



# COMMUNION

BOOKLET IV : COLLABORATION

# About Us



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Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore

catalyses the baptised faithful to live out the mission to evangelise



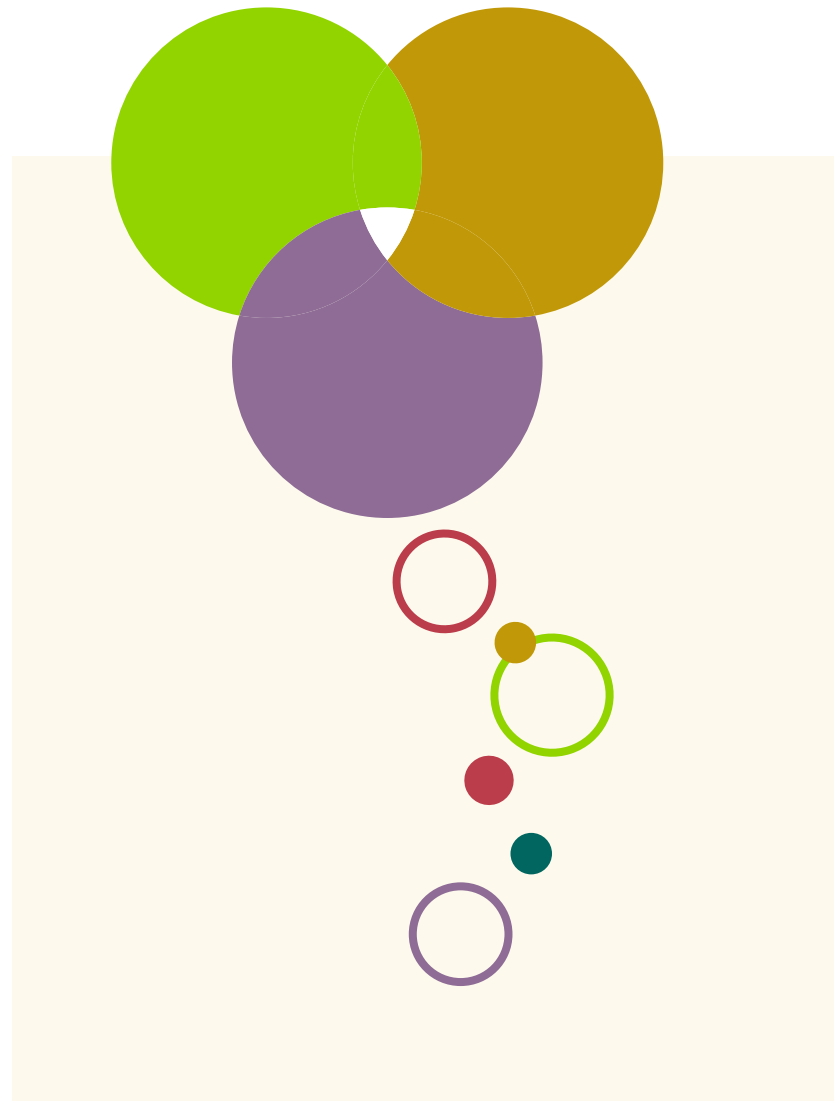
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# Contents

- 1 [Introduction](#)
- 2 [Use of this Booklet](#)
- 3 [Story of a Hospitality Ministry](#)
- 4 [Session one](#)
- 5 [Session two](#)
- 6 [Session three](#)



## COMMUNION

# Introduction

John 17:21-23

*May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so perfected in unity that the world will recognize that it was you who sent me and that you have loved them as you loved me.*

We are familiar with this discourse from John's gospel. However, in reality we often struggle with this 'oneness', this 'togetherness' that John's gospel exhorts because of the complexity of human relationships. The term 'communion' is also understood differently. While there may be a sense of belonging to a community, ministry group or an organization, more often than not, our experience of togetherness is just 'being next to each other'.

