

The *ABC* of Discipleship

(ABC)

ACCEPTANCE BELONGING COMMITMENT DISCIPLESHIP

(acceptance belonging commitment discipleship)

(Introductory Notes)

Each session will include the four themes of the ABC of Discipleship, namely:

- acceptance
- belonging
- commitment
- discipleship

These themes are interwoven in a 'holistic manner' into the content of each session. The four Sessions are structured round the four vows of Church membership (as used within the Church of Scotland)

1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and confessing Jesus Christ, as your Saviour and Lord?
2. Do you promise to join regularly with your fellow Christians in worship on the Lord's Day?
3. Do you promise to be faithful in reading the bible and in prayer?
4. Do you give a fitting proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world?

5. Do you promise depending on the grace of God, to profess publicly your loyalty to Jesus Christ, to serve him in your daily work, and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?

The sessions can be used flexibly for outreach events, the basis for new communicant members classes or as a bible study designed to deepen and foster the faith of each participant. The format of the four sessions will include the following sections and each of these can be used as the leader or group considers appropriate.

- The Vow, with comment by speaker.
- Teaching section: linked to the cycle of grace and the cycle of works (provided by the very Rev. Albert Bogle, St Andrews Bo'ness/Sanctuary First)
- Short Films
- Contextual Bible study
- Faith Exercises
- A variety of forms of Prayer
- Endings: meditative films, exercises

The length of each session would be 45 minutes to an hour in length, with time added for discussion and appropriate fellowship time for tea/coffee.

DOWNLOAD LINKS

Resource Material can be downloaded and viewed at www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/themes/abc-of-discipleship-bible-study



ACCEPTANCE

A two way relationship of being accepted by God and accepting the gift of faith.



Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and confessing Jesus Christ, as your Saviour and Lord.

Vow 1 

(Acceptance)

1

INTRODUCTORY VIDEO: Keith Ross (Hamilton Presbytery)

The road to discipleship is like the steps to being a horse rider, awareness, control, trust leading to 'action' or movement.

-  • **Video:** Vow 1, then discuss
-  • **Video:** Teaching, Rev Albert Bogle on the cycle of grace cycle and the cycle of works
 - **Faith Exercise:** Who do you think you are?
Invite the participants of the group to answer the questions of identity. This will stimulate discussion in small or a larger grouping on the topic of how our identity shapes our spiritual journey.
 - **A Contextual Bible study:** Based on Psalm 139
Read the psalm as a group/individuals and begin a discussion based on the following questions re: the passage
-  • **Video:** You Are Amazing
- **Prayer:** The serenity prayer written by Reinhold Niebuhr

EXERCISES AND BIBLE STUDIES IN SESSION 1

VOW 1:

When we consider church membership in the Church of Scotland, there are 5 vows that have been traditionally used to help us focus on our Christian commitment and discipleship. In this session we focus on Vow 1, which speaks of the nature and Identity of God.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

This is an exercise to invite the participants to consider the following questions of identity. Conduct this exercise in pairs or in a small group, if the participants are comfortable with each other. It is designed to explore our origins and the beginnings of our faith and what choices people are able to make. The last question is 'deliberately phrased -' whose' and not 'who', as it invites a challenge of belonging to God.

- How do you think you are? (How are you?)
- Where do you think you are? (At what point in life?)
- What do you think you are?
- Whose do you think you are?

CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY (Ps 139)

- Identify three things that speak of God's identity
- What has annoyed/challenged/pierced you and made you uncomfortable?
- What surprised/new light did you find in the passage?
- What did you not understand?
- Is there anything you would want to pass onto others?

PRAYER

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment

at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him, forever in the next. Amen.
Reinhold Niebuhr

RESOURCES

Resources for this section can be downloaded from
<http://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/themes/abc-of-discipleship-bible-study>





BELONGING

The 'Belonging' strand of being 'rooted' by the scriptures and in our prayer life.



Do you promise to join regularly with your fellow Christians in worship on the Lord's Day?

Vow 2 >>

(Belonging)

2

- **Video:** Teaching, Rev Albert Bogle
- **Video:** The Prodigal son
 - **Bible Study:** The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-32
- **Video:** Vow 2, then discuss
 - **Prayer Exercise:** When he comes to his senses... I will go to my Father (Luke 15:17/18)
- **Video:** I Come Forward
 - **Responsive exercise:** Baptism



EXERCISES AND BIBLE STUDIES IN SESSION 2

VOW 2:

When we consider church membership in the Church of Scotland, there are 5 vows that have been traditionally used to help us focus on our Christian commitment and discipleship. In this session we focus on Vow 2, which speaks of the importance of worship. There will be an opportunity to explore the significance of the Lord's Supper in helping us to understand our belonging in the body of Christ in session 4.

BIBLE STUDY OF PRODIGAL SON: (Luke 15:11-32)

Rembrandt Painting of the Prodigal Son (download from website)

What do you see, examine the picture

What does it say about the acceptance of each of the characters?

1. Younger son: when he had come to his senses = acceptance
2. Father: the welcome and forgiveness of God = accepting of the sons
3. Elder son: always had his inheritance = couldn't see his acceptance
4. Us: the listener: recognizing/being accepting of the grace around us.

