



# Friends of JESUS



## John 15:12-17 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup>This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. <sup>15</sup>No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, that you love one another.

## Introduction

In the Bible, God and the Lord Jesus call certain individuals their friends, but no human ever refers to God or Jesus as their friend. It is not a mutual, reciprocal friendship. The Bible refers to both Abraham (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23) and Moses (Exodus 33:11) as friends of God. Jesus calls the disciples His friends, but He is still their Lord and Teacher (John 13:13, 14).

In reality, Jesus is not automatically our friend or everyone's friend. The Bible teaches that by nature, we are all God's enemies because He is holy and we all have sinned (Romans 8:7; James 4:4; 1 Peter 5:5). But the good news is that God sent Jesus to reconcile rebellious sinners to Himself.

## 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

<sup>18</sup>Now all things are of God, who

has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

## Luke 5:31-32

<sup>31</sup>Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>32</sup>I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

The first step to be called a friend of Jesus is to come to Him as a helpless sinner, to accept Him as your Lord and Savior, and to believe that He is the only way, the truth, and the life. Once you have done that, then you can consider these characteristics of Jesus' friends and seek to grow in them.

These are the four characteristics of those whom Jesus calls His friends.

### 1. Love one another just as He loved us (John 15:12-13, 17).

#### John 13:34-35

<sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Jesus repeats this command on the same night because He wanted them to remember this one thing—love

is not optional for those who follow Jesus.

### A. Jesus' love for us is the standard for our love for one another.

Jesus' love is "self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved." The highest good for all people is that they would have their sins forgiven and receive eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. And once a person has come to know Christ, his highest good is that he be conformed to the image of Christ. Those goals should be our aim in all of our relationships.

The Bible commands certain feelings, for example, "Rejoice always" (1 Thessalonians 5:16), or "Be anxious for nothing" (Philippians 4:6). But love is primarily a commitment and not a feeling. It is a caring commitment and people should feel our genuine feelings of love for them. But even when we don't feel especially loving, we need to obey God by sacrificing ourselves for the sake of others.

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**Rev. Dr. James C. Sy**  
Administrative Pastor





**T**here is no better way to conclude the school year but through fun and exciting activities. The campus was filled with laughter, excitement, and even challenge from May 20 to 24 as United Christian Academy (UCA) held its Language Week and Balitaan 2024. Also, the school opened its campus for visitors to have a first-hand experience of its programs and see the school facilities. Students displayed various performances using the Filipino and

English language. During the video shoot, students showcased their reporting, acting, and video production skills. On the other hand, the Language Week was filled with engaging musical plays from the Bible where students gave life to well-loved stories that teach critical Bible Principles.

As the school year is about to end, students got to bond once more with their schoolmates, friends, and even their parents. Praise the Lord for the joy He has given to UCA family!

## BALITAAN Awarding

UCA and UCACOA students received their given awards for their vital participation in the newscasting and broadcasting program. The most watched news reports in Facebook and YouTube were also awarded.



UCACOA students showcase their special dance number featuring the rich culture of the Philippines.



With their outstanding performances as anchors, reporters, and actors, students joyfully receive their badges and play button award.



John 15:12-13  
(NKJV)

<sup>12</sup>This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.





The video editors are also awarded to recognize their effort and skills in editing.

A beaming gladness shows on the faces of the students while receiving their recognition.

## Campus Tour

With the Open House event, UCA welcomed the visitors who were inquiring about the school offerings and programs. They also encountered the school staff, students, and parents.



New parents and students tour around the school and meet the staff, greeting them with warmth and smile.

<sup>5</sup>Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6  
(NKJV)





Everyone is in awe as the pupils from Grades 1 to 3 portray the destruction judged upon the wicked and the covenant of God with Noah as a righteous man of God.

## NOAH'S ARK

## Theater PLAY



Even at their young age, UCA exposes the students to a variety of programs where they can express themselves and explore their talents.

