

# **Gathered as God's Family**

RENEW AFRICA SEASON FOUR

## **SHARING THE GOOD NEWS**

*Extra Notes for Small Group Material*  
*(St Thomas's Church Parish Renew Team)*

# RENEW 4 EXTRA NOTES FOR SMALL GROUP MATERIAL

## WEEKLY THEMES

Week 1 – Clothed in Christ (Baptism reminder)

Week 2 – Personal Conversion (A story to tell)

Week 3 – Rejoice in the Lord (“Good news” to share)

Week 4 – Evangelisation in the home

Week 5 – Evangelisation in the church

Week 6 – You will be my disciples (On a mission)

Please note:

- Where the word “Catholic” is used, in most cases simply replace it with “Anglican” to enhance the material’s relevance for us as Anglicans.
- These notes provide additional “Anglican” quotes to inspire us and some additional (optional) thoughts and questions to possibly add value to your group gatherings.
- There is no obligation to use any of this material.

For each week you will find extra information/options in this booklet for the following sections:

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6
Anglican quotes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sharing our action step	✓	✓	✓			✓
A look at Life			✓			
A look at Scripture	✓			✓		
Living our Faith			✓	✓	✓	
Closing Prayer			✓		✓	✓
Extra Notes	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

# WEEK 1 - CLOTHED IN CHRIST

## ANGLICAN QUOTES

- Baptism is the sacrament by which God adopts us as his children and makes us members of Christ's body the Church and inheritors of the Kingdom of God. We are united with Christ in his death (Romans 6:34). We are granted forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). We are made members of his body (1Cor 12:12-13) .We are raised with Him to new life in the Spirit (Col 2:12).  
(Anglican Prayer book p438)
- The outward and visible sign in baptism is water in which the person is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- The inward and spiritual grace in baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins and new life in the Holy Spirit (Anglican Prayer Book, 1989).
- "The Jewish baptismal rite was practiced in centuries before Jesus' arrival as a means of bathing for ritual purity. John baptized the people to wash away their wrongdoing, to challenge them to live a new life in keeping with the commandments of God and to prepare their hearts for the Messiah. Jesus' own baptism stands as the fulfilment of John's promises, for Jesus came to baptize the people with the Holy Spirit."  
(Dyer, 2009)

## SHARING OUR ACTION STEP p10

Since this is the first session of the series, RECALL the Renew journey we have been on: August 2013 "Meet Christ Today" – we were reminded of the saving work of our Lord and Saviour for us today. Lent 2014 gave us the opportunity to respond to "Jesus the Healer" and August 2014 challenged us to recognise and develop our God given gifts to build up the body of Christ. Now we begin a series on Discipleship challenging us to fulfil Jesus' final command to make disciples and respond to our Archbishop's call to grow our church.

**Let everyone in the group share one significant enlightenment/revelation they recall from the Renew journey thus far. (No comments!)**

## A LOOK AT SCRIPTURE p 12

The second Vatican Council called us "*People of God*" we can substitute// replace it with "by our baptism we become *members of Christ's body*"

Referring to the Sharing Section (in A Look at Scripture) for the 1<sup>st</sup> Question – **something helpful to remember:**

“Baptism is therefore a communal sacrament not because it is only effective when the whole community is present, but because it makes each one baptized an integral part of the local church, the Body of Christ. It also means taking one another seriously and interacting with respect towards all as we live out our commitment to Jesus day by day. We share Jesus’ teachings with others first and foremost by the way we live as His followers every day and then by what we say”. (Baptism preparation course ACSA).

Referring to the Sharing Section (in A Look at Scripture) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Question – **something to consider:**

Ubuntu is an African ideology which says that people can only find fulfilment through interacting with other people. Some of the sayings associated with Ubuntu are “*I belong therefore I am*”; “*I am because we are*”. Ubuntu emphasizes community and focuses on people’s interactions and relations with each other. People in Ubuntu are open and available for others and are accountable to one another. They do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for all have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belong in a greater group. When the child is being baptized he/she becomes part of the Church community. So as the child grows up he/she must feel that sense of belonging - of Ubuntu. It is therefore the role of the parents, godparents and wider church community to nurture the baptized children to spiritual maturity. As they grow up they need the support of that family and the church community, so that they may learn to trust in God. They need encouragement to be faithful in public worship and personal prayer, to come to confirmation and to continue in obedience to the commandments of God all the days of their life.

