

# Scripture Engagement at our Events



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## INTRODUCTION

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*  
(Colossians 3: 16)

In our student movements, we run many camps, conferences, trainings and other events. What we model in these meetings will shape our students and the life of our local groups.

This resource is a help to reflect specifically on how we can integrate Scripture engagement well in our programs. It presents different examples from around the IFES world – not for you to copy in detail, but to inspire and enrich your own thoughts. You can adapt individual aspects of these examples to events of very different lengths and sizes.

There is much to be discovered in the following programs. I would like to simply highlight some values with regard to Scripture engagement:

**Giving Time for Depth.** In order to go deep into God’s Word and let it shape us, we need time. In some of the following examples, you will see whole mornings dedicated to interacting with just one Bible passage. This choice to focus can be very worthwhile.

**Integrating a Variety of Approaches.** There are many different ways of interacting with God’s Word. Communal Bible study and prayerful reflection, Bible expositions and creative responses complement one another in some of the following programs. Combining different approaches can help us enter into God’s Word more fully: with our thoughts, emotions and will.

**Building Bridges to Real Life Issues.** Many students struggle to see the relevance of God’s Word. We need to help them understand how meaningful Scripture is for life today. The following programs include examples of how God’s Word is brought into connection with personal issues, contemporary topics, films and philosophical texts.

**Growing Roots through Reflection Time.** Including processing time in the program is a gift to the participants: it helps them sort their thoughts and grasp what God is saying to them. This allows God’s Word to sink deeper into their hearts. In the following programs you will see examples including daily reflection time and/or a half-day of silence.

**Passing on the Big Picture.** Events which are longer than a local student meeting are a great opportunity to show how isolated Bible passages are part of a coherent story. As you read on, you will find examples of whole programs being shaped by one biblical book or giving an overview of the biblical story.

**Training with a Curriculum.** What do we want each student to learn in the area of Scripture Engagement? Some programs reflect how movements have answered this question by putting together a curriculum. As students return to the same event from one year to the next, they can build on what they have already learned.

In many ways this resource is not complete. Many other good examples could be added. And the descriptions which are included only reflect the basic format of Scripture engagement at these events. They do not give a deeper insight into the content. They also do not fully capture all aspects of Scripture engagement in the program: God's Word hopefully plays a role in shaping all program elements whether Bible expositions, small groups, worship, prayer, topical talks or seminars.

Our IFES Living Stones Vision 2020 stresses the integration of Scripture engagement in everything we do: "As we work to achieve our vision, every aspect of IFES life will be surrounded and supported by three core commitments: Scripture engagement, community, prayer." And so we also seek to let these three core commitments shape our events. This resource hopes to be a contribution towards this end.

I am very interested in any feedback you may have as you apply these ideas and develop new ones: [sabine.kalthoff@ifesworld.org](mailto:sabine.kalthoff@ifesworld.org).

Enjoy reading!

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# Bible Study Nights

**UGBB BURKINA FASO**

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## **EVENT : BIBLE STUDY NIGHT**

This is a series of Bible studies organised by and for students. During Bible Study nights students engage with God's Word throughout a whole night (of 9-10 hours) using different Bible study methods. These nights usually take place on the night before a day off (e.g. Friday night). This allows students to rest the following day without missing classes. When such a night is organised by a small group, usually around 30 students attend; the number increases to around 200 when it is done by a department (set of small groups in the same town).

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

These Bible study nights include different ways of engaging Scripture in small groups and sometimes a Bible exposition. For example, during one such night, we used the following approaches:

- **Bible exposition**
- **Bible reader method:** a meditative approach based on questions: What do I need to change in my life? Do the people in this passage depict any good or bad attitudes? What can I take from this text? What does this passage say about God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?
- **OIA:** Observation, Interpretation, Application. First the students take time to observe the facts, then to interpret them and discern the core message before finally applying the message to their context.
- **Mime:** As someone reads out the story, the students mime it. This takes place in the plenary with everyone. Then the participants discuss the Bible passage in small groups and pray.
- **Journalist coverage:** After the story has been read in the plenary, one person acts as a journalist. He goes with his camera or microphone to make a report of the story by asking people for their reactions and comments through questions such as: What have you seen? How did it happen? The journalist coverage is followed by a Bible study in small groups.

## **SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY**

Regular Bible meetings at university only last one to two hours maximum due to busy schedules, and are generally during lunch time. In order to attend these meetings, students have to skip or delay their lunch, or first go to lunch and then come late to the meeting. The Bible study nights allow students to spend an extended time in God's Word. Night times are calm and unhurried and therefore very useful for engaging with God's Word.

These Bible study nights allow enough time to introduce students to a variety of ways in which they can engage God's Word. This enriches each individual's approach to Scripture and also their regular small group Bible study meetings.

Many students find that dramatic approaches (mime, journalist coverage) help them to understand biblical passages more deeply.

## **FURTHER COMMENTS**

Many students were surprised at the idea of spending a whole night in Scripture; some were used to prayer nights but not to Bible Study nights.

Initially the number of Bible studies was higher and some groups had to rush in order to move on to the next one. Several other activities were also sometimes inserted in the program, considerably reducing the time of Bible engagement. We recommended having a smaller number of studies in order to focus on engagement instead of rushing and wanting to cover too many methods.

