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As you work through this Leader Guide, you will see a handful of gray and green icons to indicate key points and specific action items. Here’s a reference to help you identify each one.
As a Journey Group Leader at Christ Fellowship, your role is all about growing disciples. The Greek word for disciple, mathétés, literally translates as “learner.” Discipleship can be described as the process of learning about the teachings of Jesus, internalizing them and then acting upon them. To serve others in a discipleship role you must first be a disciple yourself. Take a look at these three qualities of a disciple:

Learning the Teachings of Jesus. When we’re learners, we discover new depths in our relationship with God. In John 17:3 Jesus says, “This is the way to have eternal life — to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.” We are meant to know God through Jesus Christ and to constantly discover new depths.

Internalizing the Teachings of Jesus. Internalizing what we’re learning means that we make each new lesson a part of our everyday life. When we internalize what we’re learning, our lives begin to look more like Jesus and we become an example for those beginning their discipleship journey.

Acting on the Teachings of Jesus. Discipleship is both words and actions. As discipleship leaders, our actions reflect what we know to be true of God and we begin to plant seeds and call others up to a closer walk with Christ.

As discipleship leaders, you are an integral part of carrying the heart and vision of discipleship to the people who attend each of our campuses. God has brought each person here for healing, for rest, for connection, for family and for the opportunity to experience Him in a new way. He wants to use you to accomplish His mission!

“Disciples are not manufactured wholesale. They are produced one by one, because someone has taken the pains to discipline, to instruct and enlighten, to nurture and train one that is younger.” —J. Oswald Sanders

In this first section of your facilitator guide, we are going to give you the specific tools needed to be effective in your role as a disciple-maker and Journey Group Leader.
At Christ Fellowship, we are committed to creating engaging environments that inspire people to take one more step in their walk with Christ. An engaging environment is where people are connecting, learning, and serving together. We believe that when all three of these elements are joined together the result is dynamic spiritual growth.

Each of our discipleship environments is designed to lead people into that dynamic spiritual growth and The Journey is a key element in that process. To put The Journey in context, here are the steps we encourage for those who are new to Christ Fellowship:

1. **THE PARTY** is a relaxed meet-and-greet that we offer after every service. It’s an opportunity for people to get to know each other and to get connected at Christ Fellowship. Newcomers also receive a personal invitation to attend the upcoming Get in the Game, offered monthly.

2. **THE GAME** (GIG) is your next step in getting to know more about Christ Fellowship. Because God is doing a great work through us, we’re making a difference in our world. We want you to be a part of what’s happening here! During this 60-minute experience, you’ll learn what it means to belong at Christ Fellowship... Everyone, Everyday, Everywhere.

3. **THE JOURNEY** is a six-session interactive experience, where participants explore their identity in Christ, salvation and repentance, baptism, communion and other spiritual disciplines, personal stewardship, and the core beliefs and core values of Christ Fellowship. At the end of these six sessions, participants are invited to become committed members of Christ Fellowship, and are helped to take next steps to grow in their faith.

4. **LIFE GROUPS & SERVE TEAMS.** Every member of Christ Fellowship is encouraged to take practical steps to grow in their faith after completing The Journey. At Christ Fellowship the main discipleship environments designed to help inspire and promote spiritual growth are Life Groups and Serve Teams. Life Groups are smaller gatherings that study together and build community throughout the week. Serve Teams are groups of people who use their talents and abilities to serve others while building community throughout the week.
DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

WEEKEND SERVICES

THE PARTY

THE GAME

THE JOURNEY

THE LIFE

LIFE GROUPS

SERVE TEAMS

LEAD OTHERS
THE JOURNEY CONSISTS OF SIX SESSIONS IN A GROUP ENVIRONMENT, complemented by daily personal studies and resources. The sessions take place in groups of two to ten people who are led by a Journey Group Leader. The Journey is held most months of the year at each of our Christ Fellowship campuses. It generally begins the week following Get in the Game.

Onsite:
In an onsite experience, several Journey Groups along with their Journey Group Leaders meet in one room and are guided by Journey Facilitators, who provide supplemental teaching from the front of the classroom and take responsibility for keeping the overall process on track. There are a variety of onsite options of The Journey. Sunday morning and mid-week evening sessions are 65-minutes and held for six consecutive weeks. We also occasionally offer a one-day format where you can complete all six sessions on one Saturday.

Offsite:
In some cases, a Journey Group may meet offsite as a Life Group or Serve Team in a more informal setting such as someone’s living room, a restaurant, or another location locally or around the world. When The Journey is offered in an offsite environment, participants receive teaching from a Facilitator via video, and will then have discussion with their Journey Group Leader and one another for the interactive portions. For this format, the Journey Group Leader will serve in the same capacity as a Life Group or Serve Team Leader.

Online:
The Journey is also offered to those who worship with Christ Fellowship via Church Online. Anyone, anywhere in the world, can join our interactive online platform to go through The Journey in a digital format similar to the onsite experience. Participants will be able to watch a video of our Journey Facilitators leading them through the experience, and can interact with their Journey Group Leader and one another through an interactive learning platform.
DEFINITION OF A JOURNEY GROUP LEADER

Details
This is your opportunity to help people just like you feel ‘at home’ at Christ Fellowship and grow closer to Jesus by...
- Creating a welcoming environment
- Building a connection with each person in your group
- Facilitating dynamic spiritual conversations
- Helping each participant set and follow-through with spiritual growth goals

Experience
- Has experienced The Journey as a participant
- Is a committed member of Christ Fellowship and embraces our church’s mission
- Understands and is able to communicate basic Christian doctrines clearly as outlined in Christ Fellowship’s Core Beliefs
- Accurately represents Christ Fellowship’s Core Values in their character and communication
- Understands the importance of and can clearly share his or her “Story”
- Is committed to personal spiritual growth
- Enjoys interacting with people

Schedule
- The Journey is offered most months over the course of six, one-hour sessions, or a Saturday one-day format
- Plan for 65-minutes per session. Additionally, you can expect to have interactions with some of your group participants beyond the actual sessions
An important piece of your role as a leader is your personal faith story. During The Journey we will be focusing on the power of personal faith stories and encouraging each participant to begin writing out and sharing their stories. As a Journey Group Leader, you have the opportunity to model what a powerful, clear, and concise faith story looks like!

What not to do:
- Do not start your story with a weird spiritual experience
- Do not tell long winded stories
- Do not tell a fuzzy story
- Do not make your story overly dramatic
- Do not use too much religionese
- Do not speak with an air of superiority

Best Practices:
- Do write out your story (Pages 28–29)
- Do use the before and after format (John 8)
- Do make your story clear and concise
- Do get to the main point — Jesus Christ
- Do keep your story to 3 minutes or less
- Do share your story with sincerity

There is no higher honor in life than to be message carriers of the Gospel, the greatest news known to humanity! Be intentional about developing your personal faith story in a way that inspires and honors those with whom you share your story.
TOP 10 QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE JOURNEY GROUP LEADER

1. Be Prayerful and Expectant. All spiritual progress depends on prayer. As you pray for each participant and prepare your own heart to lead your Journey Group, you can expect that God is going to create opportunities to use you to impact the lives of each Journey participant. Be sure to look for the opportunities God is opening for you!

2. Be Dependable and Prompt. Not only does The Journey process require dependability and promptness, these two actions also communicate how much you value each participant’s time and the overall Journey experience. Reviewing the “Getting Ready” notes before each session will equip you for a successful Journey session.

3. Be Sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Allow God to guide your conversation and personalize His life-changing grace in the heart of each Journey Group member. It is such a privilege to partner with the Holy Spirit in someone’s life!

4. Be Faithful to the Journey Material. The rhythm of The Journey experience intentionally provides a balance of biblical instruction and supportive interaction, creating an environment that the Holy Spirit can use to promote life-transformation. We have continued to test The Journey material on thousands of participants with amazing results. Please stick to the lesson plans as we have found it works the best!

5. Be Respectful of Privacy. Be careful not to pry beyond what a person wants to share, and aggressively guard the confidentiality of personal information that is shared.

6. Be Available. Stay in touch with Journey participants throughout the week and beyond the experience, providing encouragement, prayer and direction as needed.

7. Be Encouraging and Enthusiastic. Establishing a positive atmosphere of encouragement is important for providing participants more of an incentive to return for the next session. Even if a person is struggling, find a way to highlight positive interactions and progress they are making.