The call to be in communion is to know one another at an intimate and unitive level that begins from an intimate togetherness with Jesus Christ. This process of growing and living into communion with Jesus Christ and with each other requires, first of all, for the individual to know who and where he or she is. This knowing enables the cultivation of the habits that will produce communion, the 'togetherness' that Jesus desires us to have - 'May they be one, may they be so completely one' (c.f Jn 17:21)  
This process of growing into communion cannot be achieved

at the blink of an eye. It takes the entire community, group or organization to interact and eventually grow to be in true communion. Groups or communities normally move through an awareness of being next to each other, co-existing alongside each other first. After which, they begin to communicate with each other. Communication here means getting to know each other, knowing the values the person subscribes to and what makes the person who he or she is. With greater interaction, relationships are deepened. When members of the community become closer and known to each other, cooperation takes place because of the realization that actions of each individual affect the others and the group. Hence, we cooperate so that more, if not all, members get to reap the positive effects of the action. It is then easier for the community or group to move to eventually collaborating with each other. At this point, we will not be able to say to our members that 'it is not my business' but will make sure that every member is included and cared for.

[Back to content](#)





# Use of this booklet

This is the **fourth** of four in this series of growing in communion. Each booklet is designed with the aim of Ministries or communities learning and discovering more about the communion continuum so as to be able to grow more intimately with Jesus Christ and with one another. The sessions will not address the individual's growth in relationship with Jesus Christ, as it is assumed that this is done elsewhere.

There are three sessions in each booklet and a fictional story of a community before the sessions. Users will follow the growth of this fictional community as they work through the four booklets. It is hoped that through following the life of this fictional community, it may serve as a mirror for users to reflect on their own experience in their community or ministry as they discover and learn more about the stages of communion. So take time to go through the story.

Appoint a person who knows how to facilitate to be the facilitator for the sessions. You may want to rotate amongst those who know how to facilitate so that members have a chance to facilitate the group discussion.

At the end of each session, there is an activity for the group to do. It is essential to give time to all members to complete the activity before moving on to the next session. Members will share their experience at the next session. Begin and end each session with an opening and a closing prayer.

Since growing in communion is a process or a journey for us to grow into, we will find ourselves doing better at some point and at other times not so well. It is not the intention to move ministries or communities to communion overnight just by using these booklets. Rather, it is about raising an awareness that all ministries or communities are called to grow into communion with God and with one another. The important thing to note is that we need to be convinced that it is God our Father's great plan to draw all humankind together to dwell in His immense love. Thus, we do not give up since Jesus Christ came to show us the way. As disciples, we are called to follow so as to contribute and serve the Kingdom of God.

[Back to content](#)



Story

# Hospitality Ministry in St George Parish - pt4

The hospitality ministry from St George is having a meeting with their parish priest, Father Jack. Let us listen in to hear what they are discussing

Rose: Thank you Robin for the opening prayer. Let's begin our meeting. Father Jack, you have some comments about our group?

Fr Jack: Yes, I think your group did well at the mass for the anointing of the sick. I like to see how we can help each other to grow the talents here. Like Kelvin, I noticed you were very comfortable praying with the sick and elderly. Sally, you are good at making everyone feel welcomed to the church. I think each of you have a unique gift that you can bring to the group.

Robin: Father, what kind of gifts are you talking about?

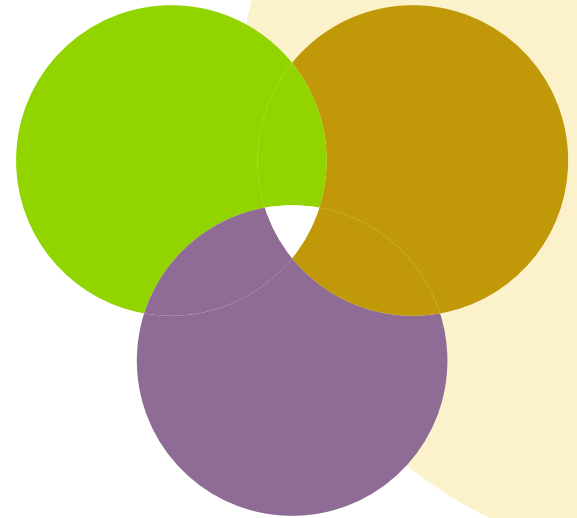
Fr Jack: I am referring to the Spiritual gifts that each of you are given. Do you know your gifts?

(Some shaking their heads, others acknowledged by nodding)

Kaitlyn: Does it mean that I keep the gifts to myself?

Fr Jack: No Kaitlyn, the gifts and talents are meant to be used to benefit the whole group. For example, you are gifted in organizing, use it to plan and organize activities that will benefit the entire group.

Sam: Father Jack, this is well and good when you are here. It will be different when we have a change of leaders such as change of priests. Also, some of us have been here for a long time, been there done that. So, no



surprise anymore, you know what I mean?