## **A SAMPLE BIBLE STUDY NIGHT**

**Theme: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your Mouth" (Joshua 1:8)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
19:30	Welcome, Prayer and Worship
20:20-21:50	Bible Study; James 1:16-25, Bible reader method
22:00-23:30	Bible exposition, Joshua 1: 8-19
00:15-1:45	Bible Study; Acts 17:1-12, Mime
1:55-3:25	Bible Study; 2 Timothy 3: 10-17, OIA
3:50-4:20	Bible Study; Joshua 3:1-17 Journalist Coverage
5:00	Closing Prayer





# Camp Cameron: A Discipleship Training Camp

**FES MALAYSIA**

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## **EVENT : CAMP CAMERON**

**(Theme: ‘Give me Life in Thy ways’ Psalm 119:37)**

This three-week discipleship camp seeks to help students examine the biblical foundations of their Christian faith and what these foundations mean for their living today. Camp Cameron families (small groups of 15-16 students, each with 2-3 staff and one graduate helper) form the basis for all activities at camp. We usually have 5-6 families at the camp. This camp can only be attended once in a student’s lifetime.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

- **Telling the story of God & his people (CGK: Chronicles of God & his Kingdom):** These plenary sessions tell the story of God and his kingdom, taking the participants through the Old and the New Testament. The purpose is that they may know God, as revealed in the whole Bible; discovering his covenantal relationship with us; realizing God’s underlying plan for salvation through Jesus Christ; learning from Jesus the perfect example of a life lived in God’s way; receiving from him the mission entrusted to us today. This series includes one activity-based session which enables the students to experience and identify with the journey of God’s people in the Old Testament (see CGK 2: Overview of the OT).
- **WORDilicious Investigators (WI):** This is Camp Cameron’s focus on training students in inductive bible study. During the first two weeks of the camp, the participants have eight WI sessions in their family groups. The objective is for them to appreciate, experience and learn to read/study different biblical genres.
- **OIA:** Observation, Interpretation, Application. First the students take time to observe the facts, then to interpret them and discern the core message before finally applying the message to their context.
- **Different ways of spending time alone with God and his Word:** *lectio divina* (exploring various ways of meditating on the Word, with each daily passage linked to that day’s teaching); *selah* (daily time to journal and reflect on what was learned from God and his word); *mid-week chapel* (a time to respond to all that God has revealed of himself up to that point at camp); *sabbath* (a longer reflection time of 5-6 hours at the end of each week).

## **SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY**

The CGK plenary sessions provide students with the big picture of the biblical story. They are encouraged to see who God is in the big story. It is heartening when students begin to engage with the God of the Old Testament (so unfamiliar and distant to many of them) and see that he is the same unchanging God of covenant throughout the Old and the New Testament.

Experiencing the journey of God's people through the activity-based overview session helps students engage with the Old Testament story. This is important since many students do not know the whole story, or they have only engaged with it cognitively without ever putting themselves in the shoes of the people.

In the WI groups, the principles of inductive bible study are not just taught, but reinforced through different activities. The exposure to three biblical genres helps students both appreciate the difference between them and see that God is the Lord of all of Scripture. As connections become visible, they begin to understand Scripture as a whole rather than as disconnected bits and pieces.

Through the space and time given for personal engagement with God's Word, students learn to value solitude and time alone with God. Choosing Scripture passages for lectio divina which are linked to that day's theme/topics helps prepare the students to be attentive to what is ahead.

## **FURTHER COMMENTS**

Scripture engagement at the camp provides a strong basis for us to look at the evening series on *Redeeming Relationships with God and Self* (Week 1); *with Others – Family, Friends, Courtship* (Week 2); *with Our World* (Week 3). At the same time, camp families and camp life provide a practical platform to work through issues in redeeming relationships.

Life at camp follows a daily and weekly rhythm. Sabbath marks the end of the week when students 'cease' and process what they have received. The mid-week Chapel provides space for students to respond to God. Space for leisure and working out some energy and frustrations are provided through activities like games, outings and other camp special events. The whole of this camp (structure and content) seeks to engage with Scripture; it seeks to demonstrate that God is involved in every aspect of life.

## EXAMPLE OF ONE DAY AT CAMP CAMERON

(not all days look the same)

<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
07:20 – 08:10	Lectio Divina
09:00 – 10:45	Morning Plenary: (i) Worship (ii) Session: Chronicles of God and His Kingdom
11:15 – 12:45	WORDilicious Investigators
15:30 – 16:45	Homework for WORDilicious Investigators
17:00 – 18:00	Games
19:30 – 21:30	Evening Plenary: (i) Worship (ii) Session on Redeeming Relationships
21:45 – 23:00	Family Time: Selah / Sharing

**The Chronicles of God and His Kingdom** (15 sessions in total) :

### **CGK 1: THE BEGINNINGS**

(Genesis 1 – 11) Creation. Betrayal & sin. Creation of languages & cultures.

### **CGK 2: OVERVIEW OF OLD TESTAMENT**

This 2-hour session consists of eight stations which participants experience in small groups.