8. Be Non-judgmental. Do not seek to be perceived as a spiritual expert, or judge negative life-choices or behavior. Instead, be approachable, serving as a guide and a resource for individuals.

9. Be Sincere. Build credibility and trust with Journey participants by having sincere interactions with them. People need to know that their leaders are truly interested in their process of spiritual growth and genuinely care about their well-being. If a leader is simply “going through the motions” and not putting their heart into the process, people will quickly pick up on this and consequently will invest less of themselves in the process as well.

10. Be intentional about connecting each participant to their next step. Your goal is to walk beside individuals to help them identify where they are on their spiritual journey and help guide them in connecting, learning and serving at Christ Fellowship.
Remember, these points should serve only as general guidelines to creating a healthy and vibrant Journey Group. We will be praying for you as you take steps to enrich lives through The Journey. We are so thankful to partner with you in this process! We hope this will be one of the greatest assignments you will ever have, and we pray that your life will be greatly impacted by God’s work in and through you as a result!

**Start and end on time.** Track time throughout the session to ensure this happens.

**Open your time with a brief word of prayer** and help make participants aware of the presence of Jesus (Matt. 18:20).

**Share one to two brief insights of your own** to jump-start the conversation.

**Relate what you are discussing back to Jesus** by asking these questions:
- “What does this teach us about Christ?”
- “How does God want me to respond to what I’ve just learned?”

**Be prepared to ask “open-ended” questions** that will stimulate reflection and help move people toward action. These are questions that cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” and often start with the words “what,” “how” or “why.” For example:
- What do the rest of you think? How does this make you feel?
- How did you arrive at that conclusion?
- Why do you think this is important?

**Some questions you can use in EVERY Bible study discussion:**
- What stands out to you in this passage?
- What is God trying to tell us through this?
- Why do you think this is important to God?
- How can we apply this to our lives today?
- How could this be shared with people who do not yet know Christ?
- Was there something you read that is new, reaffirming, confusing or challenging?

**Be real. Be yourself.** Authenticity is the key to helping others open up. Develop a dynamic where people feel safe to share and free to be themselves.

**Try to involve every person.** Acknowledge and affirm each person who speaks. Be sure everyone gets a chance to share at least once each session.

**Begin with the end in mind.** The Journey is a vehicle to help people connect into the body life of Christ Fellowship. Plant the seed early on that after The Journey, everyone will be able to find a “home” in a group or team. You can even encourage your group to stay together as a Life Group!
What is the time commitment? The time commitment for a Journey Group Leader varies depending on the format being offered. When The Journey is offered weekly at a campus, either on a Sunday or on a mid-week evening, a leader will serve for 7-weeks at a time, which consists of 6-weeks of sessions and one week of follow-up.

The Journey may also be offered in a one-day format, in which all six sessions would be covered in seven hours on a Saturday. When you are leading a one-day journey we request you be available for the entirety of the class and that you help participants to take next steps over the following two weeks. If you are a Life Group or Serve Team Leader taking participants through The Journey, please see your Discipleship Pastor for a resource list.

Throughout the time frame of your serving opportunity, we encourage you to make yourself available to pray and encourage individuals between the scheduled sessions. After serving as a leader for one or two rounds of The Journey, we encourage you to take a break to renew yourself and to personally grow through one of our discipleship environments, or take your group through the entire discipleship pathway. We want each cycle of serving to be life giving for you. Also, remember that one of your key responsibilities is to ‘work yourself out of a job’ by identifying future group leaders.

What if somebody in my Journey Group misses a session? A person can make up a missed session by meeting with you individually or attending the session online. Because The Journey is 6 sessions, if they miss 2 or more, they will need to participate in another round of The Journey. If you are going through The Journey as a Life Group or Serve Team, you might consider rescheduling a session to a time when everyone can participate.

What if I can’t make it for one session? If you are leading The Journey in a Life Group or Serve Team, you can postpone or reschedule that session. If you are leading a Journey Group onsite at one of our Christ Fellowship campuses, please inform the Journey Coordinator or Discipleship Pastor as soon as you know the date you’ll be gone, and they can assist you in finding another Journey Group Leader to fill-in for you.

What happens when a Journey Group is finished? We strongly encourage Journey Groups to continue meeting as a Life Group or Serve Team. The most successful groups have a leader who sets this vision from the beginning. To begin this process, potential leaders can get started and receive coaching by visiting cflifegroups.com. For any additional questions, contact your campus Discipleship Pastor.
The Journey Leader Guide

SESSION

OVERVIEWS
Session One: Beginning the Journey (65 Minutes)

Handouts
- Participant Guides
- Object Lesson — Rock of Salvation

Outline
1. Welcome: Overview & Prayer (8 min)
   - Video: Road Trip
2. Interact: Group Exercise (15 min)
3. Inform: The Search for Meaning (3 min)
4. Inform: Back to the Beginning (10 min)
   - Video: Free Fall
5. Inform: Defining Moment — Salvation (10 min)
   - Object Lesson
6. Interact: Prayer of Salvation & Repentance (15 min)
7. Wrap Up (4 min)

10-Minute Break: Write out defining moment of salvation.

Session Two: Embracing New Identity (50 Minutes)

Handouts
- Object Lesson — Mirrors

Outline
1. Inform: Session Overview (2 min)
2. Inform: Recognizing Detours (10 min)
   - Object Lesson
3. Interact: Exchanging the Lie (20 min)
4. Inform: Writing Your Story (10 min)
   - Video: Faith Stories
5. Interact: Journey Leader Faith Story (5 min)
6. Wrap Up (3 min)

10-Minute Break: Begin writing out your personal faith story.
Session Three: Going the Distance (55 Minutes)

Handouts
☐ Object Lesson — Tennis Shoes

Outline
1. Inform: Session Overview (3 min)
2. Inform: Spiritual Disciplines (5 min)
   ■ Object Lesson
3. Inform: Reading God’s Word (5 min)
4. Inform: Prayer (5 min)
   ■ Video: Prayer in Pop Culture
5. Inform: Biblical Community (5 min)
6. Interact: Service Project (20 min)
7. Inform: Baptism & Communion (10 min)
8. Wrap Up (2 min)

10-Minute Break: Continue to write out your personal faith story.

Session Four: Stewarding the Journey (65 Minutes)

Handouts
☐ The Blessed Life Book
☐ Object Lesson — Silver Coins

Outline
1. Inform: Stewardship (10 min)
   ■ Object Lesson
2. Inform: Stewarding Your Time (7 min)
   ■ Activity in Participant Guide
3. Inform: Stewarding Your Treasure (12 min)
   ■ Video: Todd & Shaun
4. Interact: I Timothy 6:17-19 Study (12 min)
5. Inform: Stewarding Your Testimony (7 min)
6. Inform: Stewarding Your Talents (7 min)
7. Wrap Up (10 min)
   ■ Video: The Blessed Life

15-Minute Break: Grab your lunch and stretch before the next session!
Session Five: Living in Family (65 Minutes)

Handouts
☐ Object Lesson — Kingdom Keys

Outline
1. Inform: Facilitator Faith Stories (8 min)
2. Interact: Lunch & Share Your Story (25 min)
3. Inform: The Heart of Membership (10 min)
   ■ Object Lesson
   ■ Video: Todd & Julie
4. Inform: Membership Defined (5 min)
5. Inform: Christ Fellowship’s Commitment to Members (5 min)
6. Interact: Why Membership Matters (10 min)
7. Wrap Up (2 min)

10-Minute Break

Session Six: Celebrating Membership (55 Minutes)

Handouts
☐ Membership Certificate

Outline
1. Inform: Session Overview (2 min)
2. Inform: Core Beliefs (10 min)
   ■ Video: We Believe
3. Inform: Spine vs. Rib Analogy (5 min)
4. Interact: What We Believe (15 min)
5. Inform: Core Values (5 min)
6. Interact: Membership Covenants (5 min)
7. Inform: Resource Stations (8 min)
   ■ Group Picture
8. Wrap Up (5 min)

Action Step: Commit to a next step and tell your Group Leader!

Post Class: Encourage participants to take advantage of the resource stations.