PRAYER EXERCISE

Link into prayer: When he comes to his senses, I will go to my Father (Luke 15:17/18). We begin our relationship with God in prayer and in doing so we belong to God and God to us.

Development of a prayer incorporating 'mindful' aspects of life e.g.:

waking, washing, eating, talking, reading, listening, sleeping.

Take each of these aspects of life and tease out in a group exercise where people see their needs being met. Encourage the group to relate these everyday occasions to a 'religious theme': e.g. waking-new life, resurrection; washing-cleansing, purifying etc. and so on. The leaders can be proactive in introducing links or allow the groups/participants to develop their own links.

I COME FORWARD:

This video takes you into a time of reflection that allows you to open up a discussion around the significance of Baptism and forgiveness.

A RESPONSIVE EXERCISE: BAPTISM

Following viewing of 'I Come Forward', invite discussion. Then participants are invited to pass round a bowl of water from person to person as a symbolic act of cleansing and healing.

RESOURCES

Resources for this section can be downloaded from

<http://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/themes/abc-of-discipleship-bible-study-belonging>





COMMITMENT

Commitment has many differing aspects to it, in this session we want to examine what our commitment to the wider world and the impact we can make to the lives of our community



Do you promise to be faithful in reading the bible and in prayer?

Vow 3 »



Do you give a fitting proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world?

Vow 4 »

(Commitment)

3



• **Video:** Teaching, Albert Bogle

- **Bible Study:** James 2: Faith in action, things we should do as Christians to respond to this 'call'

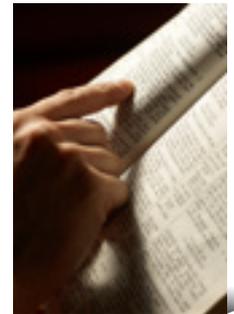


• **Video:** Vow 3



• **Video:** Vow 4, then discuss

- **Exercise:** The Kingdom of God said. Connect the following phrases and statements to the three Kingdom of God quotes above
- **Community Prayer**
An exercise in listening to one another



EXERCISES AND BIBLE STUDIES IN SESSION 3

BIBLE STUDY: (James 2: 14 - 26)

Faith in action

Things we should do as Christians to respond to this 'call'. Make a list of actions both large and small each person/the church can do to fulfill this challenge.

VOWS 3 AND 4:

When we consider church membership in the Church of Scotland, there are 5 vows that have been traditionally used to help us focus on our Christian commitment and discipleship. In this session we focus on Vows 3 and 4 where we will be considering the implications of faith in action.

KINGDOM: JESUS SAID:

"The kingdom of God is among us"

"The kingdom of God is within us"

"The kingdom of God is to come"

This is an exercise on thinking of how these words and phrases describing human needs could connect in our lives to the three statements above. The three phrases should be on a separate piece of paper. Invite the group to discuss and link each phrase to one or more of the above sayings of Jesus.

- the desire to belong to a group
- to satisfy 'ourselves'
- relatedness between people/interpersonal relationships
- being territorial creatures
- inquisitiveness and creative spirit
- desire for safety and security,
- to be 'fed' both physically and spiritually
- the power and powerlessness we feel in life,

- Love and attraction
- Desires to nurture and care for others

EXERCISE IN COMMUNITY PRAYER

- An exercise in listening to one another: e.g. topic is justice. The group/s listen to what one person in the groups prays for and in turn the next person adds to this prayer. For example the suggested topic may be justice or thanksgiving e.g.:
- Loving God we thank you..... xyz in our family..... wider church family.....
- Dear God we pray for the situation in Iraq that justice would prevail for xyz, next person prays... we wouldn't know justice if we saw it, and so on....

RESOURCES

Resources for this section can be downloaded from

<http://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/themes/abc-of-discipleship-bible-study-commitment>





DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is about the weaving of acceptance, belonging, and commitment leading to 'actions of grace.'



Do you promise depending on the grace of God, to profess publicly your loyalty to Jesus Christ, to serve him in your daily work, and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?

Vow 5 

(Discipleship)

4

-  • **Video:** Teaching, Albert Bogle
 - **Bible Study:** The key stones of life
-  • **Video:** Vow 5, then discuss
 - **Discussion:** The meaning of Communion
-  • **Video:** This is the Time
-  • **Video:** Conclusion, Albert Bogle
 - **Prayer Exercise:** Holy Hand



VOW 5:

When we consider church membership in the Church of Scotland, there are 5 vows that have been traditionally used to help us focus on our Christian commitment and discipleship. In this session we focus on Vow 5 which encourages us to share our faith. This session emphasises the importance of scripture in giving us building blocks on which we can build our lives. It will also seek to encourage us to explore the place and importance of Communion to sustain us in our Christian witness.

Invite the leader to discuss the meaning of the Lord's Supper and then view the Film: This is the time. Inviting the participant's reflections at the end.

'HOLY HAND' PRAYER EXERCISE

Each finger representing a different theme: love; trust; action; promise; etc.

Thumb: holding on

First finger: pointing the way

Middle Finger: the strongest finger that can pull more than its size

Ring finger: commitment/promise

Pinky: seems unnecessary, but the hand wouldn't be the a hand without it

Our the use of our hands can represent important acts of religious faith such as a handshake – giving , move the mouse to facilitate- knowledge, the human touch -healing hands, hand clasped together - prayer symbol.

RESOURCES

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(Acknowledgements)

