

# INTRODUCTION

We live in a religiously plural and increasingly secularist society. The modes of evangelism that had been successful in the past (e.g. mass evangelistic rallies, street evangelism, one-way Gospel presentations, apologetical evangelism, etc.) are waning in receptiveness to both non-believers and believers. Public perception of Christians and Christianity are also changing as the Church in Singapore engages more openly in public square issues giving rise to views (rightly or wrongly) of Christians as being intolerant or bigoted. Such societal conditions affect the Church's witness & evangelism in 2 broad ways:

- i) Non-Christians become less open to having religious conversations with Christians through which the gospel may be shared;
- ii) Christians, particularly those of the Millennials and younger generations, feel a tension in sharing their faith with others as they do not want to come across as "pushy or disrespectful towards people of other faith."<sup>1</sup>

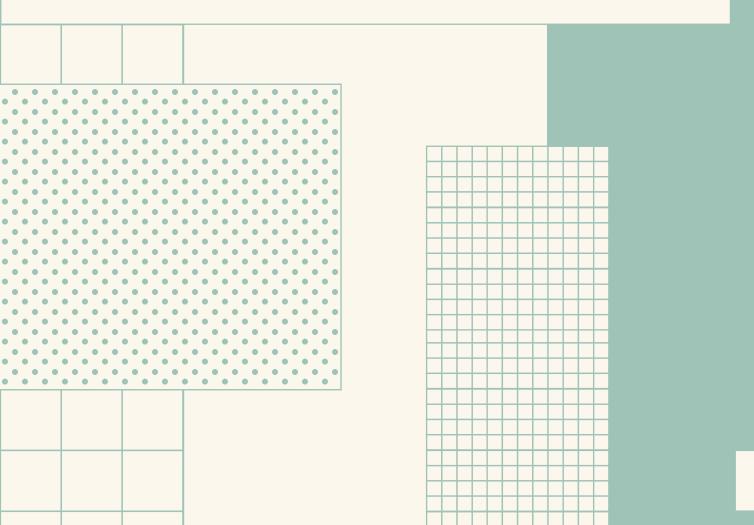
While there are many resources on witnessing and evangelism already available, we believe that one rooted in gentleness and humility fills a current gap in recognising the sensitivities of our modern day will contribute to equipping and increasing the confidence of the Church (TRAC<sup>2</sup> in particular).

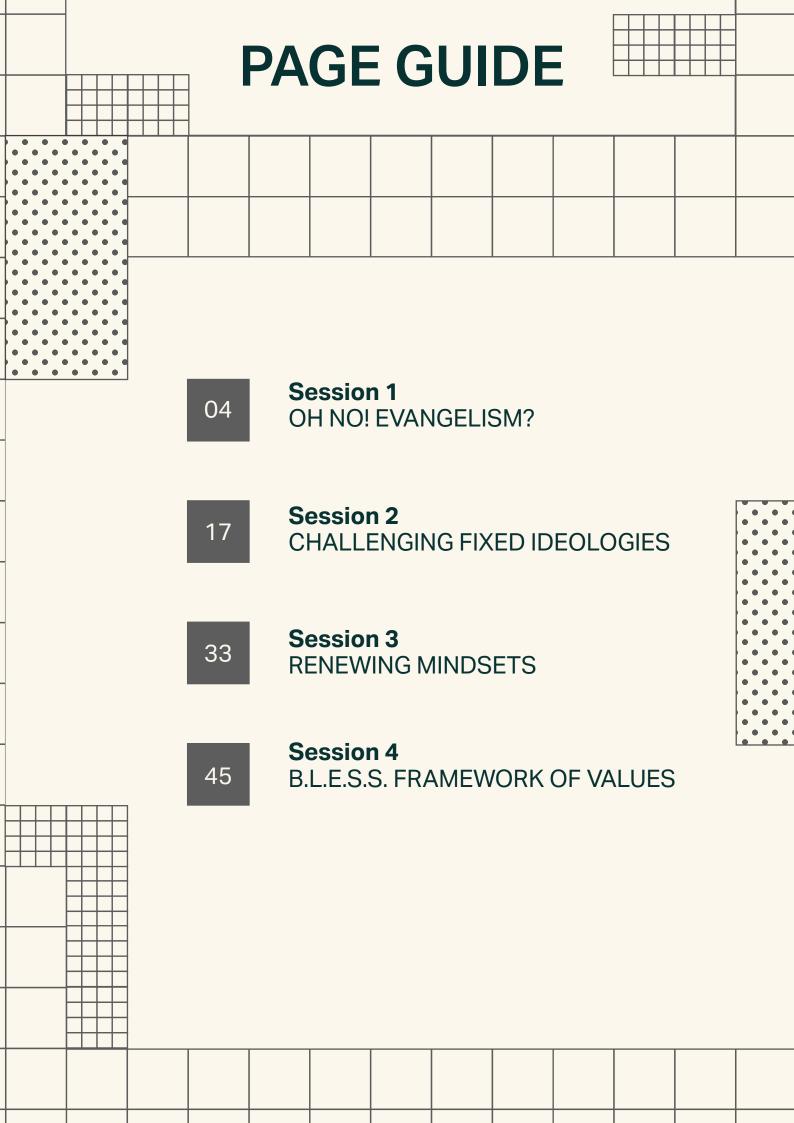
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://thirst.sg/millennials-in-usa-think-evangelism-is-wrong-what-about-singapore/ (2019; referenced in the article is the research by Barna in USA, https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/); see also https://graceworks.com.sg/are-young-christians-interested-in-evangelism/ (2022). These views are consistent with a study conducted by the One for Jesus Movement in 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC) is one of the three Annual Conferences of The Methodist Church in Singapore. TRAC is a connection of 21 local churches with more than 30,020 members as of Nov 2023.

This series is not aimed at building intellectual knowledge or arguments for apologetics or debate, nor does it promote another new or fixed tactic of evangelism. Our hearts are for this to be a learning journey, with an invitation for us to do the following together:

- 1. Critically reflect on our paradigms and postures, and own the need for change to be witnesses of Christ in the spirit of Christ;
- 2. Renew our minds and hearts, and cultivate new dispositions when engaging with others with different convictions from us; and
- Explore new ways of engagement with others that we will find natural to do in light of our faith in Jesus, and that invites them to get to know Jesus in contrast to securing their reception of a set of religious propositions.









