

# Welcome

This course is an exploration of what it means to be a soldier within The Salvation Army. Our hope is that by the end, you will have grown in your faith and know whether being a soldier is right for you.

We will look at the eleven doctrines, or beliefs that are the foundation of The Salvation Army. Soldiers embrace these beliefs and enter into a covenant or agreement with God about the way they will live in the world.

All people are welcome at The Salvation Army – whether you are a soldier or not. The Army, like the Christian church, exists for others, as well as for our members.

God wants you to know and follow him. Jesus calls you to be his disciple. That means you learn from him and seek to obey him. It means you live for him day by day. You become light for the place where you live. You serve the people there in Jesus' name. As a disciple, you will also belong to Christ's body – his church. You will seek to love others in the church and the the poor, the hurting and the lost in the community. .

Soldiership is one way to do this. Around the world, more than a million people have responded to God's call to soldiership. It is a lifelong commitment to align with The Salvation Army and its mission in the world.

As a soldier, you commit to the disciplines of The Salvation Army. You play a critical part in our mission. You will live a lifestyle that supports our mission and are encouraged to wear uniform, especially when representing The Salvation Army in the community. As a soldier, you will do all you can to advance our mission and be one with other Salvationists around the world, supporting them with prayer, gifts and love.

During the course, we will meet some soldiers and hear their stories. We encourage you to ask soldiers in your corps what it means to them and why they choose to express their obedience to Jesus in this way.

As we move through the course, we pray that you grow as a disciple of Jesus. And we pray that the Holy Spirit speaks clearly to you about the next step in your journey with him.



## Introduction

The Salvation Army was founded in England in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth.

It began as a mission to bring salvation through Jesus and to do that especially for the poor and forgotten of Britain. It evolved into an army of salvation, and in 1878, it became The Salvation Army. Within a few years, it had widened its work to fight against the injustice and miseries of this world. From the beginning, it has sent its people out to do its mission.

In 1880, the movement began in Australia and has since spread to more than 130 countries around the world. Together, we are united by Jesus Christ across nations, cultures and languages.

Australian Salvos are part of this international movement, which is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. The Salvation Army's message is based on the Bible. Our ministry is motivated by the love of God, and our mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in his name, without discrimination.

Our vision for Australia is a tribute to the passionate spirit of our founders and an expression of our conviction that the love of Jesus has transforming power.

### Vision

Our vision is what we aim to achieve in Australia.

*Wherever there is hardship or injustice Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time, with the love of Jesus.*

### Mission

Our mission is the heart of what we do.

*The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus. We share the love of Jesus by:*

- *Caring for people*
- *Creating faith pathways*
- *Building healthy communities*
- *Working for justice*

This mission is holistic. It means we seek to care for the whole person – physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

Holistic mission is God's mission in the world that seeks to restore and renew the whole of creation – not only relationships between God and people but also relationships between people and with the environment.

### Local Mission Delivery

Local Mission Delivery is the way Salvation Army teams around Australia collaborate in local areas to deliver holistic mission in a way that is nationally consistent.

This includes:

- Corps
- Social and community engagement centres addressing homelessness, family and domestic violence, youth outreach, and alcohol and other drug services
- Chaplains
- Mission Enterprises (e.g. Salvos Stores).

Together, we work to use our different gifts and services to innovatively live out our mission.

### Discuss

1. What attracted you to The Salvation Army movement?
2. What are you hoping to learn from doing this course?

## Meeting suggestions

**1** ..... **11 sessions** addressing one doctrine per session

**2** ..... **6 sessions**

- I. Welcome, introduction, doctrine 1
- II. Doctrines 2–3
- III. Doctrines 4–5
- IV. Doctrines 6–7
- V. Doctrines 8–9
- VI. Doctrines 10–11 and next steps

**3** ..... **5 sessions**

- I. Welcome and introduction
- II. Doctrines 1–3
- III. Doctrines 4–6
- IV. Doctrines 7–9
- V. Doctrines 10–11 and next steps



# Doctrine 1: Word of the living God

*We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.*

## Big ideas

- **Scripture is the basis for Christian belief and practice**
- **Scripture is trustworthy because it is inspired by God**
- **Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**

**“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and for training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”**  
*(2 Timothy 3:16–17).*

How do we know that what we believe about God is true?  
How do we know how to live as followers of Jesus?

We believe that in the Bible, God has revealed all we need to know about him and to follow him. It is the authoritative revelation of God to human beings. It was written by many different authors, but tells the same story of God and his work in the world.

The Old Testament tells us of God's work in the world up to the time of Jesus. It recounts God's creation of the world and human beings, our fall into sin and God's plan to restore the world. It tells of God's constant love for the world and desire to see people flourish in relationship with Him.

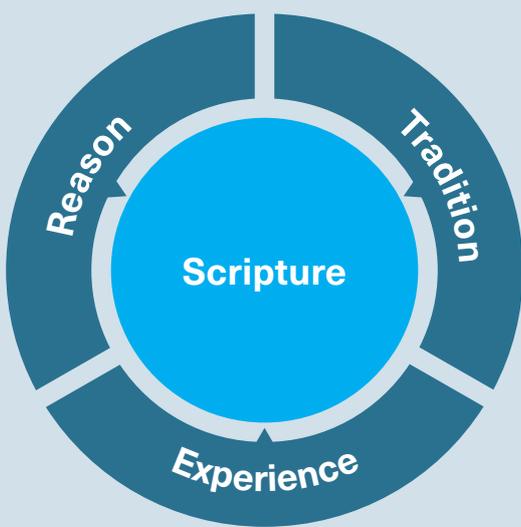
The New Testament tells us about Jesus Christ, the point in history when God came into the world as a human being. It tells of his life, teaching, death on the cross and resurrection. It also includes letters that help us understand what it means to follow Jesus as his people in the world.

The Bible is a library of 66 books. It is made up of different types of writing including histories, biographies, wisdom, letters, laws and poetry.



## How do we know God?

The Salvation Army's understanding is influenced by John Wesley, an 18th century English theologian. He believed there are four sources by which God reveals himself to people: scripture, reason, experience and tradition. He emphasised scripture and encouraged people to test everything against God's word in the Bible.



The Christian church has always valued reading the Bible – both personally and in our meetings as a community. ‘The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring people to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God’ (A. W. Tozer). It is a source of wisdom, encouragement and understanding for a flourishing life with God:

“ *How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth*

*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*”

(Psalm 119:89, 103, 105).

The Gospel of John concludes:

“ *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name*”  
(John 20:30-31).

### Discuss

- How has the Bible shown you truth, encouraged you, corrected your thinking or trained you to live God's way?
- What questions do you have about the Bible?