



SERVING IN
TRUTH

AN NSF's GUIDE TO MARCHING WITH CHRIST



Office for Young People

CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SINGAPORE

encounter discipleship communion mission

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FALL IN!

Good morning *genermen*! I'm Sergeant Chris Tian.

If you're like me, you've wondered what National Service (NS) is like. And chances are you've been told that "NS is the worst period of your life and a waste of time".

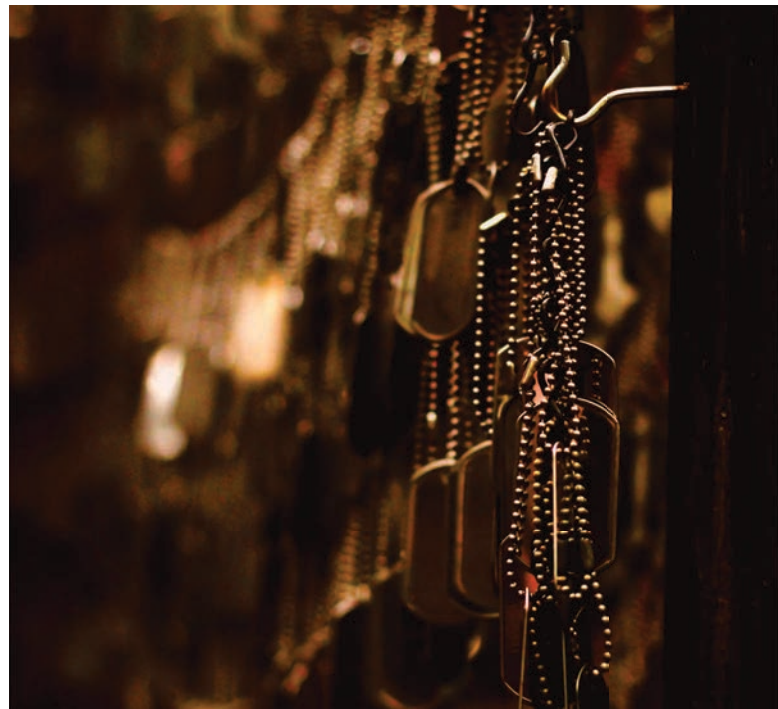
NS is no walk in the park, it's a gruelling stage of every Singaporean son's life. But to say that nothing good can come out of it isn't true! God uses this time of our lives to mould us into the men that He has made us to be.

Maybe you've seen friends who have drifted from God during NS and you're worried about your own faith. But it doesn't have to be that way. In every struggle, God is with us and He calls us to cling on to Him in these two years. Whatever stage of NS you're at, it isn't too late to commit your journey to God and march on with Him!



WHO AM I?

Knowing our true identity is important. In NS, we may try to define who we are and prove our worth through our fitness, rank, education level, or how *chiong sua* our vocation is. None of these are bad aspirations! But finding our identity in them will not do us any good because they are fleeting and will change. By looking outwards for our identity, we may end up instead losing who we truly are and becoming someone we don't want to be. So who are we really?



In these two years, you may be a Full-Time National Serviceman but above all, you are a **Full-Time son of God!** This identity never changes because God's love for you never changes. It has been given to you freely and you do not need to earn it. Therefore, we need to look upwards, to God for our identity and we need to listen to his voice of truth in our lives.

In the next few pages, we've compiled some difficulties in NS that can affect the way we view ourselves, as well as others and God. We invite you to allow God to speak to you through these pages and to respond to His call for you in this time of NS.

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**SEE WHAT GREAT
LOVE THE FATHER
HAS LAVISHED ON US,
THAT WE SHOULD
BE CALLED
CHILDREN OF GOD!
AND THAT IS WHAT
WE ARE!**

1 JOHN 3:1

FATIGUE

NS pushes us physically and mentally. But activities are usually back-to-back and exhausting, leaving us aching and with little time or energy by the end of the day. The tiredness we face often spills into our weekends too.

I SAY...

"I can't do this anymore..."
"I just want time to myself..."

LEADS US TO...

- Become selfish with our time and focus only on what we want (e.g. Netflix, sleep, play video games).
- Become cranky and irritable towards family members or friends.
- Lose motivation to pray or go for Mass; God no longer is important in our life and we try to live by our own strength.

