of God, anger, bitterness and fear. Pray and work to remove these from your life, focussing on your day-to-day activities and schedules. Be specific as you pray and work, for it is then that we can most easily hear God's voice.

3. Look for and expect opportunities to “[go] therefore and make disciples” as Jesus commanded. Primarily these will be opportunities to share your experiences of God, Jesus and the Spirit in ways that your friends, neighbours and co-workers can appreciate and perhaps identify with.

Mission

Mission is God's intent and plan for our world. Mission is his work in the world. Mission is God working to bring about the redemption and salvation of the world. Mission is what God is doing to reconcile the world to himself, so that all the world may experience the fulfillment and union with God which we were created to enjoy. Mission is God being God in our midst, so that we might hear him and respond. Mission is God loving us in tangible, practical, authentic and genuine ways.

Ministry

Ministry is what the Church does in order to carry out the mission of God. The Church doesn't have a mission: God does. And God has a Church to carry out that mission. Ministry is the visible application and implementation of our love from and for God as well as of our love for others. Ministry is what the Church does as it carries out its mandate to be God's ambassadors of his reconciling love.

We will know that this mission is being carried out as we

1. proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
2. teach, baptize and nurture new believers;
3. respond to human need by loving service;
4. seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation;

5. strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.²

These five marks will identify mission and guide our ministry. They serve as editors over our programs.

Application guidelines

1. God's mission is to reconcile all things to himself, to eliminate the barriers that separate us from him. Being personally reconciled to God is the beginning for carrying out the mission of God through our ministries.

- 1.1. Develop a habit of personal and meaningful confession, repentance and forgiveness. This may require the ministry of a priest. "The Penitential Rite" (BAS, pp. 45-46) or "The Reconciliation of a Penitent" (BAS, pp. 167-172) may be of particular value, even in the absence of a priest.

- 1.2. Make a commitment to forgiving others, even in the absence of a formal apology. Forgiving is not forgetting: it only means that you refuse to be burdened by another's sin.

2. God's mission is the basis for ministry in the Church. God's mission is the wellspring for the Church and the source of its ministries. The Church is identified by God's mission guiding its ministries.

- 2.1. Ask yourself, "What is God's mission for me today?" Do not try to expand it to eternity or even for your whole life. Just focus on today:

² "The Marks of Mission" as adopted by the Anglican Church of Canada and a majority of other Anglican provinces.

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“God is using me to reconcile the world to himself. What is that going to look like today?”

2.2. Bring to your parish’s attention “The Marks of Mission” as a template by which you design your ministries and evaluate their effectiveness. “How is what we are doing accurately reflecting ‘The Marks of Mission’?” Mission leads to ministry which is guided by the five indicators.

2.3. The Marks of Mission are not only parish indicators—they are markers for individual disciples as well. Use your imagination to envision the ways in which you as a disciple might work towards

- a. *proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom;*
- b. *teaching, baptizing and nurturing new believers;*
- c. *responding to human need by loving service;*
- d. *seeking to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation;*
- e. *striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth.*

“Proclaiming” may include sharing your own salvation story with another person.

You could mentor a new believer by sharing in his walk with Christ.

You could respond to human need by sharing time with a frail friend.

You could seek to transform unjust structures by not tolerating racist or prejudiced conversation.

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You could strive to safeguard creation by publicly working to support your local recycling programs.

The basics of Christian faith

A professor at a well-known Albertan university once said, "That's the great thing about being Anglican: you can believe anything you want and still be an Anglican." Not true, of course. Anglicans are Christians, standing firmly within the boundaries of Scripture and Christian tradition. Anglicans are very clear about what we believe. You see it weekly in our worship. You hear it weekly in our lectionaries. And you see it daily in our ministries.

However, we are not necessarily that good at publicly defining our faith and drawing connections for the public between what we believe and what we do. Since we are disciples (learners who absorb the teachings and the behaviours of the Master), it would be helpful to clearly outline what those teachings and behaviours are.

We Anglicans *do* accept

- "(a) the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith;
- (b) the Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith;
- (c) the two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself — Baptism and the Supper of the Lord — ministered with unfailing use of Christ's Words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him;

(d) the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.”³

In carrying out the mission of God through the ministries of the Church, it would be of great value to the disciple to have a working knowledge of these four cornerstones stated above.

Bible

We accept that the Bible (comprised of 66 books divided into two major sections, The Old and New Testaments) is the authoritative and normative library of God’s dealings with his chosen people, the Jews. We give the Bible the power to set the standards for our beliefs (it is authoritative) and the Bible contains those standards (it is normative).

Trinity 101

Essential to the definition of Christian faith is an acceptance of the understanding of God as Trinity. God has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit—each of them God, co-equal and co-eternal and each of them individually knowable.

God the Father is outside time, pouring his creative and sustaining energies into time and space so that they may both continue.

³ “The Lambeth Quadrilateral”, Resolution 11 from the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, 1888.

God the Son enters time and space, so that he might redeem us through his love and his obedience to the Father.

God the Holy Spirit accompanies us throughout time, so that at every moment we might experience the love, support and guidance of God in all our circumstances.

The Creeds

The Anglican Church throughout the world uses two major statements of faith: the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

The Apostles' Creed is formulated as a statement of faith for newcomers to the Church. It is very much like a question-and-answer session in which a bishop might have asked a candidate for baptism, "Do you believe in God?" "I believe in God..." The Apostles' Creed is the older of the two creeds.