*Example of one station:*

Slavery in Egypt (15 minutes). Atmosphere to be created: scolding, hard work needed, no resting. Students are asked to remove their shoes. Each group is given a task – some wash clothes, others wash dishes and wipe kitchen floor. They need to look for their own detergent, buckets, water. Task masters push them to work faster; check if clean enough, if not students to wash again.

### **CGK 3: BLUEPRINTS**

(Genesis 12 – 50) God's plan of salvation unveiled. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

### **CGK 4: THIS IS OUR GOD!**

(Exodus - Deuteronomy) Deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Israel being formed as a nation.

### **CGK 5: BRICK BY BRICK**

(Joshua – 1 Kings 11) Entering, possessing the land of promise. Disobedience. Kingdom united & glorious.

### **CGK 6: DISILLUSIONED!?**

(1 Kings 11-2 Kings) Fall & disgrace of the Kingdom. Exile.

### **CGK 7: WAITING. WAITING WAITING.**

(Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Ezra, Nehemiah) Waiting for a deliverer. God at work in the midst of exile, silence. Return from exile.

### **CGK 8: BEHOLD THE KING!**

(Matt 1-4, Luke 1-3, John 1:1-14) Unveiling of the King as lamb of God

### **CGK 9: INSIDE OUT, UPSIDE DOWN**

(Matt 4-15, Isaiah 9:1-7) The lifestyle, nature of the kingdom of God

### **CGK 10: WHAT A WAY!**

(Matt 16-28, Isaiah 52, Mark 16) The key to the kingdom – death and resurrection of the King.

### **CGK 11: THE INVASION**

(Acts of the Apostles) Power and expansion of the kingdom. Holy Spirit, church, persecution.

### **CGK 12: THE PIONEERS**

(Acts of the Apostles) Key persons in the expansion: Philip, Peter, Paul

### **CGK 13: THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES**

(1 Corinthians) The early church, issues faced in Christ, in the world, in the church

### **CGK 14: THE RETURN OF THE KING**

(Revelation) The culmination of the kingdom of God

### **CGK 15: THE CGK CLOSING**

Highlight themes in the CGK series, connections between Old and New Testament

**WORDillicious Investigators** (8 sessions in total) :

- Throughout the camp, only three different passages of Scriptures are studied in the WI sessions: Psalm 84 (poetry), Philemon (epistle), Mark 5:1-20 (narrative)
- The first three sessions help students to observe, dig in, listen and place themselves in the context. The next three sessions are the actual study of the given text, focusing on interpretation and application. The final three sessions focus on giving a personal response and developing ideas for running WI groups on campus.
- The four WI homework slots are included to enable students to prepare for the Bible studies – to practice speaking Scriptures, and to do some personal preparation.





# Dig-In : A Bible Study Weekend

**IVCF/USA**

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## **EVENT : DIG-IN**

A Bible Dig-In is an intensive manuscript Bible study experience in which four consecutive passages of Scripture are studied within 28 hours. Most often, Bible Dig-Ins are held on a Friday night and all day Saturday on campus or a near-by church.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

Each participant receives a copy of the Scripture text as a printed manuscript, formatted without chapter or verse numbers, headings, paragraph breaks, etc. A session involves a dynamic mixture of personal reading and study, discussion in groups of 3-4 and interaction of the entire group led by a facilitator. Each session follows an inductive process of observation, interpretation, and application. The printed manuscript provides a place to mark the text, note questions, make connections, etc. A skilled facilitator provides the information about historical and cultural context, guides the group through the process of looking closely at the text, forming questions that arise from the text, and building an interpretation referring only to the text and the original audience.

Texts that work well for Dig-ins include Exodus 32-34, Ruth, Habakkuk, Haggai, Amos, Jonah, Philippians, 1 Timothy, James and 1 John.

## **SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY**

- engages three different learning styles (visual, audio, kinaesthetic)
- participants are trained in basic principles and skills of biblical interpretation
- creates a space for dynamic communal interaction with the Word
- encourages curiosity, active participation and critical thinking
- biblical text is central, not the teacher
- the format is highly flexible and can be adjusted to the size and skill level of group with groups of 15-200+ people.
- low cost: Dig-ins require very little equipment, staff, etc. and if done on or near campus, arrangements aren't needed for housing or food.

The compressed schedule enables participants to dive deeply into a short book of Scripture and understand it as a whole. (This is important as most Bible studies work with individual isolated passages and don't encourage synthesis of entire books of the Bible.)

Students who have participated in a Bible Dig-In have greater motivation and expectation for weekly Bible studies because the compressed experience led by a skilled facilitator opens their eyes to the depth of the Scripture. Their Bible study skills are sharpened, strengthening the quality of their personal Bible study as well as their participation in small groups.

## **FURTHER COMMENTS**

A similar but longer format is used at week-long camps using the gospel of Mark. The camp consists of three 2-3 hour sessions per day for 5-6 days in a row. Mark 1 camp covers the first half of the gospel, Mark 2 the second. Students come to love and trust Jesus more deeply as they immerse themselves in Mark's narrative.