GOD SAYS...

- **Prayer is just as essential for our rest as food and physical sleep!**

"Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation for cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness."

St. John Chrysostom

- **I am your help & your strength!**

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40: 31



FATIGUE

TESTIMONY

How has prayer helped you in moments of tiredness in NS?
(Maximus Tan, Commando)

Prayer helps me to recognize the presence of God, especially in times of difficulties, and helps me unite my suffering with Jesus'. During long route marches or while waiting for orders during outfield missions, I would pray the rosary or just have a conversation with Jesus. As I pray, I would imagine Jesus walking beside me and encouraging me as he carries his own cross to Calvary. Through prayer, Jesus has shown me that he is indeed present in my struggles and this has given me the strength and hope to press on in moments where I felt uncomfortable and exhausted.

SERGEANT CHRISTIAN SAYS...

Eat well, sleep well and pray well!

Remember! With prayer, it is quality over quantity - i.e. to say, prayer doesn't need to be long and filled with big spiritual words. It is the heart that prays. Take some time in your day to talk to Jesus, even 5 minutes is good! Best part about prayer, it can happen anytime and anywhere! So whether you're route marching, cleaning your weapon or even proning in the jungle, take some time to talk to Jesus!



PEER PRESSURE

NS trains us to be disciplined and resilient. But there are many voices that try to tell us what is “good” and we feel an overwhelming need to conform because the FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) is real.

I SAY...

“I need to fit in...”
“I don’t want to miss out...”

THIS CAN LEAD US TO...

- Join in “cool” activities to show that we are “man” enough (smoking, gossip, vulgarities, impure conversations, clubbing and excessive drinking).
- Distance ourselves from God because we view Him as a “party pooper”.
- Lead a double life in and out of camp.

GOD SAYS...

- **You are not missing out on anything, you are called and chosen to be set apart!**

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8: 28

- **I have not abandoned you in these temptations. I will strengthen you and fight with you!**

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

1 Corinthians 10: 13

TESTIMONY

How have you dealt with peer pressure in NS?
(Basil Lee, Guards)

Dealing with the negative influence from my peers in camp has not been easy as there is always a fear of missing out and many times, I have succumbed to these temptations. Though I have fallen and failed often, Jesus reminds me each time that he still loves me and he forgives me. He reminds me that my identity lies not in my failures but in him alone - I am a child of God! It is this confidence in God's faithfulness and love for me that helps me to stand up every time I fall and to press on in this NS journey.

SERGEANT CHRISTIAN SAYS...

When we face peer pressure, it's important to learn to take a step back and pray for the grace to cling on to our identity as a child of God. From there, we realise that we are enough and we do not need to prove ourselves or fit in. Jesus can give us the grace to say "No" to unhelpful things so that we can say "Yes" to greater things!

Just as Jesus used Scripture to ward off the devil in the desert, we too must be familiar with Scripture so that we can stand our ground. We can start small; like reading the daily gospels. The Word of God is food for our souls. *"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"* - Matthew 4:4



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**YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE
WORLD. A TOWN BUILT ON A
HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN.
NEITHER DO PEOPLE LIGHT
A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER
A BOWL. INSTEAD THEY PUT
IT ON ITS STAND, AND IT
GIVES LIGHT TO EVERYONE
IN THE HOUSE. IN THE SAME
WAY, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE
BEFORE OTHERS, THAT THEY
MAY SEE YOUR GOOD DEEDS
AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER
IN HEAVEN.**

MATTHEW 5: 14-16



WASTE OF TIME

NS is a time of many new experiences. But it can be difficult to accept because often we find ourselves doing things that may not make sense. We feel that NS is taking up time we could've used in other better ways.

I SAY...

"Just get it over with..."

"What can I possibly gain out of NS?"

THIS CAN LEAD US TO...

- Be indifferent and unmotivated to put in effort, and just count down till ORD.
- Resentment, shown as disobedience towards superiors or getting annoyed with our "siao on" peers.
- Frustration at God for placing us in such a pointless period of our life.

GOD SAYS...

- I use even your NS experiences for your good, to mould you into the man that I made you to be!