The Nicene Creed grew out of conflict in the Church over the nature of Jesus and the experience of salvation. This creed also helped to refine our understanding of the Holy Spirit. It is a more complex statement of faith and quickly became the standard for membership in the Christian Church.

Sacraments

Our Church focusses its worship life around the Ministry of the Word and the Ministry of the Sacraments.

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The Ministry of the Word includes the lectionary for each day's services as well as preaching, praying, hymnody, drama, art, lectures and the like.

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual reality which has been instituted or refashioned by Jesus. These power-filled symbols are both actions *and* physical pictures that embody a special presence and power. The Ministry of the Sacraments is centred on Baptism and the Eucharist (a.k.a. Holy Communion, Lord's Supper, and the Mass).

Baptism is a miracle of God's making through which the Holy Spirit enters the life of the candidate. This is accomplished by baptizing the candidate with water in the name of the Trinity. This miracle begins the lifelong transformation of the candidate and starts him or her on the long route to discipleship. Baptism marks the beginning of God's mission at work through us.

The Eucharist is a miracle of God's making in which the presence, power and love of God—implanted in us in baptism—are renewed and focussed. In the bread and wine of Holy Communion we are given reminders of Christ's life, death and resurrection. These reminders work to renew our spiritual lives so that we might carry out God's mission.

Ordained ministry

The Body of Christ (a.k.a. the Church) is obligated to use its resources (time, abilities, and material resources) responsibly and well. In order to most effectively do this and in response to the example of Scripture, the Church has developed specialized ministries amongst which are ordained persons. There are three streams of ordination: bishop, priest and deacon.

The bishop is the diocesan contact, channel and conduit with the Christian Church, both the Church currently ministering and the Church of the past. He or she bears the weight of maintaining the faith and traditions of the Church within the diocese as well as providing the link amongst parishes of the diocese. As the chief inheritor of the apostolic office, the bishop is responsible to Christians currently experimenting with God's mission as well as those who long ago made their contributions to that mission.

There are five archbishops in Canada. Four of them are territorial, with responsibilities to large territories called ecclesiastical provinces (British Columbia and Yukon, Canada, Ontario and Rupert's Land,). The fifth archbishop is the Primate of Canada, with responsibilities to the world-wide Anglican Communion on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The priest is responsible for the worship, discipleship formation and supervision of the pastoral

care of a parish, region or chaplaincy, which may be comprised of a number of congregations. The priest is thus responsible to the bishop for the formation of disciples with respect to Baptism and Eucharist, and for the conduct of the Ministry of the Word. The priest serves on the forefront of the pastoral care efforts of the whole people of God. By default, he or she is also largely responsible for the administration of the ministry.

The deacon serves the Church as a bridge between the Church and the outside society. The deacon has a special interest in the lives of the marginalized: the poor, the homeless, the mentally ill, the addicted and the shunned.

There are two expressions of the diaconate in Canada. The transitional deacon uses the time spent as a deacon to prepare for priesthood. The vocational deacon intends to remain as a deacon and develops his or her ministry accordingly.

Every priest remains a deacon and every bishop remains a deacon and a priest. A subsequent ordination does not cancel the former one.

Application guidelines

1. A good knowledge of the Bible is essential to the Christian disciple. Reading it on a regular basis creates a familiarity with the text that enables good conversations and discussions.

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- 1.1. Use the “Daily Office Lectionary” (*BAS*, pp. 452-497; ask an ordained person for help in figuring out the lectionary) to structure your reading.
- 1.2. Use a devotional aid such as “Daily Bread” to structure your reading.
2. Accepting God as Trinity is mandatory: this is necessary in order to be a Christian disciple.
 - 2.1. Look for God at work in your life as Father, in Jesus, and through the influence of the Holy Spirit. As part of your prayer discipline, keep a journal indicating how God is active in each way in your life.
3. Don’t let the recitation of the Creeds in your worship services become mechanical. We Anglicans do not worship by rote: we worship in Spirit and in truth.
 - 3.1. When reciting the Creeds, adopt a posture that reinforces your intention to take them seriously.
 - 3.2. Write the Nicene Creed out by hand, phrase by phrase, and include examples from your own life indicating how you have experienced each clause of the Creed.
4. Sacraments by definition are miraculous interventions by God in our lives. Appreciate the depth of God’s love and mission at work each time you share in a sacrament.
 - 4.1. When sharing in the Eucharist, make yourself aware of the privilege God is doing you.

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Jesus lived, died and was resurrected specifically for you and you are given the chance to share in that reality with each Communion. Be awed by this gift.

4.2. Take the opportunity for auricular confession (= private, personal, voiced confession in the presence of a priest) prior to communion—maybe not every time, but occasionally, so as to better emphasize the reality and to better prepare to receive it.

4.3. Volunteer to be a parish sponsor for a baptism—but only if you can keep up with the responsibilities.

5. Ordination is the Church's recognition that God has called an individual to a specific role inside his mission.

5.1. Consider what your role is to be inside God's mission.

5.2. Ordination does not eliminate the Church's need to support clergy. Think of a specific way in which you might support

- a. your bishop,
- b. your priest, and
- c. your closest vocational deacon.