- Identifying the problems with evangelism today:
   Why is evangelism so difficult? How do non-Christians feel about evangelising Christians? How Christians feel about that?
- Taking ownership of the problem: Realize that evangelism is difficult because we have made it difficult; but how so?
- Creating anticipation for change: Building a sense of how evangelism can be different
- Stimulating commitment to change: Align participants on what to expect and what they need to bring to the sessions



## **SESSION OUTLINE**



Gather



Series Introduction



Mentimeter Activity: Evangelism?



Group Sharing: How are we practising and sharing our faith that makes Christianity undesirable?



In Conversation: The Changing Context of Witnessing



Sermon: Gentle and Respectful Witnessing



Group Sharing: What have you found enlightening or jarring to hear?



Bible Reflection: Acts 15 and Acts 10



Group Sharing: Acts 15 and Acts 10



Closing words





## Gather

With this being the very first session of the series, how you start will set the tone and ethos for the rest of the sessions. It is important to establish an atmosphere of gentleness, respect, invitation, warmth, and openness - these are the very postures that this learning journey aims to cultivate in the way we relate with others in being witnesses of Christ. How conversations, listening and talking to one another, receiving differences and disagreements, are carried out in these sessions is in itself a formative exercise; and hopefully something that shapes how we interact with those we are wanting to invite to get to know and come to believe in Jesus and follow him.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

- Welcome everyone to this learning journey to be witnesses of Christ in the way of Christ.
- Read the INTRODUCTION to the group.
- Share with the group that the format of each session includes reflecting on videos, and small group sharing and discussions.
- Invite consensus on Principles for Learning in Christian Community<sup>1</sup>
  - No Christian has a monopoly on understanding either God's Word or the words of the Scripture. This includes biblical scholars and the most unlearned Christian. All of us must listen to one another as we seek to understand the richness of God's gifts.

- 2. In listening to one another, we must listen firstly to seek to understand one another rather than looking for a response to give one another. This may mean that we will do more asking to clarify what we understand from one another than giving our judgments or opinions on what we have heard from one another.
- 3. We must assume everyone has Christian integrity and not accuse one another of being unchristian, no matter how unusual are the opinions.
- 4. We must further assume that we will arrive at different understandings of portions of Scripture, and that that will not disturb God as much as it will some of us.
- 5. While we accept our differences, we do not feel that those differences are unimportant, or that they should be ignored or treated as if they did not matter.
- 6. Different biblical understandings can remain among us, but we can still be warm Christian friends. In fact, as we grow to better understand our differences, we can grow in our appreciation of one another.
- Pray together with these words based on Psalm 25:4-5, 9:

Gracious God,

Teach me humility, that I may be led in what is right.

Make me to know your ways; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. Amen.



## **Mentimeter Activity**

### **QUESTION FOR THOUGHT:**

WHAT ARE THE VERY FIRST FEELINGS THAT COME TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU SEE THIS WORD - EVANGELISM?

As prompted by the video hosts, guide the group to participate in the Mentimeter activity.

If more time is needed to navigate to Mentimeter or to clarify the instructions, pause the video to cater for it. However, do not give too much time to this segment.

N.B.: The activity is asking only for first reactions and instinctive responses, and the time allotted for responding is intentionally kept short to elicit such responses.

### **Creating the mentimeter activity:**

- Head to mentimeter.com and log in (you may have to create an account).
- Select "New Quiz", and a blank template.
- Pick the "Word Cloud" function for a slide and type in the question as a header.
- Next, share the link or 8-number code for everyone to join (via mentimeter.com) and input their answers.
- Participants should be able to enter and view the answers on their mobile screen



### **QUESTION FOR THOUGHT:**

# HOW ARE WE PRACTISING AND SHARING OUR FAITH THAT MAKES CHRISTIANITY UNDESIRABLE?

Invite the group to share personal experiences and observations of why non-Christians may find Christianity undesirable due to their interactions with Christians. Take note that the question is focused on actions - the mechanisms (approaches, behaviours, attitudes) of how one shares the Gospel.

Some members may opine that the low growth of Christianity in Singapore and the tension faced by Christians in sharing the gospel are more greatly due to other factors (e.g. the gospel being exclusive, the relativistic mood of the times, etc). Do not feel pressured to force a landing or agreement on this. Acknowledge that their view could well be true from their experience, but gently redirect them back to the key focus of the question on actions. You can also help them understand that the assumptions underlying the question reflect a segment of Singapore that the video would like us to consider.

Some members may also wonder if the video is speaking against methods like "street evangelism." Assure such members that this learning journey is not focused on addressing methods of evangelism, but our dispositions in how we evangelise, and also our understanding and assumptions of what it means to evangelise or be a witness for Christ. If they are practitioners and advocates of various tools or methods of evangelism, affirm them for being active in evangelism, and invite them to consider how this learning journey may enhance what they are presently doing to invite others to know Jesus.



# In Conversation: The Changing Context of Witnessing

This segment features an interview with Ho Wei-Hao, co-author of The Generations Project: Bridging Generational Divides in the Singapore Church (Singapore: Graceworks, 2023) with Dr Tan Soo-Inn. His views are based on the research findings presented in The Generations Project, which provide a good backdrop for consideration to the unique challenges of witnessing in our current times - no matter to new generations or not.



# WHY IS THERE A NEED TO LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS IN OUR CHURCHES?

Excerpt from The Generations Project book:

We live at a unique point in history where at least five generations are living and working together. Each generation has been shaped by different formative experiences: for the Silent generation—World War 2 and the Great Depression; for Generation X and onwards—the advent of the internet. Because of this, the ways they view life and faith are different.

While it is wrong to overgeneralise the characteristics of each generation, and indeed each individual is in many ways unique, there are also common trends we see in the different generations. This has resulted in misunderstanding and conflict in our families, our organisations, and in the church as well, between those from different generations. From our research, we uncovered that it was not a scenario where one generation was right and the others were wrong. Rather, the intergenerational tensions were due to a serious lack of understanding and empathy amongst the different generations. It is our hope that God will be able to use our research to enable better intergenerational relationships in our churches.