The role of the parents and church family in helping children to live out their baptismal vows is therefore very important and needs to be made very clear.

#### **EXTRA NOTES**

Anglicans believe in infant baptism so that children can share citizenship in the covenant membership in Christ and redemption by God. When infants or young adults are baptized promises are made for them by their parents and Godparents who promise that the infants will be brought up within the Church to know Christ and to follow him. It is the duty of the church to ensure that the parents or those responsible for the upbringing of the child receive such instruction in the Christian faith as will enable them to renew their own commitment to Christ and to promote the nurture and growth in the fellowship of the Church of the child. (Constitution and Canons, 2012)

## Theological statement

In the early Christian Church baptism was offered to adults when they repented and put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. However the question arose, "What do we do about the children born to believing parents?" In the Old Testament children of Jewish parents were given the sign that they belonged to God through circumcision (Gen 17:1-14). This was the sign of the **Old Covenant**. In the Christian Church children of Christian parents were baptized as a sign of the **New Covenant**. In Scripture God clearly sees the family as a "unit" within the community of faith (we are not just individuals). In the New Testament we therefore see that households and families were baptized when the head of the household came to Christ (Acts 16:14-15; 16:30-34; 1Cor 1:16). They came under the "umbrella" of his faith. It also followed that children born some time after the conversion of their parents would also be baptized. Since the days of the early church history shows us that the practice of baptizing children of believing parents has continued in all mainline church denominations (e.g. Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Dutch Reformed, Lutherans, Methodist). When the baptized person is ready he/she has the opportunity to make their own profession of faith (make the Baptismal promises) in the context of Confirmation.

## WEEK 2 - PERSONAL CONVERSION

### ANGLICAN QUOTES

The gift of this missionary and sustaining Spirit is for today, whatever your context and however much it is changing. So the promise for today in Acts 2:39 is: "For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

*Jan. 1, 1739. In his journal Wesley wrote about it this way:*

*Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love-feast in Fetter-Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord."*

The promise is for today.

*'Our theology would improve if we thought more of the church being given to the Spirit, than of the Spirit being given to the church.'* John V Taylor

If you have never been filled, open yourself today. We are told to keep on being filled. Together we give ourselves to the Holy Spirit again.

Bishop Graham Cray, Fresh Expressions

## **SHARING OUR ACTION STEP** p19

See excerpt from our APB Baptism service below...

When the child is presented to the priest he says:  
*N I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

*I sign you with the sign of the cross.*

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

***Fight valiantly under the banner of Christ***

***Against sin and the devil***

***And continue his faithful soldiers and servants***

***To the end of your lives***

A candle is given to the godparents with these words:

Christ our light

By baptism into Christ you pass from darkness to light

***Shine as light in the world***

***To the glory of God the Father***

- Did you have to fight valiantly for Christ this week?
- How have you been a faithful soldier and servant?
- When did you shine as a light in the world? (don't be shy!)

## **A LOOK AT LIFE**

“Good Catholic” on page 19 can just be substituted with “Good Anglican”

## **EXTRA NOTES**

Definition – look up [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com) Search: convert/conversion

Encourage the group to read a Christian Biography/Autobiography

[www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com) Search: Best Christian Biographies/Autobiographies

## **WEEK 3 - REJOICE IN THE LORD (“Good news” to share)**

### **ANGLICAN QUOTES**

Notable quotes by Anglican leaders:

- The church exists . . . for what we sometimes call *mission*: to announce to the world that Jesus is its Lord. This is the “good news”,

and when it is announced it transforms people and societies. Mission, in its widest as well as its more focused senses, is what the church is there for. God intends to put the world to rights; he has dramatically launched this project through Jesus. Those who belong to Jesus are called, here and now, in the power of the Spirit, to be agents of that putting-to-rights purpose. Tom Wright, former Anglican Bishop of Durham (Simply Christian)