Digging Deeper: Encourage daily 15-minute devotionals.
SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Begin connecting with each person in your Journey Group and creating an atmosphere where they feel comfortable connecting with one another.
- Help your group begin their spiritual journey by exploring the meaning of the journey we are on as described in Genesis.
- Embrace or reaffirm participants’ personal faith in Jesus Christ through a clear understanding of the ABC’s of salvation. Salvation is the first spiritual milestone and is the starting point for each person’s journey.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIPS

Begin by building group connection: Warmly greet all new members of your Journey Group as they arrive. Try to find common interests among participants so that they engage in natural conversations with one another, even before The Journey begins.

Be prepared to lead the INTERACT sections: Review the Interact questions and try to reserve them for that section in session one.
Session One
Beginning The Journey

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Warmly greet participants and make introductions. Encourage conversation until Facilitators open in prayer. Distribute name tags and have participants sign in.

1. WELCOME: OVERVIEW & PRAYER (8 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Welcome participants and introduce yourselves.

Open class in prayer.

We’re so glad that you decided to come on this spiritual journey with us! The Journey is Christ Fellowship’s membership class and is an important step as you get connected into the family here. We hope that through this class you will feel a deep sense of belonging both in the family of God and here in our local church.

Each of you has a participant guide that will help you to dig deeper into the topics we will cover today. Your guide is set up by sessions and includes the main points we will cover along with key Scripture references. You will also find all of our group discussion questions and plenty of writing space to record your thoughts along the way! After we’ve finished the six sessions today, we will walk you through the resources available at the back of your participant guide. These resources will help you to continue your personal journey of spiritual growth!

During each session, we’re going to use some examples and imagery from road trips. How many of you have ever been on a road trip? Hopefully your road trip wasn’t quite as eventful as this one…
We’ve all been there...lost or frustrated...in desperate need of a map...paper version or Google version. From the time roads were developed, people have been making signs or milestones to help direct them on their journey. Milestones were constructed to provide reference points along the road to reassure you that you’re on the right path. They tell you either how far you’ve travelled or how far you still need to go to reach your destination.

Milestones are just as important on our spiritual journey as they are on a long road trip. The destination of our spiritual journey is to become a committed disciple of Jesus Christ. Each person’s journey has unique twists and turns, but the milestones along the way help to keep you on the right path and make the adventure an exhilarating experience. Some of the milestones are practices that, as you repeat, bring you closer to your spiritual destination. Other milestones act as defining moments that mark a fork in the road and a conscious choice of direction.

Today, we will have 6 sessions that will cover both those milestones that create defining moments and those that are essential practices you repeat to help you on your spiritual journey. During our time together we will dig into topics such as salvation and repentance, our identity in Christ, personal spiritual disciplines, how to steward our time, talents, treasures and testimonies, how to write and share our stories with others and the heart and beliefs of membership here at Christ Fellowship.

Let’s get started today by getting to know the people who will be travelling with you on this Journey. Leader’s you have a 3-minute hourglass, go ahead and flip that hourglass over to give everyone time to fill out the questionnaire on page 9 of the participant guide. After everyone has filled out the questions, take the remaining time to discuss the questions as a group.

All right, participants please go ahead and fill out the questions. Leaders, you can flip your hourglass!

2. INTERACT: GROUP EXERCISE (15 MINUTES)

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Get to know the people in your group by having them answer the 5-question survey on page 9 of the participant guide. Have everyone write out his or her answers during the first 3 minutes of your group time. Then, allow each person to share their answers with the group. Collect the Surveys at the end of the group discussion and use them to intentionally show value to each person throughout the remaining 5 sessions.

☐ What is your favorite road trip music?
☐ What treat is a must for long distance travelling?
☐ Do you have any special talents that come out on trips?
☐ How do you spend your time when you’re a passenger on a trip?
☐ What do you like to accomplish when travelling?

3. INFORM: OUR SEARCH FOR MEANING (3 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: To be successful on our journey, we have to know and understand where we are starting. On our spiritual journey that starting point has to do with our self worth and the meaning of life. Regardless of our different backgrounds, cultures, or experiences — at some point in our lives we have all asked ourselves questions like:

☐ Who am I? Why am I here?
☐ What is the meaning or purpose of life?
☐ Is this really all there is to life?
How many of you can relate?

In those moments, what are some of the things that you tend to base your identity on? For me it was _______________________.

What are some other things you’ve experienced?

**4. INFORM: BACK TO THE BEGINNING (10 MINUTES)**

**FACILITATOR:** In order to understand God’s response to these questions, we have to go all the way back to the beginning. How many of you have ever walked into a room half way through a movie?

A couple months ago, I came home to one of my roommates watching Star Wars. I know it’s crazy, but I had never seen Star Wars before. The characters and action drew me into the movie, but I had absolutely no idea what was going on. I couldn’t stop watching, but I was confused because I didn’t understand who the characters were or why they were doing what they were doing. I’m sure I annoyed my roommate with all my questions!

I realized in that experience that we often walk through life the same way. We’re born into the middle of the story and until we go back to the beginning we walk through life confused because we don’t understand who we are or why we do what we do. The beauty of it all is that God doesn’t want us to stay confused, He is a God of clarity and He wrote the beginning of the story for us!

God starts His journey with us in the book of Genesis, which tells us that:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth…God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” —Genesis 1:1, 31

Everything God created was “good.”

The first man and woman God created experienced “good” in everything! Adam & Eve experienced a full, unhindered relationship with one another and with God. They were significant with a divine purpose, they were safe and secure and all of their needs were met.

Can you image that? Can you imagine what it would be like to have a full, unhindered relationship with your friends and family? Can you imagine having a full, unhindered relationship with God?

We were created for just that! God made Adam and Eve because He wanted a family — a “good,” loving, fully open, unhindered relationship with them and their offspring. But because this kind of loving relationship cannot be forced, God had to give Adam and Eve a choice to love Him. So God gave them one command, and their obedience to this command would express their trust and committed love to God.

Take a look at this video that artistically describes what happened next.
VIDEO: FREE FALL

5. INFORM: DEFINING MOMENT — SALVATION (10 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Can you imagine God’s broken heart? The unhindered, loving relationship He had intended was suddenly broken when Adam and Eve chose to disobey. That moment was a turning point in our story.

If our story ended here, it would be a tragedy of the worst kind. But thankfully, this tragedy is only the beginning of a beautiful love story between God and His people. He did not abandon Adam and Eve when they disobeyed. Although he had to punish their disobedience, He immediately spoke hope into their lives by promising to send Jesus — who would conquer Satan’s lies with God’s truth and would restore mankind back into the loving, unhindered relationship that God intended.

SALVATION IN JESUS CHRIST IS THE FIRST MILESTONE AND DEFINING MOMENT ON OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY.

Your Journey Group Leaders have a bag filled with Rocks. Leaders please open up that bag and pass it around your group so that everyone has a rock. At the end of our six sessions we will have a gift for you that will act as a place to collect the items you receive during each session, so hold onto this rock!

In Luke 6:47-48 Jesus says: “I will show you what it’s like when someone COMES TO ME, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built.”

Salvation in Christ is the solid rock foundation from which we start our spiritual journey. Just like mankind’s disobedience was a choice, salvation is a choice we make.

John 3:16 says: “For God so LOVED the world that He GAVE his one and only son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

God gave His Son freely out of love for us. There is nothing we can do to earn that love and there is nothing we can do that will take God’s love away. But, to experience His salvation, we must choose to accept the gift of Jesus Christ and align our lives with His truth.

Accepting God’s gift and aligning your life with Jesus takes everything you are, but it’s not complicated. It’s as easy as the ABCs!

ACKNOWLEDGE your sins and your need for a Savior.

1 John 1:8-9 says: “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Confessing our sins:
- We openly acknowledge that we’ve rebelled against God.
- We do not deny any of our sins - actions, behaviors, attitudes that are offensive to God.
BELIEVE in Jesus Christ, asking Him to be your Lord.

Romans 10:9-10 says: “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

To believe in your heart implies an active trust and confidence that Jesus Christ, who died and rose again as the only Savior of the world, will bring salvation into your life. That active trust produces action in our lives.

When we declare with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, we are saying that:
- We submit all aspects of our lives to Jesus.
- We embrace all of Jesus’ teachings as God’s truth.
- We believe that Jesus is not one ‘god’ among many but rather He is our only God.

