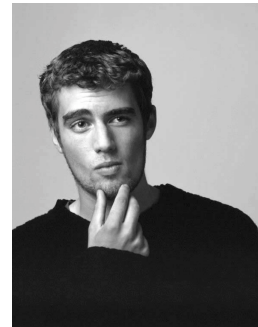


Finding Your Faith Language

A way to help you discover more about how you believe.



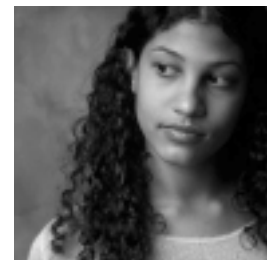
Steve



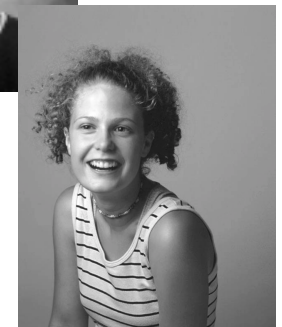
Sylvia



Jose



Maria



Jennifer

Finding Your Faith Language

Answer Sheet

My name: _____

Date I took the questionnaire this time: _____

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | B | C | D | 11 | A | B | C | D |
| 2 | A | B | C | D | 12 | A | B | C | D |
| 3 | A | B | C | D | 13 | A | B | C | D |
| 4 | A | B | C | D | 14 | A | B | C | D |
| 5 | A | B | C | D | 15 | A | B | C | D |
| 6 | A | B | C | D | 16 | A | B | C | D |
| 7 | A | B | C | D | 17 | A | B | C | D |
| 8 | A | B | C | D | 18 | A | B | C | D |
| 9 | A | B | C | D | 19 | A | B | C | D |
| 10 | A | B | C | D | 20 | A | B | C | D |

Finding Your Faith Language

What's up here?

Church of the Spirit is committed to speaking clearly about the age-old truths of God for people living in a very modern world. While we change the way we worship, we do not change who we worship or what we teach about God. Still, we realize we need to continually change how we speak about faith so we can help more people hear the Good News of Jesus.

Here's the challenge: We can not be successful no matter how clearly we speak about God if we do not speak a language you understand.

To do that we need to be better at understanding what language you speak, that is, in what ways in which you best understand your faith. We know some people prefer one way of learning about God more than others; some folk want discussions, some want fill in the blank notes to go along with the messages, while others want open-ended questions, some want to look up Bible passages, while others want to know how the Bible's teachings fit in with what other cultures believe. We are not all the same, and neither is how we approach faith. Or how we approach God. And folks, that's OK.

At *The Spirit* we want to better serve your needs. To do that we'd like your help in telling us about the language of faith your "speak." Over time you may look at your faith differently, and as times change you may want to use a different language. That's OK too. Today we want to know what's most important to you as you seek to know God in your life.

Please note:

- ▶ There are no right or wrong answers, no good or bad answers
- ▶ You may answer the questions one way today and another way next year because our faith languages can change over time
- ▶ This questionnaire does not talk about what doctrines you believe so much as how you think and talk and learn about God

Remember, our purpose is to help you clarify what you believe. Knowing that will help us to better adapt how we are teaching to fit your learning style (or faith language). We are not trying to move you to a different language. We don't want everyone at *The Spirit* to speak the exact same way about their faith. (That would be boring.) We simply want to do a better job of helping you grow in your faith. That's why we're here. Thank you for taking part in this.

Instructions

Go with your first impressions. It's not like you are being tested or there are any prizes. Just read through the statements and pick one that sounds close to how you see things. Perhaps none of the statements will be right for you. All of the answers may sound good to you. Start by narrowing your choices down to two, and then go with your gut reaction and pick one of the two. **When you're done circling the letters next to the statements you think describe you, please transfer the results to the back page.** Thanks!