More info about The Generations Project is available here

- https://graceworks.com.sg/store/category/pastoral-resources/the-generations-project/
- https://graceworks.com.sg/generations-project/



# Sermon: Gentle and Respectful Witnessing

Listen to a sermon by Rev Dr Gordon Wong, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Singapore (MCS) (2020-2024). He began service as a Methodist pastor in 1986, and served as President of the Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC) of MCS from 2013 to 2020. He was also the Bishop William F. Oldham Professor of Old Testament at Trinity Theological College where he lectured on the Old Testament, Hebrew and Homiletics for 17 years.



## **Group Sharing**

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What have you found enlightening or jarring to hear?
- Are there thoughts that are uncomfortable for you?
- Did you learn new vocabulary on certain things?

This segment is inserted to give space for the participants to process what they have been hearing so far. It is important to provide a safe space for everyone to be able to air their views without judgment or criticisms.

Allow for disagreements - where there are persons who disagree with anything in the video or discussions so far, convey to them respect for their views and avoid being drawn into any debates with them.

N.B.: Remember that how conversations, listening and talking to one another, receiving differences and disagreements, are carried out in these sessions is in itself a formative exercise; and hopefully something that shapes how we interact with those we are wanting to invite to get to know and come to believe in Jesus and follow him.



# Bible Study Reflection: Acts 15 and Acts 10

Listen to a narration and reflect on the event of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:1-32, and the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. The narrations are adaptations combining different recognised English translations of the Bible.

The key ideas for reflection from this segment are:

- Are there ways to hold firmly to Christ as the only way to God and present that as good news for all, in gentleness and respect?
- What are our present-day issues of 'dining with Gentiles' (Acts 10) and 'circumcision' (Acts 15) – issues "that make it difficult for others turning to Christ" (Acts 15:19)?



## **Group Sharing**

The early church had to deal with some long-held religious traditions such as not eating with Gentiles and circumcision.

QUESTION: What are our present-day issues of 'dining with Gentiles' (Acts 10) and 'circumcision' (Acts 15) - issues "that make it difficult for others turning to Christ" (Acts 15:19)?

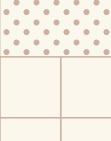
Alternatively: What are some cherished religious customs, or ingrained ideas and practices of evangelism that might "make it difficult for others turning to God" (Acts 15:19)?

Give the group 1 minute to think about their responses and note it down. Then invite them to share and discuss.

> Below are some examples that may be useful to open up spaces for discussion with differing views. However, take careful note that the point of this series and discussion is not to convey or land on a position on these matters.

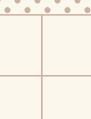
- Expecting individuals to respond within just a single session of witnessing
- we are unwilling to set foot in other religious buildings that is not a church
- Insisting that only one Bible translation should be used
- Some form of "the sinner's prayer" must be said before one can be a Christian.
- objection is not a true Christian.
- cannot be a true Christian.
- non-Christian rites or festivals if one wants to be a Christian.

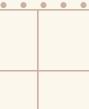


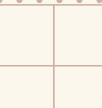














This segment concludes the session.

### **ASK THE GROUP**

What is one takeaway from today's session for you that you will do something about?

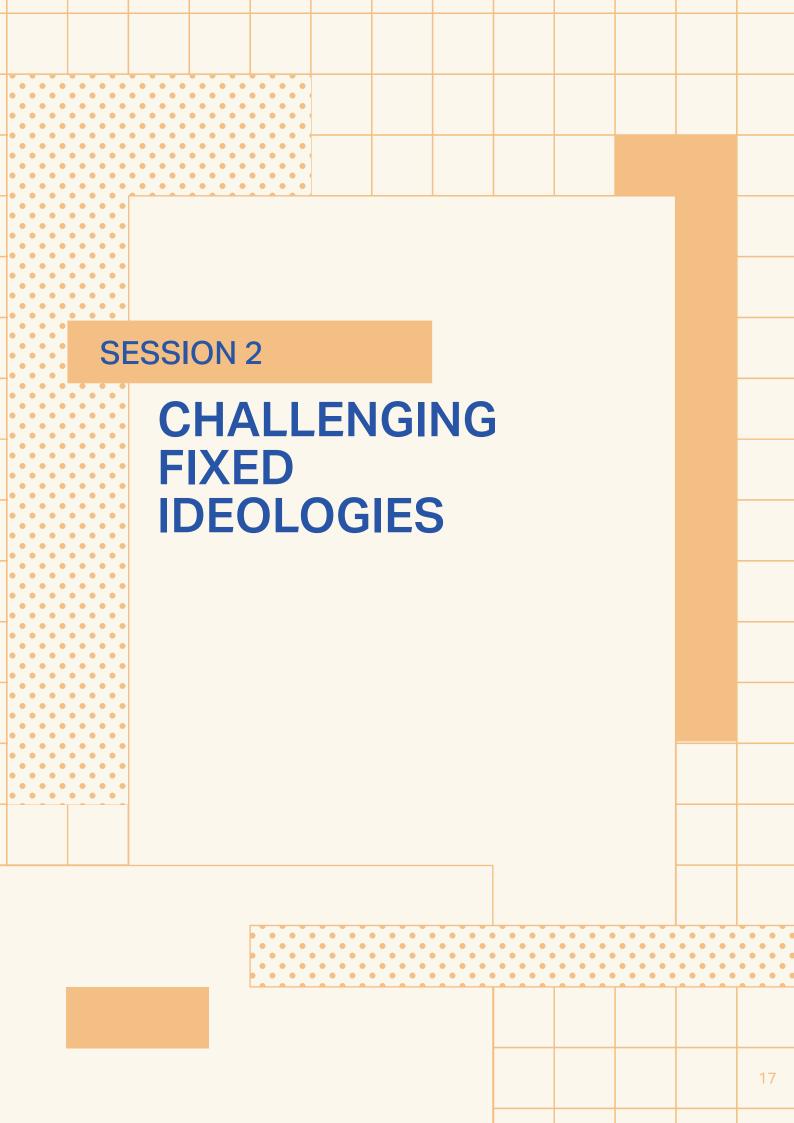
("Do" here does not only mean some outward action; it could also mean a change in mindset, attitude, or posture, etc.) As it is the individual's takeaway, there is no need to correct any perceived wrong thinking; although where helpful or where what is shared is not so clearly seen from the session, you may wish to ask questions to clarify how the person reached that idea. It is unlikely that in the closing moments, anyone's thinking (even if not what this material seeks to promote) can be changed, but as everyone shares, we trust that there will be some who will share (or even deepen) the heart of what the session is trying to convey and allow that to sit with the rest as well.