The Bible

The Bible is a **library**. This means it

- has a number of **books** (37 in the Old Testament + 29 in the New Testament = 66), and
- it was written by a number of **authors** (impossible to uncover exactly how many),
- over a period of **time** (centuries in total),
- reflecting a variety of **contexts, themes** and **understandings**,
- using a variety of **literary forms** (histories, poems, songs, Gospels, letters...),
- in a variety of **styles** (compare Matthew's Gospel with Mark's Gospel—both the same literary form but each has its own style),
- with **vocabularies** that can help to identify the book and the author (Mark used “immediately” a fair number of times and Paul's vocabulary is often unique to him),
- in one of two biblical **languages** (Old Testament in Hebrew, New Testament in Greek),
- and sometimes with differing understandings of the **grammar** of each language.

This library has one theme that controlled the selection of books: God's dealings with his chosen people, the Jews. The Old Testament reflects how the Jews struggled with the understanding of themselves as a kingdom under God. The New Testament reflects the self-proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah and how the disciples sought to make that real in their own lives.

The Bible is authoritative. That means we Christians surrender ourselves to its influence. We give the Bible the authority to set the standards for our belief. If something is in the Bible, we are challenged to cope with it. We may not ultimately make the same choices a person in the Bible might have made, but because we are Christian disciples we are obligated to the struggle to apply what we read. The Bible is authoritative.

The Bible is normative. That means that we give the Bible the power to set the standards for our faith and practice. It sets our norms for us and because we consider it authoritative, we surrender ourselves to those norms. Again, we have to work to apply this in our daily lives, but as disciples we are obligated to struggle with the norms contained in the Bible. It is normative.

The Jews circle around the centre of everything that is recorded in the Bible. Even those authors who are not Jewish (Luke, for example) are only represented in the Bible because they are reacting to Jews, their thoughts and their actions. Jesus, for example, was a Jew and Luke's Gospel seeks to explore how this Jewish carpenter is not only a Jewish Messiah, but a Messiah for all.

But God is at the centre of all things in the Bible. He acts and then his people react. The Bible records the history of that process. The Jewish people are defined by God's interaction with them. They circle around

God who is the centre of all things because God chose them to do so. God acts. His chosen people react.

The Bible is the **authoritative** and **normative** library of **God's dealings** with his **chosen** people, the **Jews**.

Application guidelines

1. A working knowledge of the Bible is crucial to Christian disciples.

1.1. Use the "Daily Office Lectionary" (BAS, pp. 452-497) to structure your reading. Figuring out how to interpret the lectionary calendar is complicated. You may need the help of a trained person to make the best start.

1.2. Involve yourself in study. A great deal of background knowledge or training is not necessary. Locate any passage in the Bible that represents one thought or story. Pray for God's guidance. Then ask these questions:

- What is the circumstance around the thought or story as it is recorded in the Bible? What was happening inside the story itself? Who are the main characters? What is the major action? What is the chief theme?
- What might this passage have meant to the people reading it back in the days it was first being distributed? The passage was included in the Bible for a purpose. What was that purpose? What might have been the impact of the passage back then?

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- To what action or change is this passage challenging me now? What is God calling me to do in response to this passage?

Responding with integrity to these questions would make the study productive and valuable.

1.3. If you are still anxious about making a mistake with the Bible, it will be enough if you join others in the study process outlined above. It is unlikely that you will wander off into misunderstandings and error if you are responding with integrity in a group of people doing likewise, all of whom are committed to being an authentic part of the Church.

Prayer

More often than not, mention the word “prayer” and Christians immediately begin to feel guilty. Like exercising, we know we should be praying more. We know we would be more spiritually healthy if we prayed more. We feel as if we’re letting Jesus down. Prayer is more often an occasion for guilt than anything else.

So, think of prayer as a genuine lifestyle program: you do what you can, when you can, with a plan in mind. When you miss a day, that’s not a huge issue. It’s simply, “I missed today. No big deal. After all, we’re talking lifestyle here.” Prayer is just and only your spiritual lifestyle program.

In prayer we carry on a two-sided conversation with God: we speak, he speaks; we listen, he listens. That’s prayer.

What makes prayer difficult is that we are speaking with someone we cannot see and listening to someone whose voice is difficult to hear. That’s why prayer is a *discipline* for us *disciples* and we have to work at practicing it. It is a spiritual lifestyle program and the best results are achieved when we have a plan which we follow consistently.

In prayer we rely on the fact of God’s love. That means, we rely on the truth that he loves us, no matter what we say and how we say it. We rely on him to

speak and to listen in love. Whatever he says and however he says it, we rely on it to be loving.

In prayer we also rely on the guidance and support of Scripture, tradition and reason. Scripture is authoritative and normative, so we can rely on God's side of the conversation to not contradict Scripture. Tradition is the long history of Christian practice and reflection, so we can rely on the experience of past disciples as we listen to God. Reason is one of our God-given faculties and we can rely on God's reason to guide our practice.

In light of all this, nothing need be excluded from our two-sided conversation with God. Nothing. No thing. Not any thing.

But the goal of prayer needs to be made clear: as we pray, we never intend to change God's mind. We never set out to get God to do things our way. After all, God is God. His understandings and ways are perfect. We don't want him to be or do anything that is against his divine nature. Prayer is never our attempt to coerce God into anything.

The goal of prayer is not to change God: the goal is to change us. As we converse with God we are looking to change who we are and what we do. We are seeking to become more like Jesus. We pray to change *our* minds, hearts, attitudes and actions.