## **TYPICAL SCHEDULE OF A DIG-IN**

Friday: 7-9:30 pm

Saturday: 9-12 am

Saturday: 2-5 pm

Saturday: 7-9:30 pm





# EFO: Staff Formación Conference

**IFES LATIN AMERICA**

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## **EVENT : STAFF FORMACIÓN CONFERENCE (EFO)**

This is a four-week event designed for new young staff from the 20 national movements across the region. In an early phase of their ministry, these staff are given the opportunity of an intensive formación experience in a small group of usually no more than 40 participants.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

Every week is built around one main theme (first week: Word; second week: Mission; third week: practical mission at university; fourth week: Pastoral Care). For each week we focus on one book of the Bible or a series of selected passages from one book. Over the four weeks we try to have a good balance between Old and New Testament and if possible cover different genres of the Scriptures.

The mornings of week one, two and four are usually built around one passage of Scripture. Each passage is looked at in the following ways (see below for a typical morning schedule):

- introduction to the passage;
- Bible exposition;
- silent and personal reflection;
- conversation in small groups;
- plenary discussion and interaction.

The program also includes workshops on the study, hermeneutics or preaching of the Bible as well as informal interviews with the invited speakers about their personal journey with the Scriptures.

## SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY:

The participants greatly value spending the whole morning (a very long morning) around one Bible passage. The different approaches complement each other well:

- the Bible exposition not only edifies the participants, but also sets a good model of how to engage deeply with the Scriptures;
- the personal time provides a unique opportunity for each participant to reflect and respond personally to what God has spoken through his Word;
- the small groups provide a great context for communal hermeneutics as new insights from each participant enrich the comprehension of the passage; this time brings to light the work of the Spirit in the community of God's people. The small group conversations also help to 'land' the passage in the real life of the participants and their contexts of mission.
- the closing plenary time provides an extra opportunity to grow in our communal understanding of the passage and to reflect on how we can respond to it in obedience. This is a time of interaction among all the participants and with the speaker.

## FURTHER COMMENTS

In Latin America, this structure of spending the whole morning around one Bible passage is typical of not only the EFO event, but also regional *formación* gatherings for student leaders as well as quite a number of events run by national movements.

Some variations to this program are having the small group sessions before the Bible exposition, or both before and after the exposition. There are also variations in the responses which participants prepare for the final plenary session – these can involve drama, music, poetry, drawings, collages or sculptures. Sometimes the communal worship takes place at the end of the mornings as a form of responding to the Bible passage.

## A POSSIBLE SCHEDULE FOR ONE MORNING

Time	Program
08:30	Community worship
09:00	Introduction to the passage (either through different readings or a short drama)
09:15	Bible exposition (sometimes 40-50 minutes)
10:15	Silent reflection and prayer (sometimes a half-day or whole day of silent retreat follows after the Bible exposition)
11:00	Refreshments/Break
11:30	Responding to the Word in small groups
12:15	Plenary discussion: interaction among all participants and with the Bible expositor
13:00	Lunch





# European Evangelism Conference

**IFES EUROPE**

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## **EVENT : EUROPEAN EVANGELISM CONFERENCE 2012**

Around 2000 students (and staff) from all over Europe came to this five-day conference in Hungary. The aims of this conference were for students:

- to grow in their passion for the Lord and their understanding of his mission;
- to gain confidence to act for his glory;
- to experience fellowship with brothers and sisters from over 40 countries.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

Scripture Engagement at this conference was a combination of the following elements:

- **personal study of the text:** During the morning plenary session, the students were given 15 minutes to get into the word individually before hearing the Bible exposition. Two observation comments and two questions were provided to help them reflect on the passage. Afterwards they were invited to share some of their observations and pray with 5 or 6 people around them (another 15 minutes).
- **listening to a Bible exposition** on the same text.
- **digging deeper in response groups.** The idea of these groups was to help students reflect on and respond to the Word of God which they had just heard. Students chose which response group they would join before the conference started and remained in the same group for the whole conference.

*The different response groups were:*

- 1. Responding to the Word through digging into the Word:** an opportunity to spend more time in the Scripture passage, to ask the speaker questions and to hear him develop further some thoughts from the morning exposition.
- 2. Responding to the Word through in-depth study of the Bible passage (Inductive Bible Study):** an opportunity to go back to the morning Bible text and study it intensely by observing the text carefully, reflecting on its meaning and thinking about how to apply it to our lives.
- 3. Responding to the Word through the arts:** an opportunity to reflect on and respond to the Bible exposition through the creative arts e.g. through drama, silent reflection on paintings, drawing a response, listening and responding to music.
- 4. Responding to the Word through applying it to contemporary culture:** an opportunity to relate the Bible passage to challenges raised by contemporary popular culture - and to ask how we can communicate this appropriately to those who do not share the Christian faith.
- 5. Responding to the Word through prayer:** an opportunity to respond to the Bible passage in worship, confession, petition and intercession – communally and individually.
- 6. Responding to the Word through applying it to our every-day ministry:** an opportunity to share with one another experiences and activities from the national movements which exemplify what an active response to the Bible passage studied might look like.
- 7. Responding to the Word through quiet meditation:** an opportunity to respond to God's Word through different forms of quiet reflection such as journaling, lectio divina, Ignatian meditation, etc.
- 8. Responding to the Word in writing:** an opportunity to read excerpts from writings inspired by God's Word and to write one's own creative response to its depth and beauty.
- 9. Responding to the Word through relating it to the big questions of our time:** an opportunity to apply God's word to the big questions of our context (e.g. money/the current Euro crisis, creation and evolution) and to ask how we can communicate this biblical perspective to others.
- 10. Responding to the Word through preparing to share it with others:** an opportunity to work on how one can communicate insights from the Bible passage to others e.g. in informal conversations or in one's student group.

## SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY

- The three different ways of spending time in the same Scripture passage (personal study; Bible exposition; response group) opens up many possibilities of interacting with and understanding God's Word.
- God made us all different. Response groups give the opportunity to respond to the Word of God in a way which fits one's own personality and interest.
- This experience of Scripture engagement gives the opportunity to learn and grow together. The aim was to have not only an individual experience, but also a communal experience.
- Since students remain in the same small groups within their response group throughout the conference, they have the opportunity to deepen relationships and really network. Openness happens through trust, trust happens through spending time together.
- Transformation happens as we put into practise what we hear. The response groups are a first step towards this by providing a means of processing what was heard from the stage: through conversations, sharing, relating the content to one's own context, etc.

## FURTHER COMMENTS

The main leaders need to be experienced leaders. They are asked to prepare the time in their group in such a way that small group discussion, sharing in the large group and praying are included.

Within each response group (which could have many participants), small groups are spontaneously formed without an appointed leader. If possible, they stayed the same throughout the conference. In each response group session, there was time for interaction in these small groups.

## A TYPICAL MORNING SCHEDULE AT THE CONFERENCE

Time	Program
9:00-11:00	Plenary Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Worship, Testimonies</li><li>- Personal Study of the Text (15 minutes)</li><li>- Sharing in groups and prayer (15 minutes)</li><li>- Bible exposition (45 minutes)</li></ul>
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
11:30-12:45	Respond! Groups (90 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- a variety of options (see above)</li></ul>





# Evangelistic Summer Camp

**A EURASIAN MOVEMENT (SENSITIVE LOCATION)**

## EVENT : EVANGELISTIC SUMMER CAMP

This camp took place in 2013 and lasted four days. The aim was to share the gospel among students and invite students to faith in Jesus Christ. Out of fourteen students who came along, nine were not believers.

## BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Each day had a different part of the body as its thematic emphasis: eyes, tongue, ears, heart. Each morning consisted of:

- **a talk** (20-30 minutes) by one of the leaders which focused mainly on the physical function of this part of the body. On the fourth day, the talk was on the “spiritual heart” – inviting students to open up the closed and hidden parts of their heart in order to receive forgiveness and healing. This fourth talk included looking at 1 John 1:5-10.
- **a manuscript Bible study** in small groups on a passage related to the theme of the day:
  - on eyes: Mark 10:46-52.
  - on the tongue: James 3:2-12
  - on ears: Mark 7:31-37 and Deuteronomy 12:28.
  - on the heart: Matthew 15:1-2; 10-20.
- Each day we also had **a game** connected with the theme of the day:
  - e.g. eyes: we put many different objects (cup, spoon, pencil, phone, etc.) on a table and showed them to the students for 30 seconds. Then we covered the objects. The students were asked to repeat what they had seen.
  - e.g. tongue: we blindfolded the eyes of the students and gave them different foods (sugar, salt, pepper, juice etc.) to taste. They had to guess which food they were tasting.

## FURTHER COMMENTS

The response of the students to this camp was very encouraging. One student became a Christian at the camp, another afterwards.





# Ezra Conference: A Bible and Discipleship Conference for Students.

**FOCUS KENYA**

**CONTACT :** Lucas Owako (FOCUS Students Ministry Director):  
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## **EVENT : EZRA CONFERENCE**

The running theme for this five-day conference is Ezra 7:10 with an emphasis on studying, practicing and teaching the word of God. The Ezra conference takes place twice in three years. Around 1500-2000 participants attend this conference.

Its main aim is to equip student leaders with the attitude, passion and skills that will enable them to grow into effective students of God's word. This effectiveness will be marked by consistent reading, thorough study, faithful application and effective proclamation of the word.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

The following items are always present in any Ezra conference program:

- Bible expositions: These address an area of need in terms of discipleship, while also modelling quality expository preaching.
- plenary topics: These include doctrinal, devotional and contemporary issues, all addressed in the light of Scripture. The aim of these sessions is to address these topics while also demonstrating expository application of the Scriptures to discipleship issues.
- small group Bible studies which are well planned and led. Leaders are pre-identified and trained on the first day of the conference, though care is also taken to ensure that most of them already have experience in leading Bible studies in their student groups. There is always a Bible study guide to help in the discussions.
- seminars addressing various areas of Bible study and the application of Scripture to life issues. The focus is, however, more on Bible study training than teaching people from the Bible.

The program is designed in such a way that the basic curriculum can be covered by attending two Ezra conferences. The topics that form the basic Ezra conference curriculum are: Bible hermeneutics, inductive Bible study, consistent Bible reading, expository preaching, homiletics, Old Testament survey, New Testament survey, introduction to church history, introduction to Christian apologetics, interpreting biblical genres.

## SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY

- **Modelling:** a great strength of this approach is that the training in principles and methods of Bible study is applied in small group Bible study discussions and modelled in Bible expositions and other plenary sessions. This helps achieve the purpose of training delegates in Bible study and preaching.
- **Seminars:** Most of the objectives of the conference are achieved through training in the seminar sessions, which explore diverse aspects of Bible study in smaller groups and provide room for feedback and discussion.
- **Core Curriculum:** having a core curriculum which students can cover over two conferences means that the students go home with a clear foundation on which they can then build.

## EZRA CONFERENCE 2013

	Dec 28	Dec 29	Dec 30	Dec 31	Jan 1	Jan 2
6:00-6:45			<b>Personal</b>	<b>Devotions</b>		
6:45-7:45		<b>BREAKFAST</b>				
8:00-9:30		Exposition: Secrets of the kingdom <i>Mark 4:1-25</i>	Exposition: Secrets of the kingdom <i>Luke 15: 11-32</i>	Exposition: Secrets of the kingdom <i>Luke 10: 25-42</i>	Exposition: Secrets of the kingdom <i>Luke 12: 13-21</i>	Plenary: "Come, Follow me!" (devotional subject)
9:45-11:00		Small Group Bible Study <i>Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13</i>	Small Group Bible Study <i>Matthew 16:21-27; Acts 20: 17-24</i>	Small Group Bible Study <i>1 Cor. 9: 24-27; 2 Tim 2:3-10</i>	Small Group Bible Study <i>Luke 12:13- 24; 1 Tim 6: 3-10, 17-19</i>	
11:30-12:45		Seminars	Seminars	Seminars	Seminars	
12:45-14:00		<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>BREAK</b>			
14:00-15:15		Seminars	Seminars	Seminars	Seminars	
15:30-16:45		Seminars	Seminars	Conference Games	Seminars	
17:00-18:15		Free-time Exhibits- Mentorship	Free-time Exhibits- Mentorship		Free-time Exhibits- Mentorship	
18:15-19:30	<b>SUPPER</b>					
19:40-21:40	Plenary: Opening Session	Plenary: The Making of a Leader	Plenary: The Challenge of Ethnicity (contempo- rary topic)	Plenary: Called to Holiness (doctrinal issue)	Exposition: Secrets of the kingdom Matthew 18:21-35	





# Freshmen Camp

**AN EAST ASIAN MOVEMENT (SENSITIVE LOCATION)**

## **EVENT : FRESHMEN CAMP**

This is a two-day camping trip designed for first-year students at the very beginning of their campus life. About 100 students come to this camp. It takes place in a park far away from the city and houses. The aim of the camp is to help students know the purpose of their college years with regard to their spiritual life and their studies as well as their call to be witnesses on campuses.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

- A key part of the event is the campfire night based on Daniel 1. Its purpose is to encourage students to be faithful to God as Daniel was. Here is an overview of the different elements:
- *campfire opening*: Each small group (around 10-12 students) forms a queue. The students are blindfolded. All lights are off. Everyone is asked to put his/her hands on the shoulders of the person in front of him/her and to walk silently. One staff holds the hand of the first person in the line, walking the group around the park in darkness. The students are experiencing the exile journey of the Israelites.
- *a sketch on Daniel 1*: This sketch is done spontaneously as the Scripture passage is presented. Daniel 1 is re-written as a dialogue of the characters and recorded beforehand. Then during the camp-fire, this recording is played while students act out the roles of the different characters.
- *Bible exposition*: This is a short exposition on Daniel 1, focusing on how Daniel and his friends stay faithful to God amid temptations and distractions and how they excel in their study.
- *group responses*: After the Bible exposition, each small group is given 10 minutes to discuss and prepare their group response to God's Word. Then each group comes to the front and acts out how 'Daniel-of-today' might respond in different situations, e.g. in family, in class.
- *individual responses*: Each person, holding a lighted candle in their hands, goes to another person to share his/her personal thoughts and response. After that, the two of them pray together. Then, they exchange their candles and go to another person and do the same. This moment and its imagery will be inscribed in students' memory for years – it is very beautiful because of the shining light of the candles in the dark of the vast and desolate park.
- *campfire ending*: Everyone gathers around the campfire again and sings some songs. There is, for example, a message about how the fire will fade but the holy fire will still burn, and when we are apart, we will bring the holy fire to various places. Then all pray in conclusion.

## **SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY**

- This is quite a holistic approach through which the participants not only hear God's Word, but also feel the life of the people in exile and express their response to the Word. This approach aims at balancing critical thinking and feeling.
- The Word is heard/presented in different ways: reading, exposition, drama.
- The Bible reading as well as the response is not rigid but creative. This attracts students to the Word.
- The Bible is interpreted carefully through a procedure of reading, understanding the background, exposition and response.
- All are involved, especially in giving a response.

## **FURTHER COMMENTS**

This kind of Bible study takes quite a lot of time. So we usually use it at camps and not in weekly Bible studies. However, we do also use experiential learning in our Bible studies.