Faith Language Statements

Statement 1

- a. I can know the difference between right and wrong by knowing and doing what God has commanded.
- b. Knowing right and wrong starts with understanding the principles Jesus taught and rationally applying them to society.
- c. I do what's right when I am loyal in my relationship with God, and when I am open and honest in my relationships with others.
- d. What's right and wrong can be seen from many perspectives, but I base my choices on the universal values God has revealed as a way to meet the needs of each individual person.

Statement 2

- a. I find truth can be seen from many sides. What's true seems far more complex to me now than I may have understood it in the past.
- b. I find the truth in what God has revealed, for instance in the stories of his actions and in the words of Jesus found in the Bible.
- c. The stories of God's relationship to other people in the Bible helps me experience how God relates to me here and now.
- d. I believe the truth is something you must define for yourself based on your experience of God and not taken on the opinions of others.

Statement 3

- a. In my prayers I feel I can draw closer to God and he draws closer to me.
- b. A person's prayers can be effective if that person has enough faith and has pleased God.
- c. I pray in many different ways, and do not always seek God's help so much as want to experience the mystery of God's presence.
- d. I sometimes find it hard to pray because I wonder how God answers prayers and whether he can intervene in our lives or in the world.

Statement 20

- a. I prefer thinking of God as a companion in my life and not as a judge.
- b. God is more of a mystery to me than he ever has been before, and yet God brings out in me a very powerful sense of awe and thanksgiving.
- c. I sometimes wonder if God is watching over us from his throne and keeping track of all we the good and bad things we do.
- d. While religions often distort the image of God, I can best see God at work through the lives of people who have lived up to their ideals.

Statement 16

- a. Those who do what God wants will be rewarded here and now as well as in eternal life.
- b. Those who do what God wants live in greater harmony with others and experience a closer relationship with God.
- c. I feel compelled by the vision of God's ways to actively pray and work for justice and peace among people in whatever ways I can.
- d. I have learned about the highest principles of behavior from God's ways.

Statement 17

- a. I sometimes find myself at odds with others at my church or in my family over what I believe about God.
- b. I enjoy being in a church that includes people who do not believe in God exactly as I do.
- c. The more time I spend with my church, the more I find I share many of my beliefs with the other people in the church.
- d. I prefer being part of a church where we all share the same beliefs.

Statement 18

- a. I live properly by trying to follow "The Golden Rule" and doing to others what I want them to do for me.
- b. Society works best when it is built on the principles of equal justice and concern for maintaining the good of the society as a whole.
- c. Doing what's right means caring for those God cares for, and working for the common good of all people.
- d. To be honest, I have often found myself trying to live up to the expectations of my family, friends, my boss, and even of God.

Statement 19

- a. I do not often picture God as anything in particular because any symbol of God would distract me from the reality of God.
- b. When I hear Bible stories I prefer to picture Jesus as my friend.
- c. When I hear Bible stories about God I sometimes find myself picturing God as an old man with a beard, or as a wise king on a throne.
- d. I have returned to enjoying God's presence in and through the symbols of faith (cross, crucifix, an icon, candles, incense, labyrinth, etc.). Those symbols of faith help to point me beyond what I can see to God's presence.

Statement 4

- a. It is very important to me that my faith remains compatible with that of my family and church community.
- b. I seek to include what I have learned from other people because it helps me better understand and value my own church's teachings.
- c. The traditions and moral teachings of my church are important to me and I try to live up to them.
- d. I accept those teachings of the church that fit with my own beliefs, and I see how these beliefs hold us together and gives us our unique identity separate from that of others.

Statement 5

- a. I like to hear people tell the story of how they met God, and I want to be able to share my testimony of what God has done in my life too.
- b. Since everyone has a very different story of faith, I enjoy hearing them, and then looking for how their story connects with mine.
- c. I experience joy in life through the richness of my relationships with significant others (like my family, friends, loved ones, small group).
- d. I enjoy seeing how different elements in life all seem to fit together in a coherent and consistent system that makes sense.