- *I am passionate about Jesus Christ. I want everyone to know about him and to be attracted to his extraordinary life and to try and follow his superb guidance about living well. . . . I want to share what has been wonderfully good news in my own experience with anyone who shows an interest in hearing it.*

*However, I want to offer a reminder that faith truly lived, in whatever form, is deeply impressive. What disconcerts the unbeliever is often not the arguments of believers but their lives.*

John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford

- Discipleship means learning to lead the lives we should as God's people. Growing in discipleship involves prayer, study, action and witnessing to our faith. This is the path towards human flourishing and care for God's creation (statement by the Chelmsford Diocese)

### **SHARING OUR ACTION STEP** p26

Following on last week's session, would anyone like to inspire the group with the story of their own conversion or a conversion they have witnessed/ known/ read about?

### **A LOOK AT LIFE** p27

Leaders may notice that Question 1 may not be relevant to your particular group, so here is a possible alternative:

"Have you ever found yourself feeling out of your depth in a situation/predicament?" such as:

- making a really difficult decision – about a job? about your marriage? about an aging parent
- Problems with relationships at home, school, work
- being a victim of crime
- coping with the serious illness of a child/spouse/elderly parent
- feeling totally inadequate as a parent
- feeling desperately alone or afraid

Share your feelings about this, if you feel comfortable with it.

## **LIVING OUR FAITH** p29

### Alternative Questions

- What is it about Jesus that amazes you and that you would want to pass on to a sceptical world?
- What is it about Jesus that you would point to as most significant, in a conversation with a non-believer (or a person of another faith)?
- Page 30 *How might I take the Good News to those in need . . . . .*  
Remember that the need may not necessarily be physical or financial, but spiritual or emotional – fear, anxiety, grief, doubt or distress of any kind.

## **CLOSING PRAYER** p30

Suggestion - From the Collect for 18 January:

*Stir us with your voice*

*and enlighten our lives with your grace*

*that we may give ourselves fully*

*to Christ's call to mission and ministry through Jesus Christ our Lord*

*who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit*

*One God, now and forever, Amen.*

## **WEEK 4 – EVANGELISATION IN THE HOME**

(Whether we live in community or alone we all belong to families, immediate or extended and are strongly encouraged to share “the good news” with those nearest and dearest to us.)

## **ANGLICAN QUOTES**

- “I love being married and having a family, it’s joyous and it brings lots of experience and lots of insights”  
( Paul Butler, Anglican Bishop of Durham)

From the Catechism, Anglican Prayer Book page 441:

- Christian marriage, sometimes called Holy Matrimony, is a lifelong union into which the woman and the man enter when they make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfil their vows.

And on page 458:

- Marriage is given that the couple may know each other in mutual love and find in each other the lifelong companionship and support which is God’s intention for them.



- In the security of this relationship, children are born and brought up in the love and fear of God, being entrusted by him as a sacred charge to their parents.
- The family remains the most important grouping human beings have ever developed. Children thrive, grow and develop with the safeguarding of a family. Within the family we care for the young, the old and those with caring needs. Families should be able to offer each of their members commitment, fun, love, companionship and security.

### **A LOOK AT SCRIPTURE** p37

First sentence – **you could read (the Church” or “Christian leaders” in place of “Popes”**

Possible discussion point:

Our aim as parents is often to bring up children who can think and act independently – ie who can “stand on their own two feet” in this tough world. In Christianity, we teach them to rely on Jesus for help and guidance, and to submit to His will for our lives. Consequently, some young people then regard Christianity as a “crutch” for those who feel inadequate.

- How can we portray Jesus to a young person who is determined to “go it alone”?

### **LIVING OUR FAITH** p 38:

Referring to 2<sup>nd</sup> Question: The Rev Canon Anne Kitch, author of The Anglican Family Prayer Book, says: “The best place to teach children about our faith is in the home. Children are integral to the family . . . and prayer should also be integral to the family.”