For example, when we study passages from Corinthians or Ephesians on different roles of Christians in the church, we have a 'lead-in activity' before digging into the Word. We use string to tie the hands of some students, the feet of others, while blindfolding yet others. Then we tie the whole group into one circle with a long string and give them a task to do (e.g. find 5 different kinds of leaves and 5 different kinds of flowers and 5 big ants...). The students share how they felt during this experience before we start our Bible study on the passage.

## **THE CAMP FIRE NIGHT**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
7:00	Camp-fire opening
7:45	A sketch on Daniel 1
8:00	Bible exposition (30-40 minutes)
8:30	Group responses
9:30	Individual responses
10:15	Campfire ending





# NTE: National Training Event

**AFES AUSTRALIA**

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## **EVENT : NATIONAL TRAINING EVENT (NTE)**

Every year, around 1500 delegates come to this four-and-a-half-day conference in Canberra. After this, most conference participants disperse across Australia for four days of mission in partnership with local churches. The goal of NTE is to see students radically transformed by the gospel into disciples of Jesus and disciple-makers of all nations for his glory.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

Scripture engagement at NTE takes many forms including:

- public exposition of the Bible in plenary sessions
- large- and medium-sized group seminars and workshops
- space for a prayerful response to God's Word.

The key to Scripture engagement at NTE is the 'strand groups'. Strand groups are small groups of 6-10 students who work through an intensive, inductive process of reading, understanding, drawing out the implications, and communicating the teaching of a Bible passage or topic. Eleven hours in the conference program is dedicated to strand groups.

Students progress from one strand to another as they return each year. So, the first year in which they attend NTE, they do strand 1, the next year they do strand 2, the next year strand 3, etc.

- Strand 1: Basic exegesis of a New Testament passage (Col 1:15-23), emphasizing close reading and literary context. Delegates give a 5-8min evangelistic talk on the passage.
- Strand 2: Exegesis of an Old Testament passage (1 Sam 8), teaching 'biblical theology': the context of God's unfolding revelation through the whole Bible, climaxing with Jesus. Delegates give a 5-8min talk on the passage.
- Strand 3: Introducing systematic theology (focusing on the resurrection), highlighting its biblical-theological basis and role in shaping how we pray, live, think about, and pass on the momentous news of Jesus. Delegates develop an outline of a gospel tract.
- Strand 4: Introducing Christian ethics (the topic of work), pulling together the previous three strands and applying it to a life issue for students and especially soon-to-be-graduates.
- Strand 5: Preparing a Bible teaching series on a New Testament book (Titus). This strand allows the few remaining delegates to work hard on communicating the gospel from the Bible, producing an outline for an expository teaching series.

## SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY

Strand groups provide students with an immersive training of learning to read and understand the Bible. They emphasize both the process of carefully studying and attending to what God is saying in the Bible as well as the practical impact such engagement should have. This impact includes not only a deeper individual understanding and life change, but also a growing confidence and skill in passing on what they've learnt to others through a talk or tract.

## FURTHER COMMENTS

The training provided by NTE does not stand alone. It is part of the larger process of learning and formation that flows from the AFES mission to proclaim Jesus at the university in order to present everyone mature in him. The strand groups at NTE are designed to build on and feed back into the experiences of ministry, mission and Bible reading the students bring from their involvement in their student groups throughout the year.