COMMIT all aspects of your life to Jesus.

Although salvation is a free gift from God that we cannot achieve by good deeds, it does require a wholehearted commitment to follow Christ. To make that commitment, we must first identify any parts of our lives that are not surrendered to Jesus, and repent.

Acts 3:19 says: “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

To repent isn’t the same as just having remorse that we did something wrong. Repentance is saying, “I’m sorry and I now choose, by God’s grace, to turn away from my sin and to walk in new ways that will honor God” Repentance is like taking a 180 degree turn in our lives. It’s leaving behind the old sin and walking in the new life we have in Christ.

REPENTANCE IS AN ONGOING PROCESS OF DAILY CHOOSING TO OBEY GOD’S WORD AND FOLLOW JESUS.

Some of you have already embraced salvation in Jesus through the ABCs. However, because of our fallen nature, sin may be holding you back from experiencing the close, unhindered relationship with God that He desires with us. We want to give you some time right now in your groups to reflect on your life and to talk through salvation and repentance. If you have questions about salvation or repentance, use this time to ask your Journey Leaders. You’ll have 15 minutes for conversation. Journey leaders, please make sure to pray with your groups before the discussion time ends.

6. INTERACT: PRAYER OF SALVATION & REPENTANCE (15 MINUTES)

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: When it comes to embracing Jesus as our Lord and Savior, each of us may be in a different place. Use the following questions to determine where each participant is in their story.
Discuss salvation and repentance as a group.
- What stood out to you about the ABCs of salvation?
- Where would you say you are when it comes to Acknowledge, Believe and Commit?
- Would you like to pray to receive Jesus as your Savior?
- Would you like to pray to repent of a sin that has been holding you back from a closer relationship with Jesus?

Pray with the groups.
- Invite those in your group to join you in a prayer of salvation and repentance. You can pray out loud and direct participants to pray silently in their heart.

If everyone in your group has already embraced salvation in Christ through the ABCs, consider adapting the questions to discuss:
- What role does repentance play in your spiritual growth?
- Give an example of the Lordship of Christ in your life.
- How might you use these ABC’s to share salvation in Christ with someone you know?

Make this a safe, confidential environment. Clarify that no one needs to share his or her sins with the group, but if someone chooses to, keep the tone free of judgment and full of grace. We are all equal at the foot of the cross.

Remember that although this is a wonderful time to minister to the people in your Journey Group, the “Interact” time is limited. You have a total of 15 minutes for discussion and prayer. You can always “push pause” on a conversation and pick it up once the session is over or in a follow up connection during the week.

7. WRAP UP (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: If you just made a significant step of faith, congratulations! We want to celebrate with you and help you continue to grow in your relationship with Jesus. In the coming sessions we will dig deeper into the ways you can begin to grow on your spiritual journey. For some of you, this conversation on salvation and repentance may have been difficult. Maybe you’re still not sure what to believe about Jesus or maybe you’ve been walking with God for a while but there is sin in your life that is keeping you disconnected. Regardless of which category you fall into, God has a work that He wants to do in your life!

I love the verse in Hebrews 12:2 that says Jesus is the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. God wants to author salvation in our lives and once He has initiated faith He will work in us to perfect that faith. That journey in each of our lives is our personal faith story with God. Wherever you are on the journey of faith, we want to take the next few weeks to help you write your story. Before we end this first session, take one minute to reflect on what you’ve heard. Use this time to write in your participant guide on page 12.

ONE MINUTE TAKE-AWAY

FACILITATOR: We’re going to give you a 10-minute break before we start the next session. During this break, we encourage you to write out your defining moment of salvation through Christ by answering the question, What brought you to Christ? on pages 14–15 of your participant guide.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIP

This session on salvation and repentance is the foundation for every milestone we will discuss together. Take some time to personally follow up with your group members. Focus on answering any questions they may have about salvation and repentance and invite those who do not yet have a relationship with Jesus to take that first defining moment milestone of their spiritual journey.
SESSION OBJECTIVES
Recognize the lies that Satan tells us to detour our spiritual journey and to practice exchanging those lies for the Truth of God.

Take a deeper look at personal faith stories, which show the condition of the soul, and reveal the individual next steps that will help each person reach their destination as a committed disciple of Jesus Christ.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIPS

Continue to build group connection. Continue to find common interests among participants so that they engage in natural conversations with one another.

Be prepared to lead the INTERACT sections. Review the Interact questions and try to reserve them for that section in session two.

Be prepared to GO FIRST: Share the lie that you’ve battled with your group members first, and invite them to use the Who I Am In Christ piece in their participant guide, on pages 19-21, to identify a Scripture that defeats your lie. Then, with no pressure, invite participants to share a lie that they have battled, by asking “Would anyone like to share an example of how you may have believed something about you that is probably not true?” and repeat the process.

Do not put anyone on the spot, and avoid going around the group and calling on someone. Sharing a lie with people they barely know is a very personal decision, so make sure this remains a confidential and affirming experience.

Be prepared to share your personal faith story: If you are leading with an Assistant Journey Group Leader, decide before the session who will share their story. Make sure that your personal faith story models the format we are asking journey participants to follow. Practice ahead of time so that your personal faith story is clear and concise and can be shared in 3-minutes.
Journey Leaders, take a few moments to write down your personal story and practice sharing it within the 3 minute timeframe we are asking participants to use. You will have an opportunity in this session to share your story as a model for participants.

What was your life like before you met Jesus?
What brought you to Jesus?

What has your life been like since coming to Jesus?
Session Two
Embracing New Identity

FACILITATOR: Welcome participants back from the break.

1. INFORM: SESSION OVERVIEW (2 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: In the last session, we went all the way back to the beginning of our spiritual journey. We saw how God created a good world and how humankind’s enemy, Satan, convinced Adam and Eve to walk away from their unhindered relationship with God. We also talked through God’s immediate plan for redeeming us and bringing us back into an unhindered relationship with Him through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Giving your heart to Jesus is a defining moment for your spiritual journey, but your journey does not end there. In this session, we want to talk about our identity in Christ and how to guard against the detours that Satan still throws into our spiritual journey!

2. INFORM: RECOGNIZING DETOURS (10 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: To start, it’s important to understand what influenced Adam and Eve and why they chose to disobey God. The serpent, or Satan, poisoned Adam and Eve with two deceiving lies.

Let’s take a look at Genesis 3:1-6, on page 17 of your participant guide, to see those lies.

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”
The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman, “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”

Satan attacked God’s nature and word. He attempted to cause confusion in order to make Adam and Eve doubt their understanding of God.

Satan attacked Eve’s identity and significance. By suggesting that God was withholding value and wisdom from her, Satan convinced Eve that she was not all that she could be and that she would be better off breaking free from God’s constraints to find true fulfillment on another path.

Do these lies sound familiar? The Bible calls Satan a murderer and the father of lies and states that humankind traded the truth of God for a lie (Romans 1:25). The result of that decision to disobey God is that we all now experience rejection, guilt, shame, weakness and helplessness.

Satan still uses these lies to detour us into temptation and away from an unhindered relationship with God. Our hearts and minds are the battlefield in this age-old conflict between Satan’s lies and God’s truth. Our growth as Christians is really the process of learning to trade the lies we believe for the truth of God’s Word. That process of growth begins when we accept Jesus Christ into our hearts but it doesn’t end there.

EMBRACING OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST IS A MILESTONE THAT WE DAILY RELY ON TO GUIDE OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY.

Your Journey Group Leaders have a bag filled with mirrors. Journey Leaders please pass that bag around your group so that everyone has a mirror. Sometimes it is very difficult to see clearly with the spiritual battle happening around us. Have you ever tried to look at yourself in a foggy mirror? Go ahead, breath on your mirror and let it get foggy. Can you see yourself clearly? The reality of our journey here on earth is that often our mirrors are foggy.

One of my favorite verses is 1 Corinthians 13:12 which says: “Now we see things imperfectly like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.”

When we end our journey and are face to face with Jesus Christ, we will see things perfectly. Until then, we can rest in the fact that God knows us completely and that His Word is the true reflection we can trust even when our mirror is foggy. We will talk more about God’s Word and why we can trust it in our next session!