## THE PARABLES OF JESUS



From the colorful props, artistic costumes, and convincing acting, viewers are amazed as the pupils narrate Jesus' parables written in the Bible that serve as a guide to Christian living.



The Parables of Jesus namely the Parable of the Sower, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son are portrayed by Grades 4 to 6, highlighting God's invitation to His kingdom.

John 15:16-17  
(NKJV)

<sup>16</sup>You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.  
<sup>17</sup>These things I command you, that you love one another.



## EXODUS, A JOURNEY OF FAITH

The students bring to us a heartfelt and remarkable theater play as they portray the story of Moses from the Book of Exodus.



Astounding performances are proudly exhibited by the talented students of UCA, highlighting God's faithfulness to His chosen nation as they are led out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

## BOOK OF JOB

The Grades 8, 9 & 11 students give their best in delivering their piece, giving the play a seamless portrayal of the story of Job with each poetic line piercing the hearts of the viewers.



As the play shows, despite the challenges that Job faced in the hands of the enemy, never did he once curse the Name of the Lord, but still he remained faithful and glorified Him in every season of his life.

<sup>9</sup>"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

John 15:9-10  
(NKJV)



## SPECIAL PRESENTATION

The energy and charm of the pre-school pupils bring joy to the audience as they perform a song that glorifies God and a poem that expresses how the Lord can use even little children to share Jesus and His great love.



The pupils give their sweet smiles as they pose for photos with their classmates.

## Photobooth



Indeed, the students spent a productive year at UCA. And as part of the celebration, they take pictures at the photobooth area to celebrate their milestones during the Balitaan and Language Week.

Matthew 22:37-39 (NKJV)

<sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."





## Booth Games

It was a fun and interactive week as the students played various booth games. They enjoyed it all with their friends and classmates. UCA made sure the students would have a memorable week during their last few days before the school year ends.

During the program, students are given a time to play at the booth games wherein they can redeem prizes after earning winning tickets.

## Mystery Box

After earning winning tickets from the booth games, those who qualified got the chance to play in the Mystery Box. Students received a special item in exchange of their winning tickets that they gathered. All were happy and thankful to receive gift prizes.



<sup>11</sup>And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup>that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:11-12  
(NKJV)



Exciting prizes are won by the students, parents, and visitors that celebrate the Language Week here in UCA. They were given t-shirts, tote bags, mugs and other items as souvenirs.

Raffle



Awarding



After the week-long commemoration of the Language Week, students achieve new milestones as they receive awards with their proud parents on stage.



They receive their certificates and badges with joy, knowing that their hardwork and efforts pay off.

Mark 3:33-35  
(NKJV)

<sup>33</sup>But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" <sup>34</sup>And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!" <sup>35</sup>For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."





## UCACOA 17TH COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES REAPING THE FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR

**A**nother milestone unlocked for the new graduates of TESDA Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP) of UCA College of Asia with the course of Contact Center Services NC II. The 17<sup>th</sup> Commencement Exercises was held last May 24 to recognize the scholars who completed the training.

UCACOA TVET Focal, Rev. Ryan Christian Tabay proudly presents two batches of graduates after the 18-day of training. Everyone were excited to reap the fruits of their labor as they received their certificates which will be their proof of completion to their future employers. Also, UCACOA Vice President and School Head, Rev. Dr. James Sy, congratulated the graduates and shared important things that they should remember as they earned their certificates and continue in their chosen careers.

Indeed, God has been glorified once again as he allowed UCACOA to be used to help people become productive citizens of the country.



**A**ng bawat isa ay nagagalak sa mga nagdesisyong sumunod sa kalooban ng Panginoong Hesus. Ang kanilang paglubog sa tubig ay patotoo na sila ay mayroon ng bagong buhay na matatagpuan sa Diyos! Napakabuti ng Diyos sa Kaniyang mga anak!

*Welcome to the family of God!*

**Trixie Mae Mendoza  
Angela Tizon  
Rosemarie Cauyong**



## BUHAY NA HANDANG SUMUNOD KAY HESUS

<sup>a</sup>But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>b</sup>Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

**Romans 5:8-9  
(NKJV)**



# Friends of Jesus

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I am sure that the cross did not feel good at that moment, but Jesus endured it because He was focused on the future joy of having us with Him in heaven for all eternity.

Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." We know that Jesus not only died for His friends but also for the sinners (Romans 5:8-10). We can never do what Jesus did on the cross, but in comparison, there are many heroic deeds happening every day, like saving someone from drowning or rescuing someone inside a burning building. Some would donate their blood or their organs to a complete stranger. Some would nurse someone to health or treat their injuries. In the simplest act, these self-sacrifices on a daily basis are what Jesus intends for us to do when He said, "Love one another."

## B. Abide in Christ's love to love one another.

**John 15:9-10**

<sup>9</sup>"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

Abiding in God's love is the key to loving one another.

**Matthew 22:37-39**

<sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Without abiding in God's love, our

fallen love is selfishness.

**James 4:1-4**

<sup>1</sup>Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? <sup>2</sup>You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup>Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

When we abide in God's love, the fruits are self-sacrifice and loving one another.

## 2. Obey His commandments (John 15:14).

Some have thought that by obeying Jesus' commands, they will become His friends. Remember that we must abide in His love first before we can obey. The nature of Jesus' friend is obedience, rather than earning His friendship through obedience.

**Mark 3:33-35**

<sup>33</sup>But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" <sup>34</sup>And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!" <sup>35</sup>For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

## 3. Understand the truths that He made known to us from the Father (John 15:15).

Jesus is our Lord and Savior, and we are His servants. When Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants", it does not mean that we are no longer His servants but rather, even though we are still His servant, we are treated as friend and shared

with us necessary truths.

Later, Jesus told the disciples that He has many more things to tell them, but they could not bear them yet (John 16:12). Then after the resurrection, He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45).

Now we have the Holy Spirit and the Spirit-inspired Word of God to reveal to us all that we need to know for life and godliness (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

## 4. Chosen by Him to bear fruit that remains as they depend upon Him through prayer (John 15:16)

### A. Chosen by God

Some may say, "I was saved because I choose Jesus." Let us be clear, we did not choose God, but God through Jesus Christ have chosen us. The Father drew us to His Son and opened our eyes.

**1 Corinthians 1:27-29**

<sup>27</sup>But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup>and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup>that no flesh should glory in His presence.

### B. Bear fruit that remains.

To bear fruit that remains means that by abiding in Christ's love, we will bear fruit. The fruit mentioned here is not good works, but a lost sheep, who through the proclamation of the gospel, was also called and chosen (saved by grace through faith). One of the reasons that God chose to save us is to help bring others (lost sheep) to Christ. Paul suffered so that God's

elect would hear the gospel and be saved. That should be our aim as well.

**2 Timothy 2:10**

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

While it is good to receive trainings and seminars about sharing your faith, we always need to keep in mind that salvation is not through sales-talk to close the deal. Only God can produce fruits who abide.

**John 1:12-13**

<sup>12</sup>But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

### C. Prayer

Prayer is the God-given necessity behind evangelism. Before you talk to a person about God, talk to God about the person. God sent us to preach the gospel.

## Conclusion

So, would Jesus call you His friend? He would, if you are loving others, especially those in your home and in the church. He would, if you are seeking to obey His commandments. He would, if you are growing to understand the truths revealed by the Holy Spirit in God's Word. And He would, if you know that He chose you to bear fruit that remains and you are seeking to bear that fruit through prayer.

How do I know if God has chosen me? "Have you believed in Jesus as your Lord and Savior?" If you have, that didn't come from you! You believed in Him because in love He chose you before the foundation of the world. That way, He gets all the glory!

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**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE**  
9:00 AM (Parañaque)  
3:00 PM (Cabuyao, Laguna)

**HOME BIBLE CHURCH**  
For schedule, please see  
HBC Updates.

**HOUSE OF PRAYER**  
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Scan these QR codes to watch the replays of the UCF Sunday Worship Services.**



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