



Step into

the River

## River Guide #6

*Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself. (1 Corinthians 9:25- 27)*

As a congregation we are concluding a season of spiritual training to better prepare ourselves to be used by God in whatever He has in store for us on the path ahead. As our map on this journey we are using the imagery of the river as we all seek to move deeper in our relationship with Christ from where we are now – wherever that may be. To learn more about this river analogy surf to our website ([saskatoonchurchofchrist.org](http://saskatoonchurchofchrist.org)) click on the “*STEP INTO THE RIVER*” banner and listen to the audio file available titled “*STEP INTO THE RIVER*”.

Our journey together has challenged us to focus on four key streams: *SCRIPTURE*, *PRAYER*, *SURRENDER* and *OUTWARD*. You do not have to follow all four streams, but the more you commit yourself to, the greater impact you will experience. Much like small tributaries flow together to create great rivers, these four streams have the potential to direct us into a spiritual flow that will shape the terrain of our lives in powerful ways.

Each week we have given a new *RIVER GUIDE* to lead you through the activities for each of the four streams for that week. If you missed a week the *RIVER GUIDES* can be viewed by clicking the “*STEP INTO THE RIVER*” banner on our website. Our website also contains a link to our *RIVER BLOG* ([skchurch.wordpress.com](http://skchurch.wordpress.com)) where Mike has been reflecting on his journey and invites you to comment on yours.

We hope you will join us for the final week of this journey and be here to celebrate with us at its conclusion on Easter Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012.





## Log Book

We encourage you to find a designated **Log Book** to record your thoughts in as you journey. This can be anything from a standard school notebook to a fancy diary from the book store. Anything that has two covers and is filled with empty pages. As you participate in each of the streams every day jot down your thoughts and reflections in your **Log Book**.

## THE SCRIPTURE STREAM



This stream challenges you to go deep into the Word and dive into the book of Psalms. During your daily reading time, select a Psalm from the list (available on the foyer table or download it from our website) that seems to fit with where you are at that day. Read through the psalm and reflect on what it says. Then spend some time discussing with God how those words apply to your life and how you feel about what the psalm says. When you are done, check off the box in front of the psalm you have just read and repeat the exercise each day selecting another unchecked psalm to read. Be sure to list the psalm you read and your thoughts in your **Log Book**.

## THE PRAYER STREAM



This stream involves several components. Create for yourself a dedicated prayer time every day. Try to meet with God at the same time every day, but if you miss your designated time it is better to make it up somewhere else in your day than skip it altogether. How long you pray is up to you, but challenge yourself to carve out more time from your schedule as the final weeks progress. During this prayer time:

✚ Start by spending time in silence, listening as God speaks to your heart.

Strive to block out all distractions and wayward thoughts. “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” (*Psalms 46:10*)

✚ Then spend time praying for:

- **The Leaders of Our Congregation** – that God will give them wisdom, discernment, courage and His blessing
- **All Those Stepping into the River** – that this will be a time of blessing to them and that they will be challenged to go deeper in their faith and their relationship with Christ
- **Any special needs** mentioned in our bulletin or during worship on Sunday
- **For people who do not know the Good News**, those who have not accepted God’s grace and those who have given Jesus full control of their life
- **For our city, country and planet.** For governments, leaders and all those with great public influence. For all those suffering due to war, hardship, hunger, disease and poverty

✚ Finally, spend time in prayer and thought over this week’s daily prayer themes.

## **This Week's Daily Prayer Themes**

**Sunday – Children:** Children and teens today face immense challenges. Ask for God's protection and blessing on our kids. Share your desire with Him for children everywhere to grow up in loving homes, safe environments and in good health. Ask God to give wisdom to parents to raise their kids and lead them into a relationship with Jesus.

**Monday – My Family:** Thank God for the members of your family who have a relationship with Him. Ask His continued blessing on and protection over those relationships. Spend time discussing with God the members of your family who do not currently have a relationship with Him. Ask for His guidance as you share your faith with them both in words and actions. Ask God to bring others into their lives to influence them and request the Spirit to work in their hearts to move them closer to God.