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

- I will not let you labour in vain. Seek me in all that you do and give your best at all times!

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Colossians 3: 23-24

TESTIMONY

How have you been able to overcome the mindset that “NS is a waste of time”?
(Nicholas Tan, Military Police)

I recall lugging a full signal set up and down a hill for hours, and asking God, “Why did you put me here? I’m wasting two years of my life while others are paving their road to success”. Though not immediate, the Lord’s answer to me in prayer was “You do not understand now what I am doing but later you will.” Looking back on my NS journey, I marvel at all that God has done for me. He’s pushed me out of my comfort zone spiritually and professionally, allowed me to meet and testify of His love to people from all walks of life and created in me a new spirit of faith and love.

SERGEANT CHRISTIAN SAYS...

In this season, NS is the vocation that we are called to. Place this time in God’s hands and trust that He will sanctify our work and give us life! Start by giving your best in the littlest of things, like making your bed, packing your ten-pack items or putting camo on your face. We can do these things not to impress man, but to please God!

Give journaling a go. It helps us to be aware of our feelings and God’s movement in our lives. We can look back at our entries to remind ourselves of God’s faithfulness. Allow yourself to be free when you journal; write, draw, colour, you can even type your entries on your phone. Some prompts that can help you with journaling are:

1. What am I grateful for today?
2. Where was God in my day?
3. What grace do I need for tomorrow?





LONELINESS

During NS, we cultivate brotherhood with our section mates & colleagues. However, we spend a lot of time away from family and friends that we can feel alone even though we are surrounded by people.

I SAY...

"Nobody understands me..."

"I rather do things on my own..."

THIS CAN LEAD US TO...

- A "man up" mentality; start to distance from community and God.
- Keep ourselves occupied in meaningless ways like excessive Netflixing and playing phone games.
- Entertaining temptations such as pornography & masturbation - "An idle mind is the devil's workshop".

GOD SAYS...

- **I have not abandoned you during your NS journey. I care deeply for you and continue to walk with you each and every step of the way!**

"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Deuteronomy 31: 8

- **Thirst for Me, only I can satisfy you!**

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

St Augustine

LONELINESS

TESTIMONY

How has being in community helped you face loneliness in NS?

(Timothy Chua, Logistics)

During my cadet training, the various activities we took part in had placed a physical and mental burden on me. Though I had many friends alongside me, I found it difficult to confide in them as we were expected to simply “man up” to our adversities and I was afraid of being seen as weak. However, being in the CAYA Community has helped me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus during these difficult moments. Through their personal faith sharings, prayers and presence, I am reminded to center my identity in Christ and to continually draw strength from Him.

SERGEANT CHRISTIAN SAYS...

NS is not a journey we need to take alone. Your family members are there to support you through it. Though it may be hard to meet physically, we are blessed with technology. Call home regularly to check in and spend time with family.

Journeying with a group of like-minded brothers during NS is important. Come As You Are (CAYA) is an NSF community that provides a safe space to share faith and to encourage and pray for one another in this NS journey. More information about CAYA can be found in the later pages.



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**AND LET US CONSIDER HOW
WE MAY SPUR ONE ANOTHER
ON TOWARD LOVE AND GOOD
DEEDS, NOT GIVING UP
MEETING TOGETHER, AS SOME
ARE IN THE HABIT OF DOING,
BUT ENCOURAGING ONE
ANOTHER—AND ALL THE
MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY
APPROACHING.**

HEBREWS 10: 24-25



BACK IN MY DAY

We don't have to go through NS alone... We have our brothers who have served before us that are here to encourage and carry us to Jesus! Let's hear their stories!

ETHAN CHIA (SCDF MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS CLUB)

I enlisted into the SCDF in April 2018 filled with uncertainty because none of my friends were enlisting with me. It was a huge step out of my comfort zone to enter a regimented environment with people I've never met before. However, God encouraged me through prayer to take NS as a learning experience and an opportunity to reach out to others. Basic Rescue Training taught me valuable life-saving skills and I was also blessed with a platoon who looked out for one another.