Lead the group in a closing prayer before dismissing them.

You may also want to end this and every session by inviting everyone to exchange signs of peace with one another, saying to one another,

"THE PEACE OF CHRIST BE WITH YOU."

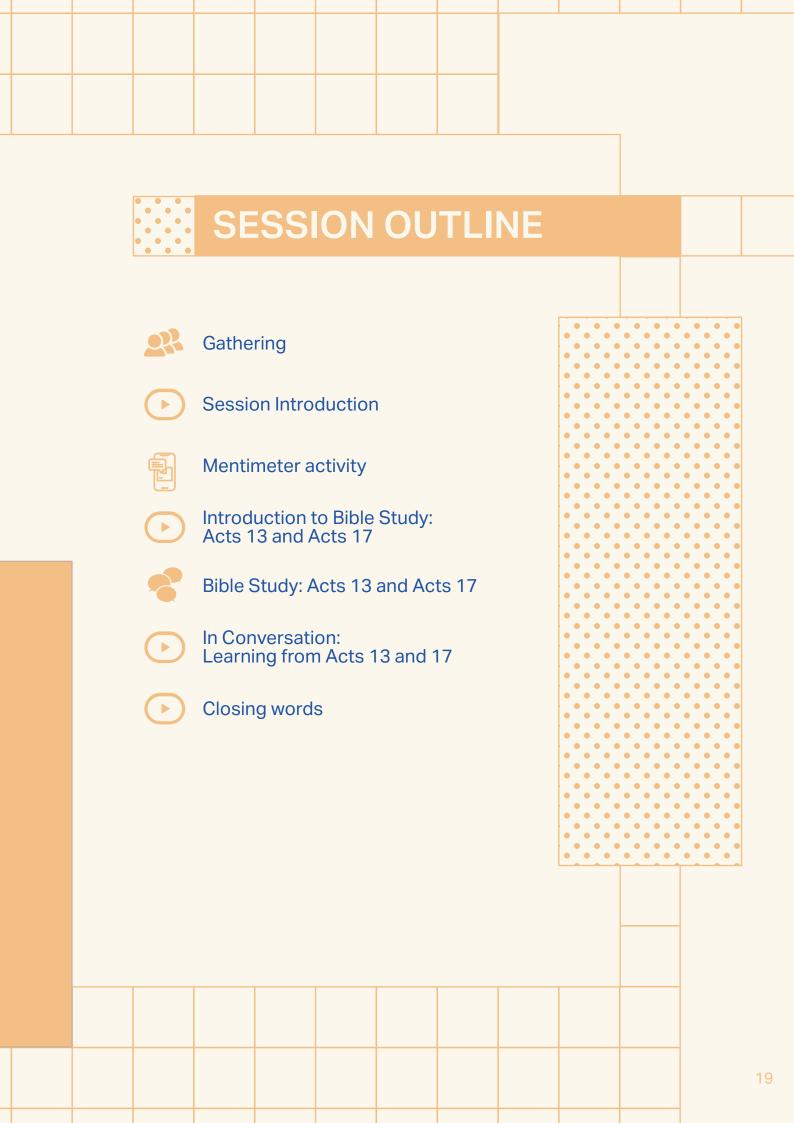


SESSION 2:
CHALLENGING FIXED
IDEOLOGIES



## **OBJECTIVES**

- Helping participants to be open to tensions and challenges that an invitation to consider changing mindsets about evangelism might evoke. The process may involve disequilibration, defamiliarization, or deconstruction.
  - Disequilibration: a sense of imbalance and dissonance when what one sees or hears seems incongruent from what one knows
  - Defamiliarization: a manner of presenting common things in less familiar ways to gain new perspectives
  - Deconstruction: to break something down into separate parts in order to understand its meaning
- Inviting participants to revisit Scripture and read it with the posture of learner.
- Realising the fixed and narrow definitions we have about many matters of faith – illustrating it with
  - Our understanding of the Gospel: What IS the Gospel?
  - The way we have been 'fed' to perceive what is counted as 'sharing' the 'Gospel'







Remember, how you start will set the tone and ethos for the session. It is important to establish an atmosphere of gentleness, respect, invitation, warmth, and openness - these are the very postures that this learning journey aims to cultivate in the way we relate with others in being witnesses of Christ. How conversations, listening and talking to one another, receiving differences and disagreements, are carried out in these sessions is in itself a formative exercise; and hopefully something that shapes how we interact with those we are wanting to invite to get to know and come to believe in Jesus and follow him.

### **SUGGESTED APPROACH**

- Welcome everyone back to this learning journey to be witnesses of Christ in the way of Christ.
- If there were strong reactions or disagreements in the last session, acknowledge them again and explicitly say that these are normal when we are challenged to reconsider thoughts on topics we have strong opinions about it is not wrong to have such feelings. In fact, some thoughts and emotions might even be similar to how some people whom we are trying to share the gospel with are thinking and feeling also it could help us gain better understanding and empathy of their experience on the receiving end. These sessions welcome such honesty and are occasions for us to grow in our ability to hold conversations amid such differences with gentleness and respect, and enhance our authenticity in sharing Christ with others.



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Mentimeter Activity  QUESTION FOR THOUGHT												
IN SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH SOMEBODY, WHAT ARE THE MAIN IDEAS THAT YOU WOULD TELL												
A NON-CHRISTIAN FRIEND ABOUT JESUS?												
Get participants to list single words each time; aim for about 3-5 each.												
As prompted by the video hosts, guide the group to participate in the Mentimeter activity*.												
If more time is needed to navigate to Mentimeter or to clarify the instructions, pause the video to cater for it. However, do not give												
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# Introduction to Bible Study: Acts 13 and Acts 17

This segment of the video includes a vox pop of views of different young adults. Their views represent their experiences and thoughts about evangelism and need not be agreed with. They are included to spur us to reflect and be aware of our own experiences and thoughts about what constitutes the gospel and sharing it.