**Tuesday – My Friends:** Make a list in your *Log Book* of your friends who don't have a relationship with Jesus. Ask for His guidance as you share your faith with them both in words and actions. Ask God to bring others into their lives to influence them and request the Spirit to work in their hearts to move them closer to God.

**Wednesday – My Inner Circle:** Make a list in your Log Book of all the people you have contact with on a daily basis (not necessarily *every day*, but at least several times a week). Discuss with God the influence you have with these people and the influence they have on you. Ask for strength and wisdom to live as an example of Christlikeness, insight to see opportunities to share God's love with them and discernment to share your faith in desirable ways.

**Thursday – All Families:** Families today are under extreme pressure and even attack. Ask for God to defend and protect families. Seek His guidance for parents. Request His assistance for families struggling with finances, employment, getting along, loving each other or whatever else might be putting a strain on their relationships with each other. Ask Him to be not only present, but central to the lives of families everywhere. Ask God to reveal to you ways you can support families around you.

**Friday – Our Society:** Consider our city, province and country. Discuss with God the influences that are working to shape our culture and our societal perspective. Ask that He would be moving in the hearts of decision makers and opinion setters that they would chose a course that leads our society closer to Him, not farther from Him. Ask God to shape the hearts and minds of people so that they will look to Him for answers. Ask God to make His church a place where His answers are known and lived out in love.

**Saturday – Our World:** We live in a global society and in a time where we cannot isolate ourselves from the problems of others. Discuss with God the issues of poverty, famine, war-torn countries, refugees, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, physical abuse, violence, gangs, areas destroyed by natural disasters and any other social issue that comes to your mind. Ask God to be working to address these issues and to move His people to be willing to be used by Him in this endeavor.



# THE SURRENDER STREAM

Fasting is a practice that is foreign to many twenty-first century Christians, but for Jesus fasting was not a question of if, but when. (Matthew 6:16). In that spirit, each week you will be challenged to abstain from a certain item or activity. Some weeks the things you give up may actually be impeding your walk with God. Other weeks simply the act of surrendering something may prove to be of great value.

In addition to the above we also invite you to consider participate in a traditional fast as well. Begin by skipping supper Friday evening and consume nothing but water and unsweetened fruit juice until Sunday morning. ***This time frame matches the period of time from when Jesus died on the cross until He rose from the grave.***

## PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE CONDUCTING A FAST

- + **Do not** fast if you are diabetic, hypoglycemic, are required to take medications with food, receiving treatment for an eating disorder, or are attempting to impress others.
- + If you have **any** medical concerns please consult your physician before fasting.
- + When fasting avoid vigorous exercise and expect some lightheadedness, bad breath and irritability.



### This Week's Fast

This week you are challenged to avoid spending money (paper or plastic). Aside from essentials like groceries, paying bills and gas for your car avoid buying anything – this should include eating out, movie tickets/ rentals or anything else you have to pay for. Use the time you would have spent to focus on God, the cravings you experience to remind you of God and any cash you save to honor God. Be sure to record how you feel about letting go of these things in your **Log Book**.

# THE OUTWARD STREAM

This stream adds an outward dimension to our season of training. If you haven't already identified your three people to pray for/interact with, please see River Guide #1 for instructions:

### This Week's Interaction

This week include each of your three people/families in your daily prayer time. Specifically ask God's blessing upon them and for opportunities to connect with their lives in meaningful ways. Ask God to reveal to you any ways that you can be an emissary of His love and grace to these people this week. If you have not delivered you Easter Invitation yet, do so this week. In your Log Book make a list of things you can do over the next couple months to continue to build relationships with your three people/families and set out reminders for yourself of those intentions. Ask God to give you opportunities to share His grace and love with these people.

*Write down your reflections on the following:*

**The *SCRIPTURE STREAM*:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**The *PRAYER STREAM*:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**The *SURRENDER STREAM*:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**The *OUTWARD STREAM*:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---