You are not who you feel you are, or who you think you are, or who others say you are. You are who God says you are! The truest things about you are found in His Word. God’s truth is the road map that allows us to take steps on our spiritual journey. To reach our destination we have to learn to avoid Satan’s detours and follow God’s truth.
3. INTERACT: EXCHANGING THE LIE (20 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: I want everyone to take a moment and to think about something negative you tend to believe about yourself that ultimately you know isn’t true.

For me personally, I tend to believe that I am unworthy of being loved. Satan lies to me on a regular basis by pointing out all the reasons that no one should love me. But, when I read God’s Word I discover that God loves me deeply and passionately and that He created me in His own image. Another one of my favorite verses in Isaiah says that God has engraved our names on the palm of His hand. My worthiness has nothing to do with God’s love!

Once you have your lie in mind, I want you, as a group, to take some time helping each other exchange those lies for the truth of God. On pages 19–21 in your participant guide you will find a list of verses that are the things that God says are true about you. Group Leaders, go ahead and start the conversation.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: You go first! Share a lie that you battle with your group. Direct them to use the “Who I Am In Christ” insert on pages 19-21 of their participant guide to find a truth from God’s Word to defeat that lie.

With no pressure for participation, invite the members of your group to share a past or present lie they battle. Encourage other members of the group to find a truth from God’s Word to defeat that lie using the “Who I Am In Christ” pages in the participant guide.

4. INFORM: WRITING YOUR STORY (10 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Learning to embrace your new identity in Christ is an important part of your spiritual journey. During the break, we encouraged you to write out your defining moment of salvation in Jesus Christ. As we mentioned then, for some of you that was a great reminder and for others it may have been difficult. If you haven’t yet experienced that defining moment of salvation we want to encourage you to ask your leaders any questions you may have and to continue to explore what salvation means. Remember that God is both the author and perfector of faith. He wants to bring you new life and we are here to help you as you learn to trust Him.

As we continue on this Journey, we want to help you take that defining moment of salvation one step farther and write out your personal faith story. Your Personal Faith Story is simply answering three questions, which can be found on pages 22–23 of your participant guide.

☐ What was your life like before Jesus?
☐ What brought you to Jesus?
☐ What has your life been like since coming to Jesus?

As you can see, if you were able to write out your defining moment of salvation during the break, you have already begun to write your story. What’s left of your story is what we talked about in this session, embracing your identity in Christ.

The first question addresses your identity before embracing God’s truth. That identity could include a lot of different words like lost, hopeless, unworthy, lifeless, depressed. Those are all lies that Satan uses to detour us from God. The third question addresses your new identity in Jesus Christ. Remember, God’s Word is the truest word about you. Take a look at these examples of powerful faith stories that reflect these three questions.
VIDEO: FAITH STORIES

When you take the time to think about and write out how God has initiated faith in your life it allows you to see all the milestones along the way. Your stories also have the ability to introduce others to their own story with God.

Our stories are powerful. Research from the Stanford Graduate School found that stories are 22 times more memorable than facts alone. The reason stories are so powerful is that when we share stories with others we bring them on the journey with us. We give them the opportunity to experience the facts in the same way that we experienced them. When we take the time to share our stories, we can influence the faith of someone else and inspire them to action.

This exercise is important because it will allow you to strengthen your own faith and to share your story with others in a clear and concise way. Journey Leaders please take a few minutes to share your personal faith story with your group!

5. INTERACT: JOURNEY LEADER FAITH STORY (5 MINUTES)

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Use this time to share your personal faith story with your group. If you are leading with an Assistant Journey Group Leader, decide before the conversation who will share their story today. Make sure that your personal faith story models the format we are asking journey participants to follow. Practice ahead of time so that your story is clear and concise and can be shared in 3 minutes.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIP
Inform participants that they will get a chance to share their 3-minute story with their entire Journey Group during session five. Encourage them to begin writing it out during our breaks before then!

6. WRAP-UP (3 minutes)

FACILITATOR: Before we end this session, we want to give you one minute to reflect on what you’ve heard. Take this time to write in your participant guide on page 21.

ONE MINUTE TAKE-AWAY

FACILITATOR: We’re going to give you another 10-minute break before we start the next session. During this break, we encourage you to write out the rest of your faith story on pages 22–23 of your participant guide. Ok, see you back here in 10 minutes!
SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Serve the local community together as a journey group.
- Learn the importance of spiritual disciplines as milestones on the Journey.
- Understand the milestones of Baptism and Communion.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIPS

Encourage continued group connection: Continue to find common interests among participants so that they engage in natural conversations with one another.

Be prepared to lead the INTERACT sections. Review the Interact questions and try to reserve them for that section in session three. During the group service project be intentional about asking questions and building community in your group. Also, use the service project as an opportunity to pray together for the needs of our community.

Encourage Believer’s Baptism: For anyone who would like to be baptized following this conversation, know the upcoming baptism dates and times for your campus. Information for Baptism can be found online at www.gochristfellowship.com/baptism. If you can, try to organize your entire Journey Group to support a member’s baptism by being present for it and celebrating it together afterwards.

If participants have questions about baptism (i.e. does being baptized as an infant “count”?), inform them that we practice “believer’s baptism” at Christ Fellowship. Direct them to Colossians 2:12 to scripturally reinforce that baptism comes as an immediate next step after a personal faith-decision has been made. If participants were baptized prior to them making a commitment to Christ as their Savior and Lord (i.e. as an infant), we strongly encourage them to participate in full-immersion “believer’s baptism.”
Session Three
Going the Distance

FACILITATOR: Welcome participants back from their break.

1. INFORM: SESSION OVERVIEW (3 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: In our last session, we talked about how to recognize the detours Satan puts in front of us by exchanging his lies for the truth of God. We also talked about how our identity in Christ is an important part of our personal faith stories. During this session, we’d like to focus on spiritual practices that allow us to ‘go the distance’ on our journey. Those practices are called spiritual disciplines and are important milestones! Open your participant guide to page 25 and let’s get started!

2. INFORM: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES (8 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Your Journey Group Leaders have a bag filled with tennis shoe key chains. Leaders, please pass that bag around your group so that everyone has a tennis shoe. How many of you have ever trained on a team or individually for a sport? I remember team sports in school with daily drills…at the beginning of the season those drills were difficult, but as I gained strength they became easier. Those drills trained my muscles and my mind to play my absolute best when it counted most in the game. Spiritual disciplines are a lot like those athletic drills. They’re designed to build our spiritual muscles and to equip our minds to make intuitive, quick decisions when it matters most.

In 1 Timothy 4:7-8 it says: “Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives’ tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”
The spiritual disciplines we’re going to cover today are some important ways that you can train for godliness. Whenever you look at your tennis shoes, think about training to go the distance on your spiritual journey!

Training to go the distance on our journey is a life-long process that we intentionally CHOOSE to engage in. We continually grow when we choose to daily invest in our walk with Jesus. There are many spiritual practices that are helpful, but today we are going to focus on just a few that are foundational to growing your faith.

3. INFORM: READING GOD’S WORD (8 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: The first drill, or spiritual discipline, we want to talk about is to read God’s Word, the Bible, every day.

2 Timothy 3:16 says: “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”

GOD’S WORD IS IMPORTANT TO TRAIN US TO GO THE DISTANCE ON OUR JOURNEY.

The Bible is God’s story; it begins and ends with God. When we see ourselves as part of His bigger story we begin to truly live as we were created to live. It is His letter written to us and is timeless and true.

In John 17:17 it says: “Sanctify them through your truth; your Word is Truth.”

As we talked about in session two, we are constantly being told lies from the enemy. He uses conversations at work, billboards and advertisements, news, TV shows…to tell us lies like:

- You are just this one purchase away from finally being content
- Sexual morality is as quaint and obsolete as flannel graph boards and mimeograph machines
- Religion is optional and Jesus is merely one of the options

How many of you have heard some of those lies?

They pop in our lives every day, and no matter how ridiculous the lie, if it’s told often enough, convincingly enough, and by enough people, it begins to sound like the truth. If we are going to trade these lies for the truth, we must know what the truth is, and God’s Word is truth.

Romans 12:2 says: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

If we are not continually filling our minds with the Truth of God and allowing Him to transform us, we will conform to the lies that are being told to us every day. That’s WHY we practice the discipline of reading the Word, and it is a discipline. You have to be intentional about CHOOSING to read the Bible. When you do, it allows you to know God in a personal way and to experience more of His character and love.