# Bible Study: Acts 13 and Acts 17

- Read Acts 13:13-43 and 17:16-34 as a group.
- For each of the passages, invite someone to read it in full.
  - Select people who are able to read with clarity, energy, and emotions reflective of the text.
  - It is not necessary to get everyone to read the passage aloud as they will be reading the passages in the subsequent sub-group study of the texts.
- Divide the group into sub-groups of 3-4 people in each group.





- Guide the sub-groups to compare the 2 passages and respond to the questions below (question by question). You can also consider photocopying the suggested worksheet on page 31 to facilitate the text comparisons.
- Keep to the time duration to keep the study for each question focused.
   There will be a chime in the video when it's time for you to move on from one question to the other.
- When ready, come together again and invite the different groups to share their responses to each question.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**(Zooming in on Acts 13:26-41 and Acts 17:22-31)

- 1. What were the main subject matter in these passages?
  What did Paul talk about? Why were they different? (10 min)
- 2. What were the terms (language) used? Why were they different? (5 min)
- 3. What quotes were used in these passages? Find the original texts the quotes were cited from. Who was being referred to in the texts? (direct the people to search for the exact phrases using Google or other internet search tools; 15 min)
- 4. What was the Good News?
  What was the purpose of the cross and resurrection? (5 min)



Close attention to the Scripture text is important for this exercise, so it's ideal that participants pick out the exact words or phrases that are used in the Scripture passage. If the answers given do not use the words/phrases from the text, it will be useful to clarify which word/phrase in the text led to the answer given.

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#### SESSION 2: CHALLENGING FIXED IDEOLOGIES

Acts 13:26-41

Acts 17:22-31

## What was the Good News?

What was the purpose of the cross and resurrection?



 Could not be justified by the law of Moses. (v39)

#### What man's response should be:

• Believe. (v39)

## The Good News and purpose of the cross and resurrection:

- Jesus was the fulfilment of the promise that God had given to their ancestors. (vv23, 32-33)
- Cross and resurrection prove that Jesus was indeed the fulfilment of God's promise (vv32-37)
- Through Jesus, the forgiveness of sins and being set free from (freedom) from sin. (vv38-41)

### **Problem of man:**

Wrong thinking, ignorance. (v23, 29)

#### What man's response should be:

 Repent (Greek: metanoia = change of thinking, to be enlightened in the mind). (v30)

## The Good News and purpose of the cross and resurrection:

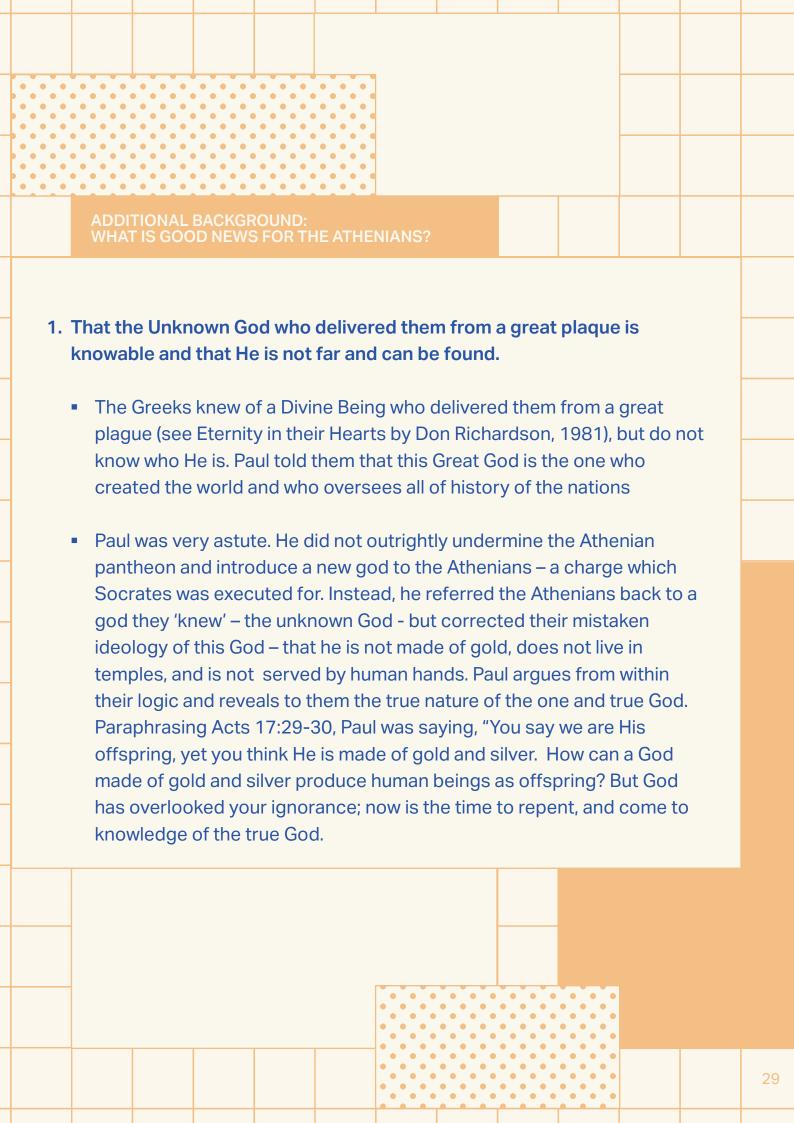
- God is know-able. (vv 23, 27)
- Judgment of the world will be with justice (i.e. not arbitrarily). (v31)
- Cross and resurrection is proof of who God has appointed as the just judge of the world.

(Knowledge, morality and justice are central tenets of Stoicism. Justice preoccupies the minds of the Greeks. Paul was engaging with Stoic philosophy, using their concepts to present the gospel. For more background, see "What is the Good News for the Athenians?")

If time permits: Invite everyone in the group to state whether they are more accustomed to the ideas of the gospel presented in Acts 13 or 17.

Paul's presentation of the gospel in Acts 13 with the ideas of salvation as the forgiveness of sin is typically what most Christians who received the gospel from the West (e.g. Christians in general in Singapore) are more familiar with. Paul's presentation of the gospel in Acts 17 was different from how he had presented it in Acts 13.