Application guidelines

1. Make prayer a habit and routine by setting not only a specific time for prayer but also a place. That way, when you miss your time (and you will), you will know that you've missed it. The physical place will also remind you of your need to pray.
2. Converse with God using whatever means and tools you need.
 - 2.1. Pray spontaneously as if you were speaking with a beloved relative.
 - 2.2. Use *The Book of Alternative Services*:
"Home Prayers", pages 687 – 697,
"Morning Prayer", pages 47 – 55;
"Evening Prayer", pages 61 – 71,
"Litanies and Collects", pages 110 – 132.
 - 2.3. Use *The Book of Common Prayer*:
"A Service for Young People",
pages 622 – 627,
"Family Prayer", pages 728 – 736,
"Prayers and Thanksgivings",
pages 37 – 64. You'll also find more
traditional versions of "Morning Prayer",
"Evening Prayer" and "Compline" in
The Book of Common Prayer.
 - 2.4. Use contemporary books on prayer and
collections of prayers.
 - 2.5. Keep a *Prayer Journal* in which you track
the content of your prayers and the results of
your time conversing with God. You might even
write out your prayers if that's supportive of

your conversation.

2.6. While it is very intimate, praying with someone may be of great support. Set aside a time (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) for prayer with someone and for conversation about your discipline of prayer.

3. You might consider using the following litany as a cornerstone in your prayer life, both at home and in your parish.

Lord Jesus Christ, let your presence fill our hearts and overflow in our actions, that we may proclaim the good news of your Kingdom. Let your glory fill this place,

Let your glory fill this world.

Lord fill us with your welcoming Spirit of truth, that we may faithfully teach, baptize and nurture those who come to believe in you. Let your glory fill this place,

Let your glory fill this world.

Lord, as you came to serve and not to be served, fill us with the compassion and insight to respond to human need by loving service. Let your glory fill this place,

Let your glory fill this world.

Lord, let the fire of your goodness and justice burn into us and through us, that we may seek to transform the unjust structures of society. Let your glory fill this place,

Let your glory fill this world.

Lord, as you come in to our lives to redeem all that is good, guide us in our turn to renew and sustain the life of your creation. Let your glory fill this place,

Let your glory fill this world.

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Almighty God, in our baptism you adopted us for your own. Quicken, we pray, your Spirit within us, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**⁴

4. Leave time and space for God to get his word in. Silence allows our minds to wander, but it also gives God opportunities to speak. Discipline yourself to be the recipient in the conversation.

⁴ Written by the Very Rev. Dr. Iain Luke, Rector of St. James' Cathedral and Dean of the Diocese of Athabasca.

Worship

Disciples practicing their faith know by experience what worship is. To those outside the Church it is a mystery, expressed in a foreign language, using incomprehensible symbols and music that belongs in a museum. For most of our society worship is best left as content for the next Dan Brown novel offering little genuine connection with day-to-day life.

Even disciples find it difficult to *define* worship. They could easily describe what one does during worship: we sing, we pray, we listen to scripture—both read and proclaimed—and we re-enact Jesus' last meal. But what is it that we're doing? It is more difficult to pin down the definition.

Worship is a personal choice and commitment to a communal activity. The Body of Christ chooses to gather together to worship.

Worship is an obligatory activity. When, where and how are options to be decided: worship itself is not. We have inherited this obligation from our Jewish predecessors and the uncounted generations of Christian disciples from around the globe. Christians worship God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Worship is the community's choice to turn to God in adoration and praise, seeking to develop our relationship with him more intimately and seeking to reflect his divine nature and call more accurately. There are commonalities in worship (praise, song, prayer, etc.)

but the direction of worship is always from the community to God in an attitude of respect, awe and love.

Worship strengthens the bonds of mutual love within the community as well as providing genuine encouragement for the spiritual journeys of the individual disciples. Through praise, prayer, meditation on the Word of God and the interaction with the Holy Spirit, the members of the Christian community experience spiritual renewal and are more intimately joined to one another.

This intentional, spiritual movement of the Christian community is focussed through various liturgies. Liturgy gives structure and form to our longing for intimacy with God and to the expressions of our respect, devotion and love.

In the Anglican experience of worship, the community gathers (for example as on pages 185-187 of *The Book of Alternative Services*) to share in the Ministry of the Word (pp. 187-190), to pray (pp. 190-192) and to be renewed in the Celebration of the Eucharist (pp. 192-214). Very quickly thereafter the Church disperses to carry out God's mission. But word, prayer and sacrament are the fundamental expressions of our worship as outlined in our liturgies.

Worship is the action of the family of disciples. In this way, "worship" is a verb, an action word which insists that we all share in the choice to move into a

more intimate relationship with God. There are no passive recipients in worship—only active participants.

Worship is the decision of the community of believers to honour, praise and glorify God. This is particularly true of the major services on Sundays. Thus, while every service must be in some way evangelistic, Sunday services are not primarily for “seekers”. Sunday services are largely gatherings of the community of those who already believe, those who already have established a relationship with God of love, trust, self-sacrifice and submission to the will of the Lord.

Application guidelines

1. Regular and frequent worship is the expectation for all Christians. It is worth setting worship as a priority in your schedules.⁵
2. Worship begins not with the opening hymn or chorus, but as you are getting ready to leave your home for the service. As a singer might “warm up” before a performance, so the disciple might warm up before worship: centre your thoughts on Jesus, begin the process of confession by setting aside whatever spiritual barriers you are experiencing, and, if you have an aging voice, warm up your vocal cords and loosen your muscles. By the time you reach the entrance to the

⁵ “Worth” and “worship” are related words. In our worship we publicly declare God’s worth in our lives.

nave, be ready physically, spiritually and emotionally to worship.