Fr Jack: Sam, I sense we need to talk. Let's us meet and talk further. As for the group you need to come and grow together, giving evidence by the way you exercise your gifts to help this group becoming vibrant. Working with the priests is important as well, sharing with them your faith stories is a way to give account of your faith and for them to help you to grow. In the end, my job as a priest is to care and help you to grow so that you can share Jesus Christ with others.

Rose: Thank you Father Jack for your input.

**Being able to ensure everyone can exercise their gifts and talents and grow in faith is the work of both the priest and the community. It is necessary to collaborate so that God's plan of salvation can be completely fulfilled. (You may want to read through this story before each of the following sessions to help members to keep this story in mind)**

[Back to content](#)





SESSION 01

# Collaboration

Ownership of the common mission



# session one



## Understanding

There has to be a greater purpose for a group of baptized Catholics to come together, otherwise the energy of coming together will fizzle out and there is no difference from any other group. This purpose is none other than the mission of the Church that Jesus Christ has put forth : ‘Go make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit” (Mt 28:19) It is a command from Jesus to his church to make disciples. Hence, the church’s very existence is for this mission given by the Lord. Everything that we do as ministry members or as community members has to move us to our goal of making disciples. This common mission is given to all the Catholics at baptism and made full by the Holy Spirit at confirmation.

Collaboration is the utilization of our gifts in partnership with one another so as to go into the world to make disciples. Hence our coming together with different strengths is really for the purpose mission. If we are concerned with our own needs and forget about the mission entrusted to us, we are shortchanging the church, the whole body of Christ.

## Reviewing

### 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

There are many different gifts, but it is always the same Spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord. There are many different forms of activity but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all. The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each

one is to be used for the general good. To one is given from the Spirit the gift of utterance expressing wisdom; to another the gift of utterance expressing knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit; to another, faith, from the same Spirit; and to another, the gifts of healing, through this one Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the power of distinguishing spirits; to one, the gift of different tongues and to another, the interpretation of tongues. But at work in all these is one and the same Spirit, distributing them at will to each individual.

**Talk about this scripture text, what struck you?**

## Deciding

At our baptism, we are all grafted onto the Body of Christ with our different gifts and talents from God our Father. The very purpose of this is to contribute to the growth of the whole body as our well-being is tied closely to the health of this body.

“The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption, and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in

the function as well as life of the body: so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, 'the whole body ... in keeping with the proper activity of each part, derives its increase from its own internal development' (Eph 4:16)

Indeed the organic union in this body and the structure of the members are so compact that the member who fails to make his proper contribution to the development of the Church must be said to be useful neither to the Church nor to himself. ([Apostolicam Actuositatem](#) #2)

**Talk about what struck you so far. How do you think you are contributing to the mission of the church?**

## Growing

In order for us to grow in collaboration it is important at this juncture to consider the contribution of each member. Arrange for a time to look through the following questions together and do a group re-committment.

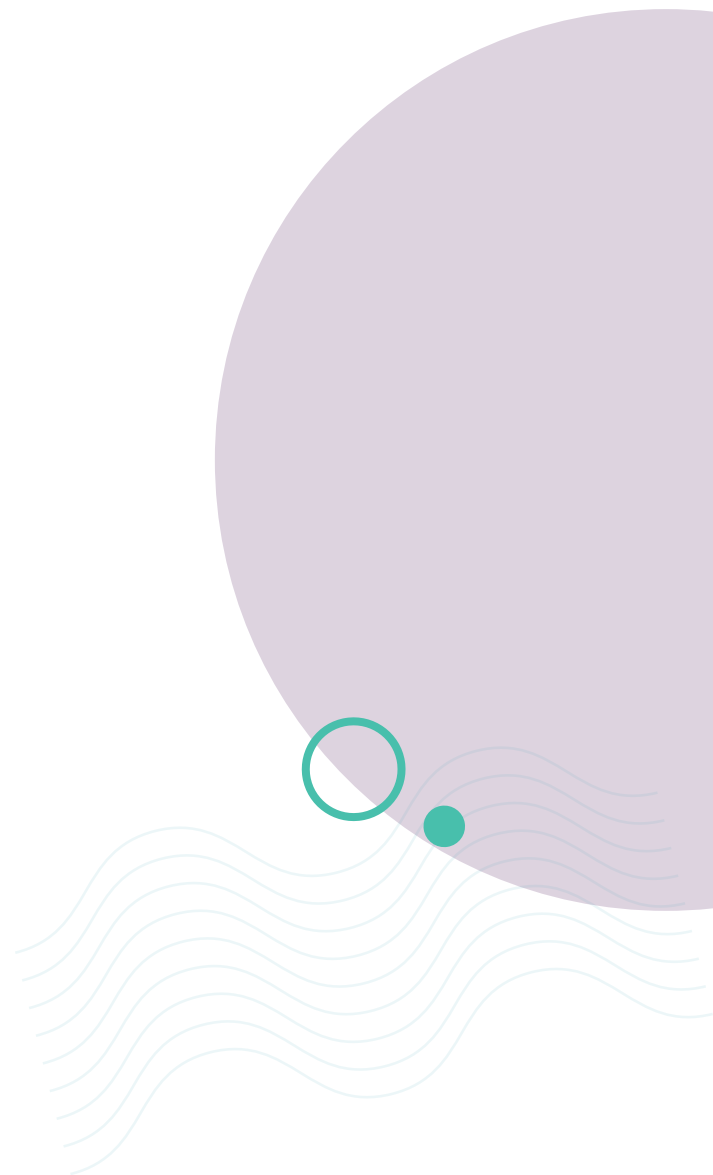
Reflection questions:

