

Small Group Discussion Guide

for leaders (see below for participants' guide)

Gathering Time

- Make sure newcomers are welcomed and engaged in conversation
- Offer a snack and drink if the setting is right (i.e. a home)
- Arrange seating so everyone in the group can see each other

Getting Acquainted

- **This week we are talking about the difference faith makes in our lives, both today and forever. How big a role does faith play in your life? Give an example of when you've relied on faith?**
- **How would you define faith?**

Discussion Starter Video

- To view the video, go to christchurchil.org/future-you-videos. Choose the title, FAITH. If you open the video in Vimeo, there is a download option to get the video onto your computer. Or you can just play it from the site without downloading.
- The videos are designed as discussion starters to be used at the beginning of the Bible Exploration.

Bible Exploration

- **For the last four weeks we've explored different situations involving Daniel and his friends. What specific words or actions from these accounts show their faith most clearly? Share what highlights come to mind.**
 - NOTE: Give people opportunity to share what they know of the story. Then thumb or scroll through Daniel 2:1-28 which culminates in Daniel's statement in verses 27-28. Also point out Daniel 1:1-2, noting Daniels belief that God was behind even the actions of a pagan king.
- **What was the sequence of Daniel's response to the king's decree that all the wise men would be put to death? What steps did he take, and what steps did God take, that led to Daniel's confidence before the king?**
- **Compare the steps of faith Daniel took in this situation with the role faith typically plays in your life? What can you learn from Daniel about how to face challenging situations?**

- **In his sermon, Mike Woodruff listed eight things faith is not. Do you agree with Mike's list? Why or why not?**
 - Here is the list:
 - Faith is not believing things you know aren't true.
 - Faith is not a leap in the dark.
 - Faith is not mere intellectual assent; it includes action.
 - Faith is not magic.
 - Faith is not optimism.
 - Faith is not a feeling.
 - The Christian Faith is not whatever we decide it is.
 - The Christian Faith is not a slice of the pie; it's the pan.
- **Which of the above statements is most helpful to you for how you think of faith?**
- **What questions do you have about faith?**
- **Mike is pretty strong on the idea that faith is not just belief, it is action. It is not something we say, it is something we *show*. Are there parts of your life where your actions don't match your words? In what ways do you need to begin putting your faith into action?**

Prayer

- Invite the group to participate in a time of "conversational" prayer. Each person may pray as often as he or she wants, but only 1-2 short sentences on one topic at a time. This lowers the barrier of participation for people unaccustomed to praying with others.

Wrap-Up

- Be sure to end the formal conversation on time.
- Thank newcomers for joining you, and invite everyone to the next meeting.
- Encourage people to linger for a few minutes, and do your best to have a personal interaction with each individual before he or she leaves.

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Prayer

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