3. Worship is not the passive reception of someone else's efforts. Step up to the plate. Volunteer. Look for opportunities to assist another disciple in worship. Be attentive to the needs of those around you. Listen intentionally. Sing (even if you're under the impression you can't). Respond to the liturgy with vigour. Ask questions. Provide your input into the worship planning process.

4. Worship helps us to express and cope with the following:

4.1. Who am I before God? Who are we as a community before God?

4.2. Why did Jesus have to die to make sense out of my life as a disciple and our shared life as a community of faith?

4.3. How is God's mission to be encouraged and developed after we worship? To what ministry is this worship today sending us out?

Expect your act of worship to provide you with guidance and input on the answers to these questions. Look for answers to your questions.

5. Check out *Audience of One* by Jeremy Sinnott.

Ministry

Ministry is what we disciples do to carry out God's mission. Like believing, prayer and worship, this is another of those "non-optional" activities. It's what disciples of Jesus do.

Of course, ministry in the service of God's mission is not a phrase meaning "be nice to other people." Being nice does not make one a Christian and behaving well is not ministry. Ministry is carrying out God's plan of reconciliation, redemption and renewal. Ministry is putting the gospel into action. Ministry is how the Church lives out the examples and teachings of its Master in practical and tangible ways.

We proclaim in words and actions God's kingdom of reconciliation, forgiveness, justice and hospitality.

We nurture and mentor new believers, encouraging them in their journey with Christ.

We serve others, as Christ served us. Loving kindness, righteousness and gratitude are put into acts of service and the connection with Jesus is thereby affirmed.

We work to put an end to intolerance, injustice and violence, both on an individual and on a societal basis. The disciple rejects prejudice, racism, bigotry and inequality in favour of God's acceptance, grace and love. We seek to make this real and tangible in ourselves, in our families and in our society.

We live as stewards of all creation and so work to sustain God's abundant life on this earth.

Each of these areas of ministry is to be linked with the gospel of Christ and the examples of our Master. We minister, not to be good and nice, but as a part of God's work in the world. God is using our ministries to continue his plan of reconciling the world to himself.

God can use your abilities and talents in the service of his mission. Having been reconciled to God, God can use you to bring others to their point of reconciliation. Your ministries are God's tools.

Application guidelines

1. Resist the temptation to think of *EVERYTHING* as ministry in the service of God's mission. Remember: ministry serves God's mission. It must point to God's reconciling work and to Jesus.
2. Pray, asking God to put someone or something in your path to which you may respond in ministry.
3. You are allowed to enjoy your ministries.
4. Assist your congregation in examining its ministries in light of the "Marks of Mission" or the "Seven Marks of a Healthy Church" (*Healthy Churches' Handbook*, Robert Warren, Church House Publishing, 2012). See the appendix.

5. Look for opportunities to engage in ministry—especially outside of Sunday morning. After all, that’s only about two hours in a week, and there are many more opportunities to serve God from Monday to Saturday. Don’t think that you have to “re-invent the wheel” either. Take a look at

- sharing in a Home Group ministry organized through your congregation,
- volunteering to be a Sponsor for baptism or confirmation candidates,
- visiting the frail elderly,
- becoming involved with PWRDF in your congregation or KAIROS in your community,
- becoming a champion for your local recycling program,
- starting a lunchtime Bible Study,
- becoming involved in your congregation’s “Second Hand” ministry,
- taking a shift at the soup kitchen,
- Vacation Bible School,
- pastoral care in acute care facilities,
- worshipping with the local Ministerial Association’s long-term care congregations,
- supporting “Moms and Tots”,
- delivering Christmas hampers,
- lawn care for shut-ins,
- fund-raising for community programs.

Stewardship of God's Gifts

That God gives us the use of the world is a given: we are his stewards and he is the master of the household, the landowner. The disciple recognizes God's call to stewardship.

God's call is that we be his faithful stewards. The Christian disciple is to be found faithfully executing his duties when the Master returns home. But, more specifically, of what are we God's stewards?

We are stewards of the gospel of salvation. We are obligated to share, proclaim and live out the good news of God in Christ. Evangelism, evangelistic living and creating an evangelical Church culture (see *Evangelism* below) are part of God's expectations of his stewards.

We are stewards of the Church. Its ministries, resources, buildings and properties are the areas in which we practice our stewardship.

We are stewards of creation. God has given us the task of caring for this earth. The disciple is intimately involved in issues of climate change, the ecology, natural resource development, renewable resource development, land rights, farming practices and the use of water.

We are stewards of our own lives. Here's where time, material resources and abilities come into play. As disciples we are expected to use our lives for the fulfillment of God's plan for his world. Traditionally,

we have thought about this in terms of the biblical standard of the tithe.

The Jews were obligated to return to God 10% of what they harvested and earned. God gave them 100% of life and they were welcome to keep 90% of it for their own plans and uses.

Canadian Anglicans formally adopted this standard at the General Synod of 1983. We pledge ourselves to giving back to God through the Church 10% of what we earn. This 10% may be calculated on either the gross or net income. One may work towards the 10% by increasing one's offerings by 1% of income per year until the 10% is reached.