Statement 6

- a. I have learned a lot about what's right and wrong over the years from the people closest to me, and they have had a big influence on me.
- b. Right and wrong should be based on universal principles that you can rationally choose, and should be applied equally to others.
- c. What's right and wrong is defined by God. I hear about the right and the wrong through the stories in the Bible.
- d. Questions of right and wrong often seem complex to me, and require being able to live into the tension of different values and truths.

Statement 7

- a. I want my spiritual leader to know what God has said, to be able to clearly teach me about God, and to answer my questions.
- b. I choose to respect spiritual leaders who have a coherent system of belief based on the principles I share.
- c. I want the church leaders to consider many different points of view about what is true, while keeping their own beliefs clear.
- d. Leaders should embody what it means to be a faithful Christian, be well thought of in the church, and be sincere about what they teach.

Statement 8

- a. I feel I can trust the Bible to provide direction and truth from God, just as faithful people have trusted it for almost 2000 years.
- b. I find the Bible's teaching becomes clear when you read it in faith.
- c. I have recently found the Bible's teachings to take on new and deeper, and sometimes even paradoxical meanings for me.
- d. I enjoy reading other books about the Bible to help me see what in the Bible is true and how it fits in with my personal beliefs.

Statement 9

- a. You would learn a lot about me just by following me around throughout my day and watching what I do.
- b. I see myself as an individual who makes my own choices, but I also see how my choices have been influenced by my gender, my social group, race, upbringing, and family.
- c. I belong to a group (like a church) based on my individual values and beliefs, which are different from those of people in other groups.
- d. I think of myself in terms of the roles I play during the day (I am a mother, a father, a spouse, sister, employee, coach, breadwinner).

Statement 10

- a. People often suffer because of how they treat one another, and whether or not they are truthful, honest and loving to others.
- b. People often suffer when they do not fulfill their obligations to others or society, or when they act in a way that would create suffering if everyone acted in the same way.
- c. Suffering strikes at the heart of the basic human dignity of people and often represents a breakdown in the greatest good for all ...
- d. Some suffering occurs when you disobey God. God no longer blesses your life or helps you achieve success or prosperity if you sin.

Statement 11

- a. I value the truth of the Bible alongside the truth of science and of psychology, history and archeology.
- b. People should be very careful with old Bibles (just like with old flags) and not just throw them away because they are sacred books.
- c. The Bible is one of many holy books in the world that are worth reading and comparing. I read it and ask, "But what does it mean?"
- d. The Bible teaches me how God is involved with my daily life and how I can make better decisions.

Statement 12

- a. I enjoy reading the stories in the Bible that talk about deepening our personal relationship with God.
- b. I enjoy the deepness of the Bible and want to understand how the parts all come together in describing how we can experience God.
- c. I enjoy studying the Bible in depth so I can understand it and reflect on how I could apply its teachings in my life.
- d. I enjoy reading the stories of the Bible where God acts and shows his power (like Noah, Moses, Jesus's miracles, Christmas, Easter).

Statement 13

- a. I belong to a church that I believe best meets my needs and interests.
- b. Most of what I believe about God I think is shared in common with the other people in my family or at my church.
- c. There are important differences between churches because people in them hold on to different basic principles and values.
- d. I believe there are many sides to the truth. People in other churches and cultures can help me better understand the truth about God.

Statement 14

- a. I enjoy being part of a diverse community of believers who look at faith from many different perspectives from their various life experiences.
- b. I have found it important to look at many different kinds of churches and their teachings before joining one that fits with my beliefs.
- c. Belonging to the right church, which believes and teaches the truth, is really important to me.
- d. I enjoy participating in a church where I can experience a real sense of community with other Christians.

Statement 15

- a. I have started to see Jesus from in many new ways, to see my faith as a process that's unfolding, to see truth as a tension between different answers, different views of what's right and good.
- b. I am drawn to how Jesus shared his love with his followers and to those most in need, as in the stories of Mary Magdalene, the woman caught in adultery, Peter who denied Jesus yet was forgiven ...
- c. I believe Jesus models for us a life-style based on the highest ideals in humanity.
- d. I am most interested to know what Jesus did and taught. I like to have the church and the pastor show me how these apply to my life.