**Recommended reading:** "Paul and the Philosophers" by Timothy A. Brookins (2015), https://ifl.web.baylor.edu/sites/g/files/ecbvkj771/files/2022-11/bookofactsarticlebrookins.pdf



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# In Conversation: Learning from Acts 13 and Acts 17

This segment of the video includes a tabletop conversation between two laypersons and two pastors on the study on Acts 13 and 17. It serves as a final round up of the study on these two passages and its implications for our approach to sharing the gospel.



## **Closing Words**

Ask the group: What is one takeaway from today's session for you that you will do something about?

("Do" here does not only mean some outward action; it could also mean a change in mindset, attitude, or posture, etc.)

This session has brought up ideas that may be very new or controversial for some participants. If you sense there to be such strong sentiments in the group, acknowledge that the ideas may be hard to grapple with and there could be very good reasons for disagreeing with them. But invite them to consider the points that they can agree with. Also bring back the focus to how conversations, listening and talking to one another, receiving differences and disagreements, carried out in these sessions is in itself a formative exercise; and hopefully something that shapes how we interact with those we are wanting to invite to get to know and come to believe in Jesus and follow him.

Lead the group in a closing prayer before dismissing them.

You may also want to end the session by inviting everyone to exchange signs of peace with one another, saying to one another, "The peace of Christ be with you."





	SESSION 4: RENEWING MINDSETS												
	OBJECTIVES												
	To critically reflect on and renew our mindset, method, and manner of evangelism: Explore and co-create a renewed paradigm and perspectives on 'evangelism,' - re-imagining and re-crafting our practice of it.												
	Demonstrate an open intergenerational discussion:     the younger expressing struggles and sharing new												
	ideas, with the older validating struggles of the younger and affirming their ideas and providing perspectives.This forum also demonstrates how												
	people of varying backgrounds can engage respectfully with one another.												
	34												







Reminder: How you start will set the tone and ethos for the session. It is important to establish an atmosphere of gentleness, respect, invitation, warmth, and openness - these are the very postures that this learning journey aims to cultivate in the way we relate with others in being witnesses of Christ. How conversations, listening and talking to one another, receiving differences and disagreements, are carried out in these sessions is in itself a formative exercise; and hopefully something that shapes how we interact with those we are wanting to invite to get to know and come to believe in Jesus and follow him.

#### SUGGESTED APPROACH

- Welcome everyone back to this learning journey to be witnesses of Christ in the way of Christ.
- If there were strong reactions or disagreements in the last session, acknowledge them again and explicitly say that these are normal when we are challenged to reconsider thoughts on topics we have strong opinions about it is not wrong to have such feelings. In fact, some thoughts and emotions might even be similar to how some people whom we are trying to share the gospel with are thinking and feeling also it could help us gain better understanding and empathy of their experience on the receiving end. These sessions welcome such honesty and are occasions for us to grow in our ability to hold conversations amid such differences with gentleness and respect, and enhance our authenticity in sharing Christ with others.





### Poll

As the video plays, invite each person to pick the statement from the list on the screen that best represents his/her understanding of sharing their faith with others. If none of the statements apply to them, they may simply say so or they may give their own statement of their understanding outside of the list.

As this activity serves as a warm-up to prepare the participants to begin focusing on and thinking about the topic in the session, there is no need to enter into any discussion on their responses at this point.

N.B.: The activity is asking only for first reactions and instinctive responses, and the time allotted for responding is intentionally kept short to elicit such responses.

#### QUESTION

## WHICH OF THESE DESCRIBE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SHARING YOUR FAITH?

- Explaining the death and resurrection of Jesus
- Sharing my experiences of Jesus in my life
- Explaining the need to receive Jesus for salvation
- Being a good Christian friend to another
- Doing life with another
- Sharing my Christian positions on life's issues,
   e.g. abortion, LGBTQ
- Helping another realise the power of God through signs and wonders





### Forum: Our Struggles with Evangelism and How We Can Reimagine It

This is an intergenerational forum\* that discusses some struggles of evangelising today, and explores how we may renew our mindsets, methods and manners about evangelism to address or mitigate those struggles.

The participants in the forum are aged between 18 and 65 years old, and come from different backgrounds (tertiary students, young adults working in different sectors, church ministry workers, missiologist, and pastors).

#### The forum format seeks to do the following:

- Demonstrate how conversations with different viewpoints may be held
- Invites listeners to be a part of the conversation and process of exploration and renewal of mindsets, methods and manners regarding evangelism as they listen to and reflect on the various questions asked and discussed

# As the group watches on, you may also encourage the group to think about the following matters:

- Who did they most identify with?
- At what points did they feel uncomfortable, and why?
- What were the manners and attitudes that the individuals had when engaging with each other?

After the forum, the video hosts will highlight key learning points from the conversations in the forum.



\*Content in this video is re-cut from an actual forum that we organised to discuss the same topic at hand. We have taken every effort to ensure that participants' original intention in the context of the conversations in the forum are reflected accordingly



### **Closing words**

The video hosts will highlight the key learning points from the forum, which are:



#### 1. We're introducing the person of Jesus, not a theory of salvation.

In most cases, we're not giving a doctrinal thesis of who Jesus is and what He has done, but introducing Jesus as a living person. This is just a starting point for engagement. It's more about relationships, and demonstrating by sharing in life together.

In many evangelistic methods and tools, the theory of salvation that is focused on has to do with how sin has separated us from God and the death and resurrection of Jesus as an atonement to make us right with God again and get into a relationship with him. This is definitely true and an important aspect of the gospel. However, it is not the only aspect of the gospel nor necessarily the best starting point to introduce someone to Jesus, because they may not yet relate with the idea of sin (against God) and atonement.

Recall the Bible study on Acts 17 in the previous lesson. Paul preached the gospel to the Athenians without mentioning sin, atonement and forgiveness, but spoke of God as the "unknown God" that the Athenians worshipped, and Jesus as the righteous judge and how the resurrection was a sign of that. Paul introduced Jesus to the Athenians starting with where they were at and what they could understand, and how the person of Jesus fulfilled their desire to know God and for a divine righteous judge. From Paul's letters, we can be sure that he would teach converts about sin, atonement and forgiveness through Christ. But at least in Acts 17, we see that these ideas were not his starting point to introduce Jesus to the Athenians.