We also extend this principle to the use of our time and abilities on behalf of God's kingdom. While it is impossible to calculate 10% of our abilities or even 10% of our volunteer time, the principle insists that, since God gave us all of life, we live under an obligation to share our time and abilities with God through the Church.

Application guidelines

1. Be intentional about the surrender of your time, abilities and material resources. Many people treat their offerings as "charity" — you give whatever you can out of whatever you have left over. Tithes come off the top of our time, abilities and material resources.

2. Look for other avenues in which you may serve God and his creation through stewardship. These might include

- involvement in ecological stewardship,
- support for the local women’s shelter programs,
- volunteering at the soup kitchen or food bank,
- surrendering the income from bottle deposits to a local charity,
- sharing in discipleship training such as confirmation or baptism preparation classes, or
- knitting layettes for premature or stillborn babies.

3. If you’re looking for an easy way of calculating your tithe, try this:

Weekly income	10%	5%	4%	2%
\$200	\$20	\$10	\$8	\$4
\$500	\$50	\$25	\$20	\$10
\$750	\$75	\$37	\$30	\$15
\$1,000	\$100	\$50	\$40	\$20
\$1,500	\$150	\$75	\$60	\$30
\$2,000	\$200	\$100	\$80	\$40

4. The dialogue in a comic strip once went like this:

Hypnotist: “As a hypnotist I can send a subject into an unconscious state by saying a single word.”

Pastor: “That’s nothing. As a pastor I can do the same thing for a whole congregation.”

Hypnotist: “Wow! What’s the word?”

Pastor: “Stewardship.”

The Church as the Body of Christ

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many...Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.⁶

That quote from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians pretty much says it all: the disciple is necessarily part of a larger group, the Body of Christ, the Church. The choice to be a disciple is the choice to be a part of the Church. How that gets worked out in practical terms has to be decided. But identification with Jesus by faith through grace means identification with his Church. Isolated, independent disciples—or congregations, for that matter—each working on his or her own, is an aberration and not consistent with the testimony of the New Testament.

This is both a trial and a relief.

It is a trial because every disciple is a human being with human failings and struggles. Being part of a congregation and denomination is not always easy. It takes work and plenty of grace.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27.

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It is a relief because the disciple does not have to work in isolation. There is a God-given family whose ministry is to support you.

This all works best when the disciple is committed to the life, health and well-being of the congregation and Church. This is best reflected when the disciple

1. maintains frequent and regular habits of prayer and corporate worship,
2. takes on meaningful roles in the ministries of the congregation,
3. takes the challenge to tithe seriously,
4. intentionally looks for opportunities to share in God's mission.

Application guidelines

1. Resist the temptation to “go it alone”. It isn't necessary and more often than not, the results are disappointing. You may benefit from spiritual direction, the practice of one believer accompanying another on the faith journey. This requires spiritual maturity from the director. If you have questions about spiritual direction or would like to seek a referral, contact your local clergy person or the Archdeacon for Mission Development (780-624-2767).

2. Look for some small group ministry in which to be involved. These are groups such as Home or Cell Groups, Bible studies, Choir, mid-week celebrations of the Eucharist and the like. Ones that promote sharing

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of the gospel and discipleship formation are to be preferred.

3. Make a commitment to frequent and regular attendance at public worship and encourage others to do the same.

Evangelism

Everyone involved in congregational development and mission would *like* to believe that the word “evangelism”, its related concepts and practical applications are commonplace and ordinary amongst Anglican Christians. We’d *like* to believe that the Decade of Evangelism (proposed in 1988 for the 1990’s) had at least one lasting impact: the eradication of the fear and anxiety surrounding that word. That’s what we’d *like* to believe.

Current practice, however, implies that we Anglicans have not embraced evangelism and many a faithful Anglican still shies away from any association with the term. Even now many Anglicans don’t see the need for evangelism and still think that talking about faith is impolite or even rude. Other people will give a passing wave to evangelism as long as it is left up to clergy.

From the very beginning Christianity has been an evangelizing faith. This word and its siblings have imprinted their identities on the very foundations of Christianity.

- Evangel: the “Good News”; from the Greek language in which the New Testament was written; translated into Old English as “godspel” which becomes the modern English “gospel”.
- Evangelize: to present the good news in, from and about Jesus (= the gospel) in ways that elicit a response from the listener.

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- Evangelism: the presentation of the gospel and of the experience with Jesus by a disciple to someone who demonstrates an openness to the presentation.
- Evangelist: a disciple with a recognized vocation to evangelism.
- Evangelistic: the adjective that arises from evangelism and evangelizing, describing a denomination or congregation that emphasizes evangelism.
- Evangelical: “of the gospel”; an adjective usually applied to Christian denominations and congregations that emphasize the following:
 - 1) personal and life-changing experiences of conversion,**
 - 2) the authority of the Bible,**
 - 3) the centrality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in the faith with respect to sin and redemption,**
and
 - 4) the active sharing of the good news through proclamation in word and deed.**

Christianity is evangelizing, evangelistic and evangelical because Jesus made it that way. The early New Testament Church followed his leadership. While any individual disciple may be called by God to become an evangelist, God made the entire Church evangelizing, evangelistic and evangelical. Disciples therefore have a responsibility to this divine intent for the Church.

The Anglican Church in England and North America has neglected these truths. We have relied on institutions (parishes, Sunday Schools), paid staff (clergy) and the birth rate amongst members as a kind of imitation evangelism – with disastrous results.