- 1) Have I been contributing to the growth in holiness of my sisters and brothers in this group? How?
- 2) Is there an area where I have withheld myself and not contribute fully? What can help me to contribute more fully?
- 3) Do you experienced lack of energy or interest to engage the members?
- 4) Do you place more importance on fulfilling the tasks than on relationships?

Have members work on the questions individually first. After that, sit in a round circle. Invite everyone to share the one thing that spoke deep to the heart while answering the

reflection questions. Remind all members that the sharing is sacred and to treat each other with respect and love. When sharing is done, look through [annex B](#) on the topic of burnout. Invite members to share what struck them.

[Back to content](#)





SESSION 02

# Collaboration

Gifts given to share with the  
Church and in the world

# session two

## Showing Concern

**Invite all members to sit in a circle, everyone will take turn to affirm each person's contribution to the group. When everyone has been affirmed, have a round of sharing on any changes that has taken place since the last meeting.**

## Understanding

We know that at our baptism we were given gifts by the Holy Spirit and some of us would even go on to name the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, there is often a lack in helping each person to know and grow the gifts given. These gifts which are given are to enable all the baptized to take on the mission of the Church given by Jesus Christ. In order that the mission is being carried out, different gifts are to be utilized. It is not to be kept within each person but to be shared freely to serve the common good.

Some of the gifts are to be used within the church community and others are for the advancement of society and making Jesus Christ known. Each baptized need to be helped to know their gifts and to use them. When all baptized are using their gifts, there is a genuine sense of sharing - giving what you have and receiving what others are giving. This is truly living the mutual and interdependent life of the body of Christ. If we find that a minority of the group is taking on more tasks than others, we need to ask if we have deprived others from using their gifts or we have indeed helped everyone to share and use their given gifts for the community. We do not want to 'grieve the Holy Spirit' (Eph 4:30) by not exercising our gifts. We also do not wish to take over all the work and not

giving everyone an opportunity to contribute.

## Reviewing

### Ephesians 4:11-16

And to some, his 'gift' was that they should be apostles; to some prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; to knit God's holy people together for the work of service to build up the Body of Christ, until we all reach unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God and form the perfect Man fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.

Then we shall no longer be children, or tossed one way and another, and carried hither and thither by every new gust of teaching, at the mercy of all the tricks people play and their unscrupulousness in deliberate deception. If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow completely into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole Body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each individual part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up in love.

**Talk about this scripture text, what struck you?**

## Deciding

Collaboration is more than just coming to work together. It is an understanding that each member of the group is gifted by the Holy Spirit. The needs of the group will be met by the gifts given to the members by the Holy Spirit. This distribution of gifts by the Holy Spirit is not based on class or status. Hence

it does not mean those in leadership or authority will be gifted more. The fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit be manifested when all members of the group can exercise the gifts together to do the mission entrusted to them.

“In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.” ([Apostolicam Actuositatem](#) #2)

**Becoming aware of this, how do you think each member in your group can share the gifts for the greater good of the group?**

## **Growing**

Gather every member in the group and give time for everyone to do the ‘Spiritual Gift Inventory found at this [link](#)

Invite everyone to read up on their spiritual gifts and share what they think of their gift.