Our hope and prayer for each of you through this journey is that you will get to know God in a deeper way. That’s why there is a resource section at the back of your participant guide that includes daily 15-minute devotionals. Those 15 minutes can deepen your relationship with God and help to train you into Christ-likeness.
There are also sample Bible reading plans in the back of your guide that you can use to help focus your mind and heart on the Bible every day. Other resources are available in our bookstore, on the YouVersion app or on our Christ Fellowship App. We encourage you to look over those resources, if you haven’t already, and choose to begin reading the Word every day.

4. INFORM: PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Another spiritual drill and milestone for Christian growth is Prayer. Prayer can be confusing sometimes and may even seem difficult to start practicing. Maybe the examples you’ve seen of prayer look a little like this video.

VIDEO: PRAYER IN CULTURE

FACILITATOR: How many of you can relate to that video? I know when I first started to pray I felt just as awkward as some of those people! Prayer isn’t a magic formula of words that we have to say; prayer is simply a conversation with God. I’ve heard it said that the Bible is God speaking to us, and prayer is how we speak to God. Both listening and speaking from the heart are necessary for close personal relationships. Prayer truly connects us to God.

In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus gave us The Lord’s Prayer as an example of how and why we should pray. You can find this scripture on page 26 of your guide. Let’s read it together now.

“Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”

Jesus’ example in the Lord’s Prayer shows us that we pray to:

- Focus our attention on God (our Father in heaven)
- Align our lives with His purpose (on earth as it is in heaven)
- Acknowledge our dependence on Him (give us today the food we need)
- Clear our hearts (forgive us our sins)
- Ask for help (rescue us from the evil one)

5. INFORM: BIBLICAL COMMUNITY (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: A third spiritual drill and milestone is connecting in biblical community. God created us as relational beings and His Word has a lot to say about how we interact with each other. One of my favorite passages on community is from Acts 2:42-47 when the first believers came together.

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals, and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshipped together at the temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity, all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.”
This passage in Acts shows how beautiful and dynamic Christian community can be! Community is contagious...each day more people were saved and added into their community. The life God calls us to is intensely relational!

WE CANNOT GROW SPIRITUALLY IF WE ARE NOT CONNECTED RELATIONALLY.

There are many other spiritual disciplines that can be helpful to train in godliness and you can find more information about those disciplines by taking a life study course. Right now, we’d like to give you an opportunity to experience Biblical community through serving together!

6. INTERACT: SERVICE PROJECT (20 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Serving together is a great way to build biblical community while making a lasting impact in our local communities. We will talk about serving more in depth in our next session because serving is an important milestone on our spiritual journey. Throughout God’s Word we find countless examples of people serving each other. Jesus served others constantly. He washed the disciples feet, fed the multitude, brought healing to the sick, encouraged the hopeless, and performed many miracles among the people. God’s Word tells us to serve one another in love.

Today, we’re going to be serving together by creating hygiene kits for the homeless in our community. On pages 27–28 of your participant guide, you’ll see a list of all the ministries that our project today will impact. As a group, we’re going to give you 20-minutes to gather the supplies listed in your participant guide and to put together these hygiene kits.

As you are putting together these kits, please take time as a group to pray for the people who will receive the kits. You will also find scripture cards that are blank on one side. We’d like to encourage each of you to write out a prayer on these cards and to put your prayer in the kit. Your words of encouragement and blessing will have a great impact on the person who receives your kit.

Leaders go ahead and get your group started with a game plan for putting together the hygiene kits today!

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Lead your group in assembling the hygiene kits. All the supplies will fit inside the quart size bags but you may have to get creative with the order in which you pack the bags. Keep in mind that some items may be taken out of boxes to provide extra space in the bags. While assembling the bags, facilitate conversation and pray together for the homeless in our region. Here are some questions you could use to get the conversation started:

☐ How have you served in the past?
☐ Do you know what your spiritual gifts are?
☐ What stood out to you from the devotionals this week?

7. INFORM: BAPTISM & COMMUNION (10 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Thank you for serving together and helping to create these hygiene kits.

☐ How was your experience serving together?
☐ Was it easy or difficult to make all the items fit inside the quart size bag?
☐ Was there any part of the experience that felt awkward or messy?

Those moments that you may have experienced are all a part of living in real community. As we experience life together, there are moments that feel a little messy. When we enter into the mess we experience the blessing of seeing how God can work through us to accomplish greater things than we ever imagined.
As we finish our session, we want to share with you two more milestones that we practice in community at Christ Fellowship: Baptism and Communion. Both of these milestones are important to us because Jesus himself first demonstrated them and commanded us to practice them to remember His sacrifice for us.

Baptism is a milestone that acts as a defining moment in our spiritual journey. When we are baptized, we are experiencing the tangible expression of Christ’s death and resurrection.

Matthew 3:13-17, on page 28 of your participant guide, shows us what baptism is and why it is so important.

“Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it saying, ‘I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,’ he said, ‘so why are you coming to me?’ But Jesus said, ‘It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.’ So John agreed to baptize Him. After His baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on Him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.’”

In the passage we see that Jesus Himself was baptized and that God was pleased by His baptism. For Christians, baptism is an immediate next step after giving our lives over to Jesus. It symbolizes the relationship we now have with Christ, that we are united with Him in His death and resurrection. That is why we practice believer’s baptism at Christ Fellowship. Some of you may have grown up in a tradition where you were baptized as an infant. When you were baptized as an infant, it was a demonstration of your parent’s beliefs and hopes for you. We encourage those of you who were baptized as an infant to consider being baptized now to reflect your personal decision of faith.

The word “baptism” comes from the Greek word baptizo that literally means to immerse. In addition, every example we see of baptism in the Bible is of immersion. That is why we practice full immersion baptism here at Christ Fellowship. Baptism into the water represents our old self being buried, and rising out of the water represents our new life in Christ.

If you responded to the ABCs of salvation and prayed to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then your next step is to get baptized and to celebrate your faith decision with our church family! If you have more questions about baptism, we encourage you to discuss them with your Journey Group Leader. If you would like to get baptized, simply complete our baptism request for online. We also offer baby dedications and children’s baptisms through our Children’s Ministries department.

Communion is a milestone that we practice monthly here at Christ Fellowship. It is a reminder of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and a way to bring us together in unity. Communion is often also called the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist.

Communion symbolizes the grace Jesus gave to us, and is a reminder of the grace we are to give one another. At Christ Fellowship we practice open communion, which means anyone who proclaims Jesus as their Lord and Savior is welcome to take the elements.
In 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 it says: “The Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

These verses show us that communion is an opportunity to remember the suffering and death of our Savior, which resulted in our forgiveness and brings us eternal life. We should take communion with humility and reverence for Jesus Christ. Believers are also instructed to examine their hearts for any sin that dishonors the sacrifice of Christ and to repent of those sins before participating in communion.

8. WRAP-UP (2 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Before we end this session, we want to give you one minute to reflect on what you’ve heard. Take this time to write in your participant guide on page 29.

ONE MINUTE TAKE-AWAY

FACILITATOR: We’re going to give you another 10-minute break before we start the next session.
SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Discover how embracing stewardship in our lives is a milestone on the journey towards becoming a committed disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Understand the meaning and significance of stewardship.
- Discover how stewardship of time, treasure, testimony and talents should honor God.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIPS

Continue to build group connection: Continue to find common interests among participants so that they engage in natural conversations with one another.

Be prepared to lead the INTERACT sections. Review the Interact questions and try to reserve them for that section in session four.

Be prepared to answer questions on the Tithe: Review the Session Four Tithing FAQs on the next page so that you are prepared to respond to questions. If you have time and are led by the Holy Spirit, feel free to also share about the spiritual growth you’ve experienced as you’ve been obedient to tithing.

Encourage Serving: In this conversation, participants will be invited to consider serving at Christ Fellowship. Be ready to share the blessings you’ve received as you have served. One way you can encourage participants to begin serving is by identifying specific gifts you have noticed, or experiences they have shared with you, that God may want to use to bless our church family.
Why does Christ Fellowship spend time talking about money? There are more verses in the Bible teaching about money or possessions than there are about prayer, fasting, serving or faith. Nearly half of all Jesus’ parables had to do with possessions, because He knew that our possessions have the power to possess us. God doesn’t want His people to live in bondage to debt or fear/worry regarding money. He has provided us a roadmap for financial freedom, which we will experience if we are willing to trust and obey His instructions.

