

First steps

Keep a copy of this with you, and if appropriate, give it to the new Christian as a reminder, after you have gone through it with him.

Here are some suggestions for your first steps as a new member of God's family.

- (i) Make a permanent note of the date. It's your new birthday! You'll want to remember this day in the future.

'When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!' (2 Corinthians 5.17)

- (ii) Tell someone what you have done. (It's like announcing an engagement!)

'For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, and believe in your own heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.' (Romans 10.9)

- (iii) Join a good church. Spiritually, you are like a new-born baby. In order to survive, you need a lot of care and attention from your new family.

(Make some suggestions, recommend your own church if appropriate, and offer to go to church with him for the first few times. How would you feel about going on your own into a betting office for the first time, or into a gay club, or onto a naturist beach?!)

- (iii) Be baptized. (It's like getting married!)

"Those who believe and are baptized will be saved." (Mark 16.16)

In the Bible baptism means being immersed in water by a church leader. It is a way of making public your decision to belong to Jesus, just as a wedding is a way of making public your decision to share your life with someone permanently. Baptism doesn't 'save' you. It's how you show Jesus that you are willing to obey him, and how he shows you that your sins have been washed away and your new life with him has truly begun.

- (iv) The Holy Spirit is our special helper. He gives us the power to live as God wants us to. *'...those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God.'* (Romans 8.5) Ask the church leaders at your baptism to pray that God will fill you with his Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, *"...if even sinful persons like yourselves give children what they need, don't you realize that your heavenly Father will do at least as much, and give the Holy Spirit to those who ask for him?"* (Luke 11.13)

- (v) If you already have a Christian friend, ask if he or she would be willing to meet you on a regular basis for a while to help you to learn how to follow Jesus. If you don't have such a friend, and if you can't find someone in the church, would you like to meet me, say once a week for a bit?

- (vi) Talk to your heavenly Father each day.

Find a quiet place to pray, and follow the TSP 'teaspoon rule' - "Thank you," "Sorry", "Please":

- *Thank* God for anything that comes to your mind.
- Tell him you are *sorry* for any way you've failed him, and ask him to forgive you.
- Ask him *please* to help you and anyone else you know who is in need.

(vii) Read the Bible each day.

The Bible is like food for your spirit. Jesus said, “*Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*” Set aside a time each day when you can read a passage of the Bible, think about it, pray about it, and if possible act on it.

The Bible is actually a collection of books. Here is one of them, which you can have as a gift. When you have read it, get hold of the whole Bible in a modern translation you can understand. You can download one as an app, or else you can buy an electronic or physical copy. Search for ‘Bibles for New Believers’. It’s the world’s best-selling book!

(viii) Here are my contact details. Please get in touch with me if you need help or advice. I’d like to pray for you now...