In the time before the next meeting, encourage each member to pray and ask God our Father to show them how they can make use of their gifts in the group.

[Back to content](#)





SESSION 03

# Collaboration

Partnership through the journey

# session three

## Showing Concern

Bring all the members of the group together and share how they intend to use their gifts for the good of the group. At the end of each sharing, affirm and thank each person for the gift(s) he or she is bringing to the group. When everyone has finish sharing, make a commitment as a group to help each other to grow and develop the gifts given. (You may use the commitment prayer in [annex 'C'](#))

## Understanding

We can appreciate how carrying out the mission of the church is not just the responsibility of a few persons but each baptized person's responsibility to make Jesus known. When each person brings the gifts and talents, it is then the role of the community to order these gifts to be fully utilized for the mission of the Church in a manner that is suited to the situation.

The work of ordering the gifts includes development and application of the gifts. Hence, it is not enough to just discern the gifts that we are given, we need to have opportunities to develop and use them. Coming together and partnering each other in the group allow us to develop and utilize the gifts of each person. It takes commitment of each person to remain in the group to contribute to the mission of bringing Jesus to everyone.

## Reviewing

### Romans 12:3-8

And through the grace that I have been given, I say this to every one of you: never pride yourself on being better than you really are, but think of yourself dispassionately, recognizing that God has given to each one his measure of faith. Just as each of us has various parts in one body, and the

parts do not all have the same function: in the same way, all of us, though there are so many of us, make up one body in Christ, and as different parts we are all joined to one another. Then since the gifts that we have differ according to the grace that was given to each of us: if it is a gift of prophecy, we should prophesy as much as our faith tells us; if it is a gift of practical service, let us devote ourselves to serving; if it is teaching, to teaching; if it is encouraging, to encouraging. When you give, you should give generously from the heart; if you are put in charge, you must be conscientious; if you do works of mercy, let it be because you enjoy doing them.

### Talk about the scripture. What struck you?

## Deciding

To do the mission of the Church is like running a marathon, it is a long haul. Hence it is as the saying goes: 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' It is essential that all baptized collaborate together so that the mission given by Jesus Christ to the Church can be achieved.

“One engages in the apostolate through the faith, hope and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church. Indeed, by the precept of charity, which is the Lord's greatest commandment, all the faithful are impelled to promote the glory of God through the coming of His kingdom and to obtain eternal life for all men – that they may know the only true God and Him whom He sent, Jesus Christ. (cf. Jn 17:3) On all Christians therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine message of salvation now and accepted by all men throughout the world.

For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit who

sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also (cf. 1Cor 12:7) 'allotting them to everyone according as He wills' (1Cor 12:11) in order that individuals, administering grace to others just as they have received it, may also be 'good stewards of the manifold grace of God' (1 Peter 4:10). To build up the whole body in charity (cf Eph 4:16). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who 'breaths where He wills' (Jn 3:8) This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good (cf. 1Thes 5:12,19, 21)" ([Apostolicam Actuositatem](#). #3)

**Talk about what struck you so far. Talk about the greater purpose of coming together as a community and how this realization is changing you.**

## Growing

Collaboration requires commitment to partner each one intentionally on this journey of faith. By doing this, we are growing in communion with each other, moving from just mere co-existing to recognizing each's giftedness and collaborate together. This partnering and growing together does not stop. We continue to grow in relationship with the Triune God and with each other.

Do take time to look through the [myths about collaboration](#) and talk about what the group has realize after going through the four booklets.

[Back to content](#)





# Myths about collaboration

(Taken from 'Collaboration – uniting our gifts in ministry' by Loughlan Sofield and Carroll Juliano)

## #1 Collaboration is easy

Collaboration demands working closely, intimately and intensely, with others. It is relational and hence emotions may be highly strung. Collaboration requires the effort of all parties. Desire for collaboration is a good starting point but will need to accompany with the willingness to invest time, energy, and self into the work. So, collaboration is not easy but a strong commitment based on beliefs about mission and gospel.

## #2 Membership in a group constitutes collaboration

Collaboration requires intentional efforts and conscious decision to use each other's gift to serve a greater purpose. Every member of the Body of Christ is called to do this and one cannot remain passive because baptism demands all baptized to work for the mission of the Church.

## #3 Collaboration is an end in itself

Being able to collaborate well together is not the end. All efforts toward growing in communion just so that the gifts of each baptized may be animated to further the mission of Christ.