Introducing Jesus as a person involves looking at the teachings, life, death and resurrection and Jesus' promise of his return and asking the question: what aspect of Jesus would be understood as good news or salvation for the person where he/she is at presently? Jesus' teachings also often come alive when we serve and love other people practically - i.e. when we show Christ to them. Consider also how evangelism is as much about doing as it is 'talking'. 2. Dialogue, not monologue. We need to create an open and safe space where people can explore faith and life. Listen, for space to seque or go deeper into. Listen, without arguing. Many times, what people are looking for at the start is not eloquent persuasion or teaching of a new idea, but a connection with their personal experiences and situations. So we need to listen and seek to understand them to connect with them before we can make connections of Jesus to their lives. When we offer a listening ear with compassion and openness, and show genuine care for the other person, we also model how Jesus would interact with them. 41



#### 3. Evangelism is a process, not a one off activity.

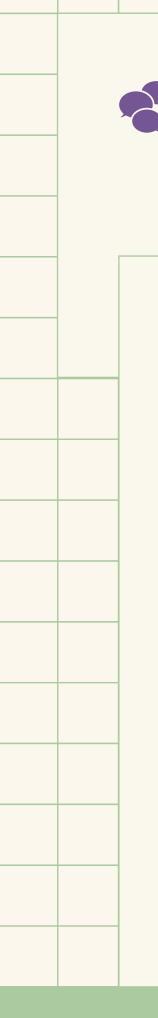
Recognize that transformation is sometimes a gradual, metamorphic process, like a tadpole growing legs. And there are other sowers and harvesters who can come alongside someone else's journey to salvation. So we do not have to feel pressured to think that we have to present everything about Jesus or the gospel in one conversation, or that if we do not get to the presentation of the ideas of sin and atonement we have not evangelised to the person. Just as even after years of being a Christian we are still learning more of Jesus and there are still ideas about Jesus or the Christian faith that we find hard to grasp, we should not expect non-Christians to have to know everything about Jesus and to believe in him in just one or a few conversations.



#### 4. Be vulnerable.

Evangelising with vulnerability means approaching others without holier-than-thou attitude or a facade of perfection, but with humility and openness. . To be vulnerable is to recognise that we do not know everything about the other person's present beliefs and that we need to listen to them respectfully and genuinely try to understand them, just as we hope they will listen to us and try to understand what we have to share. It is also to be willing to admit when we have made wrong assumptions about them or their beliefs, and to be willing to affirm vestiges of truth that may be found in their beliefs. These vestiges of truth may well be the points of connection that we can make to introduce Christ to them.

The video will end with instructions for a small group sharing.





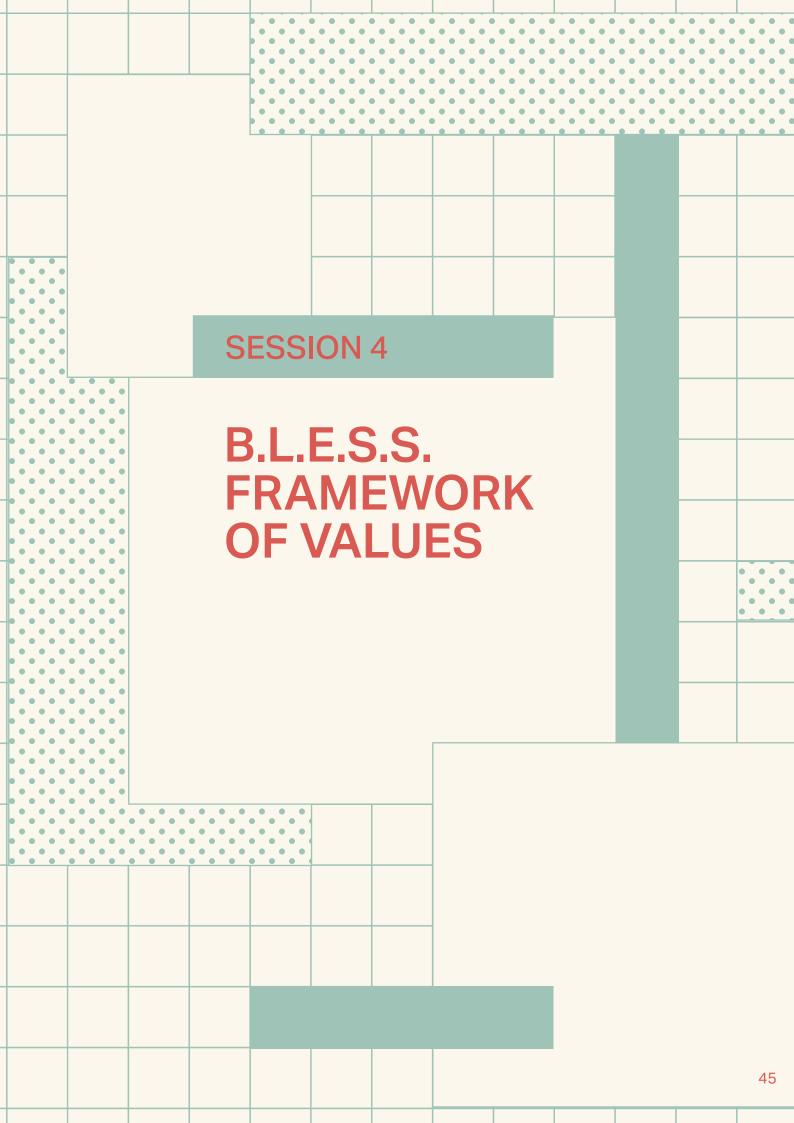
Split the group into 2s or 3s.
Invite each person to share with the other for about 10 minutes each with the questions on the screen.

# Think about a person you might be struggling to reach out to, and consider the following:

- How have you tried witnessing this person? What was the context? What did you talk about, and how did the person respond?
- How might your interactions change when you see that evangelism is a 'process'?
- What is your relationship to this person like?
- How can you be more vulnerable in your friendship with this person?
- What are their current perceptions or understanding of Christians and/or the Christian faith?
- What Biblical concepts might be relevant, or foreign to this person?
- What "good news" does this person need to hear?