Where do I give my tithe? In Leviticus 27:30-32 and Malachi 3:8-10, God gave instructions for the people of Israel to return the “tithe,” or a tenth of their income, to the Lord through the Levites at the temple storehouse. Today, we are to return our tithe to our own local church, which serves as the storehouse.

Is the tithe mentioned in the New Testament? Yes. Jesus talked about tithing in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42 where he affirmed that tithing, although a principle defined in the Law, should be practiced and is still applicable to God’s people today.

How much should I tithe? The word tithe means “one tenth.” Someone cannot tithe 3%, just as someone cannot tithe 15%, because a tithe is defined as 10%. Tithing is a minimum expression of scriptural giving. If you are giving 15% to your local church, you are tithing 10% and offering 5%. Offerings are gifts above the 10% tithe. The tithe’s purpose is to be a testimony of God’s ownership, and thus it’s meant to be individualized. Proverbs 3:9 states, “Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase.”

The tithe is a tenth of all the increase that God gives to us and is given to the church’s general fund, meaning it is not restricted or designated for any particular need. What does “increase” include? “Increase” is everything that increases the value of earthly possessions that God places into our trust, whether it is earned income (e.g. regular wages, bonuses, investment income, etc.) or unearned gifts. Calculate your tithe on your increase before taxes are paid to the government. God comes first. A tenth of everything that is “increase” to us belongs to God in the form of tithes. And remember, the tithe of our increase is not ours to “give” to God; it is God’s for us to return to Him.

What if a Journey participant wants to tithe, but has financial challenges? We want everyone who calls Christ Fellowship their church home to walk in the fullness of God’s blessings, and we believe that includes tithing. We understand that some people are just beginning their journey with Christ, or beginning their journey to tithe. The information they receive in session four may be new and they may not have tithed up to this point.

There is no condemnation in Christ and we are not to judge them; instead, we are to invite them to begin their journey to be obedient in the tithe through the various resources we offer: Reading a free copy of The Blessed Life, participating in Financial Peace University, or beginning the 3:10
**Challenge.** By taking these next steps, they can proactively work towards their goal to be obedient to God in returning the tithe.

**A Journey participant is having financial troubles. Do I still encourage tithing?** Yes. Tithing is an act of obedience to God and a tangible way one expresses his or her recognition of God as owner and provider. If we’re faithful to obey Him with our tithes and offerings, God has promised to rebuke the devourer for our sakes (Malachi 3:8-10). Only God is able to bless our finances, and He alone can give us provision and wisdom to help us overcome our financial difficulties.

We have seen God do amazing things when people start to tithe. God’s blessing isn’t restricted to what we can understand. When we obey Him in this area, we truly open the floodgates so that He can bless us in many ways. Remember, their tithe is based on their income, not their expenses.

**A Journey participant doesn’t have a job. Do I still encourage tithing?** They should tithe on any increase they receive, even if it’s a gift or an unemployment check. That is income, and God will bless your obedience. If you have no income at all, you have no increase and do not need to tithe.

**A Journey participant doesn’t have enough money to pay their bills. How should I direct them?** The first thing they need to do is evaluate their spending and create a budget. To do so, direct them to participate in our church’s next offering of Financial Peace University.

If they need assistance between now and their attendance of a course, direct them to contact the stewardship team at stewardship@cftoday.org, to get them connected with a trained volunteer financial coach.

**A Journey participant has additional questions that I don’t know how to answer.**

Stewardship questions can be directed to Betsy Lonsberry at betsy1@cftoday.org or you may direct participants to indicate that they have further spiritual questions on their Journey Evaluation, and someone will follow-up with them to discuss these questions.

**Do you teach on money because Christ Fellowship needs money?** No. God has blessed Christ Fellowship with increased giving in the past few years, and we have remained careful with expenses. For many years we have budgeted an annual 10% or more savings margin to allow us to step out when God brings opportunities to expand our impact regionally and globally.

You can review our annual revenues and expenses by visiting: gochristfellowship.com/giving/2013-annual-report.

If you have additional questions, a member of our Finance Department is more than willing to sit down and discuss your questions. Please contact Gary Wilbur at 561-776-3303 for more information.
Session Four
Stewarding the Journey

FACILITATOR: Welcome participants back from their break.

1. INFORM: STEWARDSHIP (10 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: In this session we are going to talk about another important milestone on our spiritual journey … stewardship.

☐ How many of you have heard the word stewardship before?
☐ How many of you actually know what stewardship means?

It took me awhile to understand, but the word steward can simply be defined as a manager.

In Luke 12:42-46 Jesus says: “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.”

The original Greek word used in this passage is Oikonomos, which can be translated to both steward and manager. In Christ’s day, every household of distinction in Israel would have had a steward, or manager, in charge. As described above, it was important for these stewards to be faithful to the owner and to be wise in managing the resources of the house. In the same way, God (the owner) has entrusted us (the stewards) to manage the resources of time, treasure, testimony and talents that He has given us.
Your Journey Group Leaders have a bag filled with silver coins. Leaders please pass that bag around to your group so that everyone has a coin. Jesus often taught lessons through parables, stories that related His teaching to modern examples the people would understand. In Matthew 25, Jesus taught about stewardship through the parable of talents.

I did a little research on talents to find out just what they would have been in Jesus’ day. The talent was a unit of weight, about 80 pounds. When it was used as money the talent was equivalent to 80 pounds of silver. We couldn’t get 80 pound silver coins for all of you, so you’ll just have to imagine that weight in your hands.

One talent was worth about the same as 6,000 denarii and 1 denarius was the usual wage paid for a full day of work. It’s hard to imagine, but one talent would easily have been someone’s entire life worth of wages.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus tells of a master who was leaving his home to travel and before going, the master entrusted his property to his servants. One received 5 talents, another received 3 talents and another received 1 talent, divided in proportion to their abilities. When the master returned he asked for an account of how each servant had managed his money. Two of the servants had invested the money and doubled the amount. The third servant dug a hole in the ground and buried the talent he had been given. The first two servants were praised for their stewardship and the third had his talent taken from him and given to one of the others.

What I love about this parable is that the talents were given according to the ability of the servant. The ability to invest the talent and to steward the resources well was there, but each servant had to choose to do the work of investing. Jesus used the example of money so that each person listening could relate to His words, but the parable of the talent isn’t just about money, it’s about the abundance of resources that God has entrusted to us; resources of time, treasure, testimonies and talents. Each of us has been given these ‘talents’ from God. Stewardship comes down to what we choose to do with what He has given us.

Let’s look at the key principles that define stewardship.

**Stewardship Key Principles**

1. **God’s Ownership**
   What I think I own is really on loan. God created everything, and it belongs to Him — not me.

   Psalm 24:1 says: “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.”

2. **My Management**
   He’s the master; I’m the manager. Since God owns everything my role is simply to manage the resources of time, treasure, testimony and talents that He has graciously entrusted to me.

3. **Trust**
   The way that I manage or steward these resources really comes down to trust. Do I trust God enough to do with His resources what His Word says to do? Do I trust Him enough to believe that I’ll be okay, that He will take care of my needs? When we learn to trust God with all of our lives, stewardship becomes an invitation to intimacy with God.

   Philippians 4:19 says: “And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.”

4. **Eternal Impact**
   When I do trust God and begin to manage His resources according to His instructions, my stewardship has eternal impact. Stewardship is an investment. Every day, I intentionally choose whether or not I will invest in things that matter to God.
2. **INFORM: STEWARDING YOUR TIME (7 MINUTES)**

**FACILITATOR:** The first resource we want to talk about today is the resource of our time.

*In Psalm 90:10-12 it says:* “Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures... Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

We all have the same 24 hours in each day and how we manage those 24 hours is very important. On Page 32 in your participant guide you’ll find an activity to assess how you typically spend your time. Take just one minute to write down what you think your typical 24 hours looks like!