If we are to reverse such trends and if we are to be faithful to the intent of God for the Church, then certain steps need to be undertaken.

1. Disciples are to build relationships over which the gospel may be shared.

Please remember that evangelism is NEVER about the disciple converting anyone. God converts, not disciples. Disciples only ever share their experience of Jesus and the gospel with someone who is open to hearing about them. That's evangelism. Evangelism requires a relationship that will bear the intimacy of such sharing. So, disciples of Jesus cannot hide in their churches or behind their clergy. Disciples are out in the community, building relationships with friends, neighbours and co-workers.

2. Disciples are to know the good news in, from and about Jesus.

This knowledge is not only a matter of education (Bible, theology, liturgy, etc.) but also one of personal experience. Disciples know their own story of salvation, having taken the biblical story into their own lives.

3. Disciples are to be evangelizing, evangelistic and evangelical.

This takes place first within their own congregation and amongst those people who already support them in the faith. This experience trains the disciple for movement beyond the congregation. But these efforts dare not be limited to interactions with fellow disciples. Eventually—and do not wait too long—our discipleship leads us outside the circle of disciples.

Application guidelines

1. Congregations will benefit from hosting “Discipleship Training Modules”. Disciples will learn how to write their own salvation stories and learn how to share them.

2. Hosting the diocesan FaithLift Team will provide support and encouragement for disciples as they develop their skills in evangelism.

3. Supporting “Back-to-Church Sunday” or “Alpha” may be of value in discipleship and evangelism training:

www.backtochurch.com

www.alphacanada.org.

The Diocese of Athabasca through the Archdeacon for Mission Development offers discipleship training programs (www.dioath.ca).

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4. Create a parish calendar of invitation and hospitality events alternating with discipleship training events. Hosting a public event (usually with food) creates the opportunities for relationships and the discipleship training opens the doors to the content of the gospel.

Appendix A: The Marks of Mission

Taken from *The Council of General Synod 2010 – 2013 Orientation Manual*, The Anglican Church of Canada, 2010, page 55.

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.

God calls the church, the Body of Christ, to proclaim what Jesus proclaimed: the Kingdom of God characterized by justice, healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, and hospitality. We do this in the context of a post-Christian culture where the church needs to engage in primary evangelism—sharing the good news and inviting a response.

2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.

In this post-Christian culture, the church is called again into the work of evangelism—making new believers. In baptism, new believers take up citizenship in the Kingdom and membership in the Body of Christ. The Church is responsible for shaping our common life in such a way as to nourish each person’s awareness of the mission of God and to strengthen our capacity to participate in that mission.

3. To respond to human need by loving service.

In three gospels, the evangelists focus on the bread and wine, inviting us to know that, as we take, bless, break and share bread, we find ourselves in the presence of Jesus. In the fourth, the focus shifts to the basin and towel—and Jesus’ challenge to his disciples and to us to kneel with him in serving.

4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.

Throughout scripture, and particularly in the prophetic tradition, God's transformative purpose is not limited to changing individual lives. God acts to change the conditions that constrain, distort, and oppress the lives of persons and communities. Through the prophets we hear that God is attentive to structures—the royal court, the temple, and the marketplace among them—that contradict God's compassion and distribute God's abundance unjustly. As a people following Jesus in mission in our age, God invites us to work with him to bring about change in such structures.

5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

In Vision 2019 we witness a new appreciation of the vital connection between the place where we live and the embodiment of our faith. The Church is being awakened to the gift of the land and our God-given living relationship with the earth. Assisted by the prophetic values and ideals of our Indigenous members, we recognize and affirm the compelling, urgent, and absolute character of our moral obligation to live in right relationship with God's creation.

Appendix B: Seven Marks of a Healthy Congregation

Taken from the *Healthy Churches Handbook*, by Robert Warren (Church House Publishing, 2012), this list identifies common characteristics of healthy churches.

1. Energized by faith rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive.
 - Worship and sacramental life: moves people to experience God's love.
 - Motivation: energy comes from a desire to serve God and one another.
 - Engaging with Scripture: in creative ways connect with life.
 - Nurtures faith in Christ: helping people to grow in, and share their faith.

2. Outward-looking focus with a 'whole life' rather than a 'church life' concern.
 - Deeply rooted in the local community, working in partnership with other denominations, faiths, secular groups and networks.
 - Passionate and prophetic about justice and peace, locally and globally.
 - Makes connections between faith and daily living.
 - Responds to human need by loving service.

3. Seeks to find out what God wants discerning the Spirit's leaning rather than trying to please everyone.
 - Vocation: seeks to explore what God wants it to be and do.

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- Vision: develops and communicates a shared sense of where it is going.
 - Mission priorities: consciously sets both immediate and long-term goals.
 - Able to call for, and make, sacrifices, personal and corporate, in bringing about the above and living out the faith.
4. Faces the cost of change and growth rather than resisting change and avoiding failure.
- While embracing the past, it dares to take on new ways of doing things.
 - Takes risks: and admits when things are not working, and learns from experience.
 - Crises: responds creatively to challenges that face the church and community.
 - Positive experiences of change: however small, are affirmed and built on.
5. Operates as a community rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation.
- Relationships: are nurtured, often in small groups, so people feel accepted and are helped to grow in faith and service.
 - Leadership: lay and ordained work as a team to develop locally appropriate expressions of all seven marks of a healthy church.
 - Lay ministry: the different gifts, experiences and faith journeys of all are valued and given expression in and beyond the life of the church.