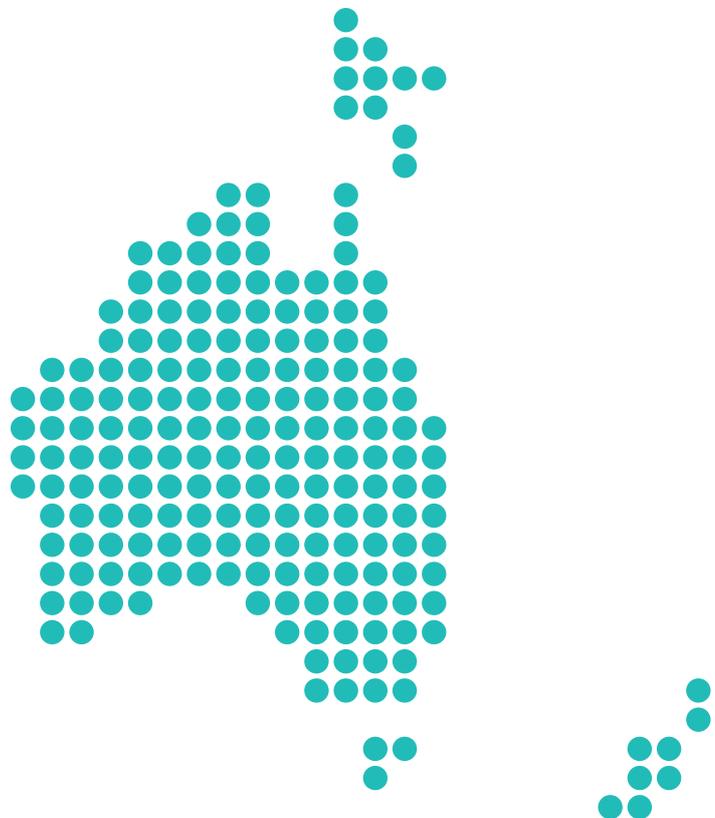
## OVERVIEW OF THE NTE PROGRAM IN 2013

**Main theme: Jesus, the God-Man**

	Dec 7	Dec 8	Dec 9	Dec 10	Dec 11
7:30 am	BREAKFAST				
9:00 am	Registration	Large Group Seminars	Large Group Seminars	Large Group Seminars	Strand Groups
10:30	Plenary Session 1 <i>Psalm 8</i>	Personal Prayer and Reflection	Personal Prayer and Reflection	Personal Prayer and Reflection	
11:00 am	BREAK				
11:30 am	Campus Time	Strand Groups	Strand Groups	Strand Groups	Plenary Session 6 <i>Psalm 110</i>
1:00 pm	LUNCH and Free Time  3:00-6:00 Strand Groups	LUNCH and Free Time  4:00-6:00 Strand Groups	LUNCH 2:00-3:30 Campus Time  Free time and other meetings	LUNCH and Free Time 4:30-6:00 Electives: a range of smaller seminars	Leave for mission locations
6:00 pm	DINNER				
7:30 pm	Plenary Session 2 <i>John 1:1-18</i>	Plenary Session 3 <i>John 6:22-58</i>	Plenary Session 4 <i>John 1:1-44</i>	Plenary Session 5 <i>John 14:1-26</i>	
9:30 pm		Global Mission Opportunities	Global Mission Opportunities	Doing an Apprenticeship with AFES	

## SOME SHORT EXPLANATIONS

- Most plenary sessions are in the evening so that an open invitation can be extended to local churches to come and hear the Bible expositions.
- The large group seminars in the morning look at the conference theme from different angles. The same three seminars are repeated every morning, so that all participants go to all of them. The themes in 2013 were: conforming to the God-man, proclaiming the God-man, and the God-man in the Trinity. A separate seminar is offered for international students.
- During the campus time, the staff and students from each campus meet separately, mainly to prepare the four-day mission they will be going to after NTE.





# SFCN: Student Formación Conference for the Northwest

**COMPA MEXICO**

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## **EVENT : STUDENT LEADER'S CONFERENCE**

This is an annual conference in Northwest Mexico. In 2011, around 20 participants came and the event lasted seven whole days. The aim was to train students in several ways of approaching Scripture and together to study the Sermon on the Mount.

## **BASIC ELEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT**

We spent the whole morning studying the Sermon on the Mount in the following way:

- lectio divina during the students' personal time with God, using the same passage as the one being studied later.
- artistic introduction to the Bible passage in the plenary by students: e.g. a monologue, painting or sketch.
- introduction to the historical context of the passage
- manuscript Bible study (communal study)
- discovering and discussing possible applications of the Sermon in our reality. This involved comparing how the teaching of Jesus stands in contrast to other teachers, writers or leaders (e.g. Buddha, Nietzsche, etc). We also discussed a video clip of world news in relation to the Scripture passage being studied.
- reading and discussing some chapters of John Stott's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount.

### **In the afternoon and evenings:**

The daily seminars were related to the content of the Sermon on the Mount e.g. helping students understand the role of God's law, understanding the world and university today, spiritual disciplines and developing a life project (an exercise in which students wrote down goals for the years to come).

One of our evening activities was watching and discussing a movie that gave an example of a student being salt and light in the world (Sophie Scholl: The Final Days).

The students were also given the task of developing biblical answers for an evangelism project, in which non-Christian students had posed questions they wanted God to answer.

At the middle of the conference we had a half-day of praying and fasting, to learn through experience what Jesus taught in the Sermon.

## **SPECIFIC STRENGTHS OF ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS WAY**

- When we planned the conference, we chose a Scripture passage, took the time to read it together as a team and then let it shape the whole program.
- Students learned different ways of engaging the same passage: lectio divina, manuscript Bible study, group discussions, and artistic approaches.
- We linked the Bible passages to our context in different ways, for example:
  - by giving resources to our students which helped them see Jesus' singularity when compared to other historical teachers;
  - by presenting historical examples so that the participants would be inspired by how others had translated this teaching into ordinary life;
  - by challenging the students to respond biblically to news, video clips and music from their time and generation that were in some way related to the Sermon on the Mount.In general, we tried to think about how Scripture could be applied to three dimensions: our lives, the church and the wider society. This way of applying the passages was very challenging to all of us.

## **FURTHER COMMENTS**

I have found this way of organizing student conferences also to be very formative for the staff and other organizers involved, as it means that we are soaking in Scripture. It is challenging because it requires a lot of preparation, but it is definitely worth it.

In 2012, we studied the life of Daniel and in 2013, the first half of Mark's gospel. This changed the program considerably since we let these passages shape both the content and our approach to Scripture.

## A SAMPLE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	28	29	30	1	2	3	4
8:00 am	BREAKFAST						
8:45 am	Devotional Lectio Devina			RETREAT OF SILENCE			
9:45 am	Bible Study: Manuscript						
11:15 am	SNACK TIME						
11:45 am	Applications						
1:45 pm	LUNCH and Free Time						
4:30 pm	Seminar 1st part						
6:00 pm	SNACK TIME			SHARING TOGETHER			
6:30 pm	Seminar 2nd part						
8:00 pm	DINNER			DINNER with other generations			
9:00 pm	Night Program						Closing...