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						B.L.E	E.S.S. FRA	AMEWOF	SESS RK OF VA	ION 4: ALUES		
OBJECTIVES												
Cultivate values, attitudes, and dispositions that are helpful for     Christian witness												
<ul> <li>Christian witness</li> <li>Role play engagement and conversations with others</li> </ul>												
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Session Introduction												
Testimony Testimony											-	
B.L.E.S.S. Framework												
Small Group Role-play and Discussion												
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				6	Co	nclusic	on					
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Reminder: How you start will set the tone and ethos for the session. It is important to establish an atmosphere of gentleness, respect, invitation, warmth, and openness - these are the very postures that this learning journey aims to cultivate in the way we relate with others in being witnesses of Christ. How conversations, listening and talking to one another, receiving differences and disagreements, are carried out in these sessions is in itself a formative exercise; and hopefully something that shapes how we interact with those we are wanting to invite to get to know and come to believe in Jesus and follow him.

#### **SUGGESTED APPROACH**

- Welcome everyone back to this learning journey to be witnesses of Christ in the way of Christ.
- If there were strong reactions or disagreements in the last session, acknowledge them again and explicitly say that these are normal when we are challenged to have strong opinions about certain things and are asked to reconsider changing our thoughts on topics we have strong opinions about them it is not wrong to have such feelings. In fact, some of the thoughts and emotions might even be similar to how some people whom we are trying to share the gospel with are thinking and feeling also it could help us gain better understanding and empathy of their experience on the receiving end. These sessions welcome such honesty and are occasions for us to grow in our ability to hold conversations amid such differences with gentleness and respect, and enhance our authenticity in sharing Christ with others.

SESSION 4: B.L.E.S.S. FRAMEWORK OF VALUES												
Encourage continued honesty and openness to consider ideas that challenge our own in this session (and the whole of this												
learning journey).												
Pray together with these words based on Psalm 25:4-5, 9:												
Gracious God, Teach me humility, that I may be led in what is right.												
Make me to know your ways; teach me your paths.  Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of												
my salvation.  Amen.												
	Session Introduction											
	Prepare the group to watch the video.  Play the video: "Session 4: B.L.E.S.S. FRAMEWORK OF VALUES"											
	OI VALUES											
											48	



One real-life testimony is shared in this segment of the video.

As the participants listen to the testimony, there are some points which they may find troubling or objectionable. For example, the testimony is by someone who was a non-Christian who married a Christian. Some Christians may object to that and question if this material will lead to giving justification to Christians to date and marry non-Christians (which some churches explicitly teach against; and some are observing that more and more Christians are marrying non-Christians). Although the focus of the testimony is on how this person eventually became a Christian and what his responses were to different approaches of evangelism for us to reflect on our own evangelistic practices and how they may be received, some may be distracted by the marriage issue. If such views surface, it is not unanticipated and it is ok. Again, this becomes an exercise for us to practice conversing in gentleness and respect when there are differences or disagreements.

It is recommended that the facilitator view the video first to be better prepared to facilitate and draw out learning points from such a situation should it arise.



### **B.L.E.S.S. Framework**

This section introduces, explains and illustrates the B.L.E.S.S. framework of values for witnessing in gentleness and respect.

#### B.L.E.S.S. stands for:

- B Begin with prayer for self for renewal of mind and heart
- L Listen to understand, appreciate and empathise, and not rebut, defend, and debate
- E Engage with others on their turf, in their terms, and at their frequency
- S (be) Self-aware, open to self-critique and willing to be vulnerable
- **S** Share what is Good News of Jesus to others

In the section of Self-Aware, there will be a short exercise (5 min; in pairs) on being willing to be vulnerable:

Think of something you struggle about faith: maybe it's the creation story, or once saved always saved, or how it just seems unfair that if people have not heard the Gospel, they will end up in hell – whatever it is, just share it, we learn to verbalise our questions and doubts. And to the person listening, just listen, don't say anything.

After the B.L.E.S.S. framework has been covered, the video will lead into a time for role-play and discussions using provided case-studies.



# Small Group Role-Play and Discussion

This activity is aimed at giving participants a short practice session using all that they have gleaned from this learning journey, summarised in the B.L.E.S.S. framework. It is highly encouraged that the case studies are not discussed only, but role-played. Role-playing gives us a more real sense of what it looks and feels like to practice the B.L.E.S.S. framework.

You may get the people in pairs and each pair can select a case-study to work with. Each person in the pair should get a chance to role-play (5 minutes per time).

#### Case Study #1

Seng Hock, a non-Christian, is attending Alpha. He asks the group: "I heard that Christians cannot be involved in Qing Ming anymore, but I am the oldest son and customarily I prepare it. My family takes this very seriously. If I were to become a Christian, what am I expected to do?"

How would you respond?

#### Case Study #2

Having graduated with a Masters in Finance, Katty has recently started work at Credit Suisse. She is your new colleague. She is a high flyer. She loves life and she loves to club and occasionally vapes, depending on company. She is planning to stay with her boyfriend in a rented apartment after 6 months of work.

How would you befriend her?

Apply some of the points you have gleaned from the forum.

If you can think of case studies that are more immediately relatable or relevant to your group, please go ahead and use your case studies instead. However, these should be written out beforehand and made available to the people at this time, so that the group is not distracted in trying to design a case-study instead of engaging in the discussion and role-play.







The video hosts will conclude the video series, and the video will end with some closing words and a prayer for the participants by Pastor Raymond Fong.



### Conclusion

Ask the group: What is your main takeaway from this learning journey that you will do something about?

("Do" here does not only mean some outward action; it could also mean a change in mindset, attitude, or posture, etc.)

As it is the individual's takeaway, there is no need to correct any perceived wrong thinking; although where helpful or where what is shared is not so clearly seen from the four sessions, you may wish to ask questions to clarify how the person reached that idea. It is unlikely that in the closing moments, anyone's thinking (even if not what this material seeks to promote) can be changed, but as everyone shares, we trust that there will be some who will share (or even deepen) the heart of what the sessions have been trying to convey and allow that to sit with the rest as well.

Thank everyone for walking together in this learning journey of "Witnessing in Gentleness and Respect."

You may want to end this series by inviting everyone to exchange signs of peace with one another, saying to one another:

"The peace of Christ be with you."

Annı	Produced by the Board of Witness & Evangelism of the Trinity  Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Singapore, with the support of Singapore Centre for Global Missions, 2025.											