6. Makes room for all being inclusive rather than exclusive.
 - Welcome: works to include newcomers into the life of the church.
 - Children and young people: are helped to belong, contribute and be nurtured in their faith.
 - Enquirers are encouraged to explore and experience faith in Christ.
 - Diversities: different social and ethnic backgrounds, mental and physical abilities, and ages, are seen as a strength.

7. Does a few things and do them well; focused rather than frenetic.
 - Does the basics well: especially public worship, pastoral care, stewardship and administration.
 - Occasional offices: make sense of life and communicate faith.
 - Being good news as a church in its attitudes and ways of working.
 - Enjoys what it does and is relaxed about what is not being done.

Appendix C: Five Marks of a Healthy Congregation

Adapted from a publication from Alice Mann, the Alban Institute. The information is circulated amongst the sectors of the Church involved in congregational development.

1. Our congregation's members know who they are before God.
2. Our congregation knows what it is called to do.
3. Our congregation has the resources and leadership necessary to carry out its calling.
4. People experience the power and energy of the Gospel in their worship and life together.
5. The activities of our congregation make discernible differences in individual lives and in the larger world around us.

Appendix D: Glossary

Baptism The sacramental act that marks the beginning of Christian discipleship.

In this act the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the spirit of the candidate and begins a process of spiritual transformation. Baptism is always baptism in water and in the name of the Trinity.

Beliefs The faith statements that describe the relationship with God as he is revealed in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our beliefs are the boundaries that help define us as Christians.

Believing The act of placing oneself in a relationship with God as he is revealed in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Believing is a choice to love, trust and surrender oneself to God.

Bible The authoritative and normative library of God's dealings with his chosen people, the Jews.

Born again from above The spiritual renewal and revival in the life of the disciple caused by the work of the Holy Spirit, the outcome of which is the disciple's re-orientation towards God in life-changing ways.

church With a lowercase c, this refers to the building as a physical structure: “The church is on the corner.” When combined with a proper name (e.g. “St. Stephen’s”), church must take on an uppercase C.

Church With an uppercase C, this refers to the Body of Christ, the whole collection of faithful people who are disciples of Jesus. These disciples are in a relationship of love, trust and surrender with God as he is revealed in Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Communion Also known as (Holy) Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper, the Mass. It is the second major sacrament in which the believer by faith receives the life, power, presence and love of Christ, in this case through the elements of bread and wine. This sacrament supports and upholds the relationship imparted in baptism.

Creed From the Latin *credo*, “I believe”: creeds are statements of faith. In the case of the Christian Church there are two creeds most universally accepted, the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed.

Disciple A follower of a master who learns the teachings and copies the behaviours of the master. In the case of Christians, we are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth who learn the good

news from, in and about him and who seek to embody his practices.

Faith A relationship of love, trust and surrender to God as he is revealed in Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. We enter this relationship by believing. We describe this relationship through our beliefs.

gospel With a lowercase g, this represents the good news from, in and about Jesus of Nazareth. The good news *in* Jesus is his reality as the incarnate Son of God. The good news *from* Jesus is what he said and did. The good news *about* Jesus is what the disciples reported and commented about in the Bible.

Gospel With an uppercase G, this represents one of the four books of the New Testament that share the good news in, from and about Jesus according to the recollections and research of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Love The choice to put the life, health and well-being of the beloved ahead of your own. In the case of Christian disciples, it is the choice to put God's presence and mission ahead of our own plans. Love is fuelled by passion. In the case of our faith, it is fuelled by passion for God and his mission on earth.

Marks of Mission The five indicators accepted by the Anglican Church of Canada that help guide the implementation of God's mission.

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Ministry The words and actions of the Church in response to God's mission.

Mission God's intent for, work in, and impact of his love on the world.

Mission is God working to reconcile the world to himself, using us disciples as his tools.

Prayer Conversation with God. The intent of prayer is never to change God's mind: its intent is to change those who pray.

Proclamation The words and actions of disciples which declare the reality of Jesus as God's Messiah, the impact of God's love on our lives and the need to respond to both of these.

Redemption Taken from the language of ancient economics, redemption was the process and price paid to buy someone out of slavery. The Church adopted the language for the impact of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus on the life of the believer. Through Christ we are ransomed from sin.

Resurrection The state of life after death in the case of Jesus of Nazareth. While Lazarus of Bethany was *revived* (he returned to the same quality of physical life as he had prior to his death), Jesus was brought to new and eternal life after his death. This life, although physical, is lived in the nearer presence and power of the Creator. It is eternal life in the love of God.

Sacrament An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, instituted by Christ as a means of grace and a promise thereof. The Anglican Church accepts two major sacraments, Baptism and Holy Eucharist. Each sacrament consists of a visible, tangible symbol, accompanied by words of institution. A real, spiritual presence imparted by the Holy Spirit accompanies each symbol.

**Salvation/
Being saved** The disciples' appropriation of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus which leads to our experience of eternity in the presence of God. This is the result of our life-changing faith in Jesus. Salvation unites all

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disciples in a relationship of love, trust and mutual sacrifice.

Trinity The Christian understanding of God's existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-equal and co-eternal.

Worship Corporate acts of praise, adoration and thanksgiving that publicly demonstrate God's worth in the lives of the Christian community. The direction of worship is from the community of the faith to God.

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