After Basic Rescue Training, I joined the SCDF Music and Performing Arts Club, planning intricate large-scale events that lasted long hours. The learning curve was steep, and the huge responsibility to ensure success of these performances stressed and wore me out. At times, I felt like giving up. I learnt to turn to God in prayer to give me the strength I needed. I also joined Come As You Are (CAYA), an NSF community and was immensely blessed with brothers who encouraged each other in faith. As we shared about our joys and struggles of NS, I realised what a precious thing it was to be pilgrims on the same journey. CAYA reminded me that Christ should always be my firm foundation, and that He is always with me.

Just like Jesus cared for the people He met, I aimed to spend more time with the men under my responsibility to get to know them better by learning more about their daily lives, their interests and their strengths; hence delegating work that constructively gave them chances to develop themselves. Another value I emphasized was unity. Ecclesiastes 4:12 - *"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."* For there to be strength in my team, we had to be united and work well with each other in spite of our differences.

For those on this NS journey, I would like to invite you to embrace it! It is a unique experience that will teach you more than you could imagine. It is also a challenge to reach out to the people around and be a pillar of support to your peers. Most importantly, remember God has a plan for you. Keep Him in prayer always, and rest assured He will show wonders to you and through you.

MARK YEO (AIR FORCE TECHNICIAN)

Being in a PES C vocation, my life was a relative breeze in terms of the physical training I had to go through. The biggest struggles were never about the outfields or route marches, but about the spiritual and mental battle within myself. Having a vocation that was so mundane, it was easy to lose myself in the repetition of daily life and to attach my self-worth to the job that I had to do, which I felt was mostly boring and meaningless. The sin of sloth became evident as I didn't have a sense of purpose in life.

Maintaining an active faith would have been way harder too if not for the countless blessings that God sent my way. The first of many to come was being able to attend the Awaken retreat in the year I enlisted. It was life changing and helped me tremendously to root myself in God's love and to rediscover my identity as a child of God. Subsequently being in the CAYA community has also given me many opportunities to deepen my faith. Being accountable to a group of brothers has helped me fight the battle against sin and regular journaling has given me many precious conversations with God. It has opened my eyes to the lies that cloud my mind and helped me to claim the many Truths which God wants to share with me - the Truth that I am loved, forgiven and free.

Prayer is now a lifestyle for me and I enjoy spending alone time with Jesus, either in the adoration room or just in the main hall of the church, especially on my days off or even after bookouts. However, living life now hasn't necessarily been smooth-sailing. Trials and difficulties still come and the battle against sin is still very real. But I now know that, whatever season I am in, I can truly trust in Him to lead me along the path He has planned, to provide for me, watch over me and lift me up in times of need. Life now has so much more purpose because I am not living for myself, but for Him instead.

And so I want to encourage you to claim the Truths that God wants to speak into your lives! Let not this two years of NS feel like a waste of time. Because the Truth is, it can be so much more than that! Step out in faith and let God lead you into deeper waters with Him. He has great plans for you, I'm sure of that!

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

PRAYER FOR NSF_s

Heavenly Father, thank you for allowing us to serve our nation through National Service. Though we may not understand now, we trust that you are working something good in us during this time.

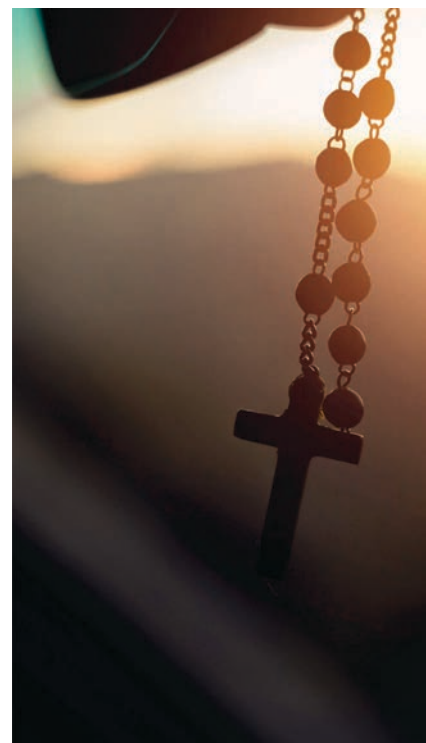
As we carry out our daily task, strengthen us and help us to keep our eyes fixed on you. Protect us, O Lord, in all that we do, that we may be safe from injury and sin. In moments where we struggle to see you, increase our faith and help us to trust more wholeheartedly in you.