*How can I gather my family to prayer?* This may seem too formal at first, so perhaps consider using opportunities that may arise spontaneously, for example:

- Grace before a meal – ask each to give thanks for something that day
- In the car – suggest that each person/child asks Jesus to be with him/her in a special way that day
- During conversation about friends/family/events – either offer to pray for the person/event, or suggest that you pray together.

*The leader then leads . . . . .to a common action*

In our society, many families face new and challenging pressures . . . the Church and society can help families flourish.

- *How can we be as welcoming and supportive as it is possible to be to those whose family life is complicated?*

### **EXTRA NOTES**

The Church touches families at many points . . . . (The Church of England)  
Refer to the website [www.churchofengland.org/our-views/](http://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/) . . .family – and

## **WEEK 5 – EVANGELISM IN THE PARISH**

### **ANGLICAN QUOTES**

*“ . . . being welcoming is a way of offering hope to people and introducing them to the Christian doctrine. If we’re seen as completely negative, people won’t come near us and they’ll just dismiss the Gospel, whereas if we’re offering care and concern, we’re opening up people to the Gospel and the hope that it offers . . . . .” (Paul Butler, Anglican Bishop of Durham)*

- ❖ Is our church a welcoming place – do we make people feel comfortable, at home, part of it?
- ❖ Have we been “welcoming people” in the past week, or do we look newcomers/strangers up and down and ignore them?
- ❖ Do we get together in our familiar groups after the service and take no notice of those who are on the fringe, or do we make them feel included and welcome?

Read the quotes on p41. From the 3rd quote list the aims and objectives of a well functioning small group.

### **“A perfect ‘pit stop’**

There are weeks when getting to group is difficult. But, rather than viewing it as yet another meeting to squeeze into an already manic schedule, how about seeing your small group as a perfect ‘pit stop’ in the middle of your busy week? After all, it is there that you can be refreshed, give out and receive encouragement from other Christians” Claire Musters (Small Group Central)

### **LIVING OUR FAITH** p46

Ensure that you have 20 minutes to discuss and reflect on this section. It will possibly be the most significant discussion of the whole course.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Start thinking and praying about the life of your small group between and beyond Renew 5.

### **EXTRA NOTES:**

Good resource for extra reading and information:

[www.smallgroupcentral.org.uk](http://www.smallgroupcentral.org.uk)

## **WEEK 6 : YOU WILL BE MY DISCIPLES**

### **ANGLICAN QUOTES**

According to the Anglican Communion, the FIVE MARKS OF MISSION are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society; to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.
- ❖ Discuss: Do you think this is a good summary of our task and mission as Christians?
- ❖ Do we, as a Church, live up to these five marks of mission?

Quotes from the Catechism in the Anglican Prayer Book page 433

- “The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”
- “The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the gospel, and promotes justice, peace and love.”
- “The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.”
- “The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in life, worship, and governance of the Church.”

### ***What is the duty of all Christians?***

The Bishops of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa describe the duty of all Anglican Christians of our Church as follows “ ***The Father expects all his***

***people to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring others to the knowledge of him”***

The Anglican Church in Southern Africa shares in this call and every baptized and confirmed member must share in God’s mission to the world.

**SHARING OUR ACTION STEP**,p50

Which people have you invited to one of our Easter services?  
Which group in the church are we going to support and how?

**CLOSING PRAYER** p55

Say the Anglicans Ablaze prayer:

*Almighty God, consuming fire of love,  
You have given us the vision to be  
Anchored in the Love of Christ,  
Committed to Your mission and  
Transformed by the Holy Spirit*

*We seek  
To honour You in living worship,  
To embody and proclaim the Good News and  
To grow communities of faith*

*Set us ablaze with Your power and love*

*To build up Your Church  
And serve You in the world  
To Your praise and glory*

*In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

**EXTRA NOTES:**

Good resource for extra reading and information: [www.growingthechurch.org.za](http://www.growingthechurch.org.za)  
and [www.anglicanwitness.org](http://www.anglicanwitness.org).

Try something new: watch Youtube video: Writing and using your personal tract.