

A GOLDEN AGE MALE GROUP THAT WORSHIPS GOD WITH FOUR STRINGS – BLUE SKY STRINGS

Have you ever imagined that a father's birthday present would have created a music group that worships God? The male group, Blue Sky Ukelele Club recently gave themselves a group name, "Blue Sky Strings". The person who started this is David Chan.

The story dates back to 2016. As David reminisced, "When Stephen's daughter gave him a Ukulele as a birthday present, he did not know how to play it and sought my help. While I am skilled at the guitar, I did not know how to play the ukulele. After researching online for a while, I learned how to play it. Afterwards, a few members in "Men's Sky", brothers who studied the bible together were also interested in learning the ukulele. As two years has passed, we continue to consistently meet and learn new songs; and even formed a team to visit YeeHong in Unionville, to perform in front of seniors and to spread the gospel."

There's a saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." The brothers in "Blue Sky Strings" are mostly over 60s and learning the ukulele was definitely a challenge. So why did they enjoy it? David responded, "The brothers in "Men's Sky" are mostly retired, and they wish to have some challenges in their lives, and learning the ukulele fits the bill."

You only need to learn 2 fingering techniques to play the ukulele. London Bridge is Falling Down and Mary Had a Little Lamb can be played. David indicated, "As long as you practice daily, you can see results in a month or two. Once you learned 6 to 7 fingering techniques, then you can basically play all songs on the ukulele."

David officially started teaching the ukulele in Zion in 2023. Invitations were initially sent to "Men's Sky", and later on to other brothers. This is the third year of class and each session has a little more than 10 people with about 1/3 of them being non-believers. David said, "During class, I will use some opportunities, such as learning to play Amazing Grace, to invite some brothers to share God's work in their lives, to allow non-believers to learn about our faith."

This January, David decided to explore sisters' interest in learning the ukulele. A special class was held for them to experience it. Initially, the plan is to only have a class if 6 or more people sign up with 10 being the capacity. However, with overwhelming interest, 19 people signed up for the special class, and 14 of them were willing to continue. David is now considering how to open up sessions apart from the one with the Men's Sky to open up the female market. This June, more ideas should pop up during Blue Sky Stings sessions. Yet, what's really on David's mind is on how to recruit more young people to join.

Brothers Flying High in Men Sky

"Men's Sky" is a fellowship for men. It's been there since the establishment of Zion in 1998. It was led by Rev. Man. When David joined Zion, Rev. Man has already left. So why is fellowship named Men's Sky? According to a sharing by Rev. Man, he jokingly said that it was because land belong to women.

"Men's Sky" has around 30 members with more 12 – 13 being more active members. We meet every other week to study the bible and share, with David being responsible for coordination. As David described it, the fellowship's purpose is to help us maintain a close relationship with God, and to bond between brothers. This is so that we expand into faith seekers and to build relationship with friends. Apart from online bible studying, life and devotion sharing, Danny Wong and a few brothers started a sports group. Every Thursday, a hiking is organized for brothers and faith seekers, and participation number is around 15.

The Covid pandemic affected the operation of Men's Sky. Bible study has gone from in-person to online. David explained, "The pandemic was an opportunity for us to explore a more fitting mode of meeting. Men's Sky has been established for 20 years and some of us went from middle aged men to becoming seniors. Night time driving is not as easy as before and some of us, and some of us are always in Hong Kong for an extended period of time. On-line meeting made it easier for everyone to join. David would especially like to thank Rev. Ho for joining. He provided more spiritual guidance to our bible studies. The hard work of the brothers is the motivation for Men's Sky to continue."