You have called us to be the salt and light of the earth. Teach us to give our best and to be bold in reaching out and loving those around us. Use this time to mould us into the men that you have called us to be. Come Lord Jesus, teach us to live and serve in truth! Amen.

PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL

Patron Saint for Soldiers

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



PRAYER FOR STRENGTH WHEN TIRED

Heavenly Father, my burdens feel so heavy, I am so weary and I feel like giving up. Yet, in moments like this, your word reminds me that when I am weak, You are strong. Help me to find rest in you, O Lord. And as I rest, strengthen and help me. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen!

PRAYER WHEN FACING TEMPTATION

Heavenly Father, your grace is always sufficient. There is always a way out of every temptation, and you will never let me be tested beyond my strength. But sometimes I want the pleasure of slavery more than the victory of freedom. Please grant me the grace to say no to the cravings of the flesh and yes to the freedom that you desire for me. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen!



PRAYER TO COMBAT INDIFFERENCE

Heavenly Father, I am struggling to find motivation and meaning in my NS journey. Help me to trust that even in this time, you are working something out for my good. Please grant me the grace to cling to you ever more tightly in this time of service and to grow in trust and reliance in your faithfulness. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen!



PRAYER WHEN FEELING LONELY

Heavenly Father, though there are many people around me, I feel all alone. Yet I know that I am never truly alone because you are always with me. Surround me with your presence and comfort me with your love. May I never try to fill this loneliness with anything other than you, because it is you alone that satisfies. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen!

**HEAVENLY FATHER,
THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US TO SERVE OUR
NATION THROUGH NATIONAL SERVICE. THOUGH
WE MAY NOT UNDERSTAND NOW, WE TRUST
THAT YOU ARE WORKING SOMETHING GOOD IN
US DURING THIS TIME.**

**AS WE CARRY OUT OUR DAILY TASK,
STRENGTHEN US AND HELP US TO KEEP OUR
EYES FIXED ON YOU. PROTECT US, O LORD, IN
ALL THAT WE DO, THAT WE MAY BE SAFE FROM
INJURY AND SIN. IN MOMENTS WHERE WE
STRUGGLE TO SEE YOU, INCREASE OUR FAITH
AND HELP US TO TRUST MORE
WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN YOU.**

**YOU HAVE CALLED US TO BE THE SALT AND
LIGHT OF THE EARTH. TEACH US TO GIVE OUR
BEST AND TO BE BOLD IN REACHING OUT AND
LOVING THOSE AROUND US. USE THIS TIME TO
MOULD US INTO THE MEN THAT YOU HAVE
CALLED US TO BE. COME LORD JESUS, TEACH US
TO LIVE AND SERVE IN TRUTH! AMEN.**

AMEN.

PRAYER FOR NSF_s

CLAIMING TRUTHS

Truths are messages from God that speak to you. Truths can come at any moment of our day and different ways like prayer, reading scripture, listening to music, talking to people etc. And since Truths are from God who is unchanging, these Truths also do not change.

TRUTHS ARE MEANT TO BEAR FRUITS

- Build you up
- Encourage you
- Affirm you
- Remind you of your true identity

EXAMPLES OF TRUTHS

- A word (chosen, beloved)
- A bible verse (Psalm 139: 14)
- Quotes/phrases (Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure - St. JP II)
- Lyrics (In my Father's house, there's a place for me)

CHALLENGE

- Create a Truth jar with whatever materials available, even a simple container works! Place it somewhere you'll see often, like your locker!
- Write 3 Truths that you received during the day and put it in the jar.
- Regularly reach into the jar and let the Lord speak to you through these little messages.





OUR CAYA COMMUNITY

COME AS YOU ARE

Come As You Are is a community of NSFs that come together to worship God, pray and share about the joys and struggles of our NS journeys. Whether you're looking to reignite the flame of your faith or seeking to grow closer to God, CAYA is the place for you!

DETAILS

We meet every Saturday from 10am to 12pm at OYP. If you are keen to join us, please register at <https://oyp.org.sg/cayaonline> and we'll get in touch with you!