## #4 Collaboration is primary about decision making, power and authority

Collaboration is not about getting power and authority but about animating the gifts of the baptized to be used for the mission of Christ.

## #5 Consensus is the only appropriate decision-making process

Decision-making process should be one that is most conducive in discerning and implementing God's will

## #6 Collaboration is egalitarian

Collaboration does not mean everyone is 'equal' and no one is to take charge. The gift of leadership is also a gift that needs to be harnessed for the building of the Kingdom of God. Each gift has a value and a place so the gift of leadership should be encouraged.

## #7 Collaboration is limited to team or small group of people

Collaboration is not confined to a small team or a limited group of members. It can take place between organisations and across communities as well.

# Burnout

Burnout is the result of unrealistic expectations of self, rather than the amount of work. A person experiencing burnout is likely to have a lack of energy and/or interest to engage others in the group. Burnout persons also do not attract people, the negative energy will likely discourage rather than encourage people to seek Jesus Christ.

**Burnout does not happen out of the blue, there is a process:**

## Stage one – Obsession with One’s ministry

At this stage, a person is almost excessively, exclusively and obsessively committed to the work or to the group. This is due to the unrealistic expectations that lead to an absorption with the group to the exclusion of other aspect of life. Hence there is little or no time for recreation, friendships or leisure activities. People at this stage is usually boring and sad.

## Stage two – Exhaustion and Questioning

This stage is marked by tiredness and the effectiveness of the group is measured by how tired the people feel. It is as if the more tired a person is the group is more effective. People at this stage asked themselves if they are making any difference and if it is worthwhile making all the efforts to work in the group.

## Stage three – Withdrawal and Disappointment

Since the person experiencing burnout is not likely to attract others because he or she is usually sad and boring, when the person progress to stage three, he or she will withdraw from others as disappointment sets in. The person is actually depressed if he or she starts to stay away from others or avoid people totally.

## Stage four – Terminal Cynicism

At this stage, there is an erosion of self-esteem. A person at this stage normally does not receive support from friends or members, with the lowered self-esteem, a person comes across as negative and always passing cynical remarks.

Persons experiencing burnout usually are not capable of getting out. They need friends and members to love them enough to confront them about their self-destructive ways. This needs to be done in an environment of trust, love and respect. It is best for the group to also discern for a right time to have this conversation.

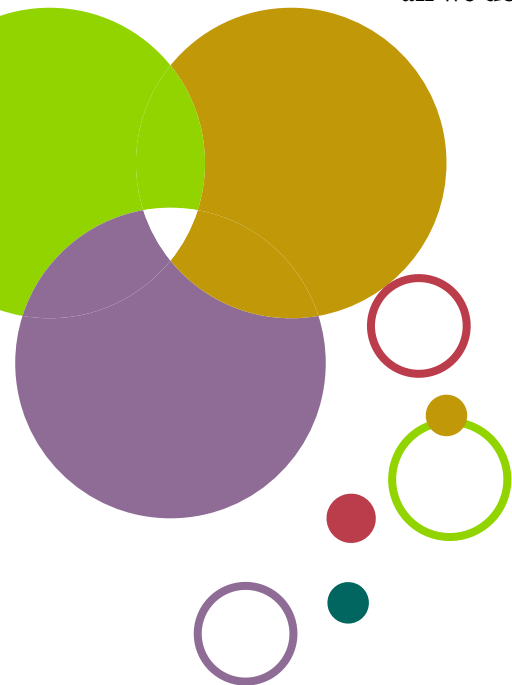
# Commitment Prayer

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** As we gather here in your name, we want to thank you for the gifts that you have showered upon this community. We place them here to be used by You dear Father for the good of this community and the greater good of the whole human race. We want to make this commitment to You and to each other...

**All:** Loving Father, we thank you for calling us and gifting us with gifts to make a difference in the community and the world. Set alight the fire within us as we make this commitment to serve You in all your people with the gifts you have given. May we remind each other to use these gifts fully for your purpose and your kingdom. Bless the works of our hands and may we bring glory to you in all we do. We make this prayer in your most holy and glorious name.



# Communion...

**You have just completed the 1st booklet on communion. There are 3 more booklets. You may download them from [www.one.org.sg](http://www.one.org.sg)**

Being in communion and learning to grow in communion is part of the work of the New Evangelisation. We will be better witnesses when others can see the loving union in our group/community. Remember to download the other booklets by clicking the button below and continue on this path of growth.

[COMMUNION](#)

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