**TAKE ONE MINUTE FOR TIME ACTIVITY**

**FACILITATOR:** As you completed this activity, you may have noticed that certain priorities need to be adjusted so that you can become a better steward of your resource of time. Our lifestyles tend to be so busy that our priorities often get mixed up and we find ourselves exhausted and still somehow not accomplishing what is most important to us. Here are a few sobering statistics on average Americans and how our time is spent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW AVERAGE AMERICANS SPEND THEIR TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ The average American adult spends 11 hours per day with electronic media. On average, just over 5 hours of that time is spent watching TV, over 2 hours is spent listening to the radio, and over an hour is spent on their smartphones. The remaining time is split between video games, DVDs and other multimedia devices. (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The average American over the age of 15 spends less than 32 minutes a day involved in civic or religious activities. Twice as much time as that is daily spent on shopping throughout America. (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The average work commute takes 25.5 minutes one way. That adds up to about 4 hours and 25 minutes per week — More time than most of us spend on vacation in a year. (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ A study from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that only 25.4% of Americans volunteered in 2013. The bureau stated that the rate declined by 1.1% from 2012 and is the lowest it has been since they began their studies in 2002. (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Christians, our time needs to reflect our priorities and our character. We want to encourage you to take time this week to evaluate your schedule and to identify any changes you need to make to become a better steward of God’s gift of time. Learning to make time for your relationship with Him is a major milestone on your spiritual journey.

3. **INFORM: STEWARDING YOUR TREASURE (10 MINUTES)**

**FACILITATOR:** Just as our calendars reflect our priorities and character, what we do with our bank account, our treasure, can give us a good picture of our stewardship. Talking about how to manage money can be a touchy subject, but it’s important to cover this topic because our attitude towards our money and possessions directly impacts our relationships.
Matthew 6:21 says: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Our treasure directly impacts the condition of our heart, so we have to be intentional about not allowing our possessions to possess us.

When our possessions become a higher priority than God they become a detour on our spiritual journey. God doesn’t need our money or possessions, but He does want our hearts.

Did you know that the Bible has more to say about money than any other topic? There are about 500 verses on prayer, about 500 verses on faith and about 2,350 verses on money and possessions. If God talks about our treasure that much, it must be important!

Let’s take a look at this video from Pastors Todd Mullins and Shaun Blakeney that will walk through a few of the principles that God has for us as we learn to steward the treasure He has given us.

VIDEO: TITHING

FACILITATOR: Learning to steward our treasure according to God’s Word can be a journey in and of itself. If this is an area that is new to you or that you feel you need to learn more about, we want to encourage you to take a next step. Information on other resources, such as Financial Peace University, The Blessed Life, and the Malachi 3:10 challenge, can be found in your Participant Guide on pages 33–34. Now we want to give you some time as a group to jump into what God’s Word has to say about stewarding our treasure. Leaders, take about 10-minutes to study 1 Timothy 6:17-19 with your groups.

4. INTERACT: STUDY OF 1 TIMOTHY 6:17–19 (10 MINUTES)

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Read 1 Timothy 6:17–19 out loud in your group, and then lead discussion with the questions following.

“Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.”

How does this passage reinforce each of the following statements?

☐ It’s not about your finances; it’s about your faith.
☐ It’s not about the tithe; it’s about your trust.
☐ It’s not about what God wants from you; it’s about what God wants for you.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIP

To answer common questions related to tithing, please refer to the Session Four Tithing FAQs on pages 44-45 on this guide. If participants have additional questions that you are not sure how to answer, please help them begin a conversation about these questions with your Discipleship Pastor.
What’s your next step of response based on what you learned today? Does anyone have questions about tithes and offerings?

5. INFORM: STEWARDING YOUR TESTIMONY (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: We’ve encouraged you to begin writing out your personal faith story during your breaks today. That story is often referred to as your testimony. Stewarding our testimonies is important to strengthen our own faith, and also because our testimonies can be used by God as milestones for another persons spiritual journey.

In 1 Peter 3:15-16 it says: “You must worship Christ as Lord of your life, and if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscious clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.”

STEWARDING OUR TESTIMONY INCLUDES TWO VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENTS: WORDS AND ACTIONS.

The words from 1 Peter tell us to be ready to explain our hope and to live a good life. To steward our testimony we need to commit to doing what is right even when it’s difficult or unpopular. When others see us living a good life it opens up the door to share with them the words that describe our hope in Jesus Christ.

That’s why we’ve encouraged you to write out your story making it clear and concise so that you can share it whenever the opportunity comes. Your shared story could be the milestone that God uses to start a brand new story in someone else’s life.

6. INFORM: STEWARDING YOUR TALENTS (7 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: The last resource we want to talk about today is your talents! When God created you, He made you a one of a kind Masterpiece! Every one of us has different passions, different skills and different life experiences that shape us into unique and important individuals! God gave you those passions, skills and experiences so that you could accomplish something beautiful for Him. Who you are, the way you are wired, is not an accident…you were created on Purpose and for a Purpose.

1 Peter 4:10 says: “God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God’s many kinds of blessings.”

How you steward the gifts that God has given you directly results in others experiencing God’s many kinds of blessings. When you really begin to use the gifts He has given you, you will also experience the joy of knowing that you are walking with Him on your journey. We are blessed by God in order to be a blessing to others.

Journey Leaders, take just a few moments to share with your groups how you have personally been blessed by serving at Christ Fellowship.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: (3 MINUTES) Take a few minutes to share one way you have been blessed by serving with the Christ Fellowship family.
7. WRAP-UP (8 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: As we end this session, we want to encourage you to check out the serving opportunities available to you! On page 37 of your participant guide you will find step-by-step instructions for how to access Christ Fellowship’s online Serve Finder. The Serve Finder is a tool that allows you to see all the serving opportunities available at your campus. When you use the Serve Finder you can see a full description of each serving role. Along with each role you will find spiritual gifts listed that will help you determine the best fit for how God has wired you! When you see a role that you would like to serve in, simply fill out the online request and you will be connected to that ministry leader.

Let’s walk through the process together now.

Take two to three minutes to walk through the Serve Finder steps, which are included in The Journey visual presentation.

Stewardship is the pathway that allows us to experience the adventure of generosity that God has waiting for us. We truly believe that when you learn to steward the resources God has given you, your life will be blessed beyond anything you can ask or imagine right now. To help you start walking this adventure with God we have a special gift for you today…take a look at this video from pastor Todd Mullins.

VIDEO: THE BLESSED LIFE

Now, we want to give you one-minute to reflect on what you’ve heard in this session. Take this time to write in your participant guide on page 37.

ONE MINUTE TAKE-AWAY

FACILITATOR: Lunch is ready now, so we’re going to take a 15-minute break. After you’ve grabbed your lunch and stretched, please return to your groups! We’re going to give you some instructions for conversation during your lunch! Ok, we’ll get started again in 15-minutes.

HOW AVERAGE AMERICANS SPEND THEIR TIME LINKS

1. http://mashable.com/2014/03/05/american-digital-media-hours/
SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Provide an opportunity for participants to share their stories and celebrate God’s work in their lives.
- Understand the heart behind membership and why the membership covenant is a milestone on the journey with Christ.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIPS

Encourage Continued Group Connection: Continue to find common interests among participants so that they engage in natural conversations with one another.

Be prepared to lead the INTERACT sections. While sharing stories, emphasize the importance of participants sticking to the 3-minute guideline so that everyone will have a chance to share. Feel free to use tools such as a stopwatch or an hourglass to help your entire group keep track of time while sharing stories.
Session Five
Living in Family

FACILITATOR: Welcome participants back from their break.

1. WELCOME: OVERVIEW & PRAYER (8 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Start this session’s conversation by having both facilitators model sharing their 3-minute story with the participants. Then turn the conversation over to Journey Group Leaders!

2. INTERACT: SHARE YOUR STORY (25 MINUTES)

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Introduce discussion by having participants open to pages 22–23 of the participant guide. Review the questions together and ask who would like to share first.

Take two to three minutes per person to share your faith story:

☐ What was your life like before Jesus?
☐ What brought you into a relationship with Jesus?
☐ How has your life been different since starting a relationship with Jesus?

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIP
If someone in your group has not begun a relationship with Jesus yet, that’s okay — we don’t want to pressure them. Feel free to adapt the questions to apply to their current journey. Remember to stay sensitive to the time! To help your entire group keep track of time, let participants know that you will use an hourglass or a timer on your phone.
FACILITATOR: Sharing our stories is unbelievably powerful! When we take the time to share our stories, we realize that we are not alone in our struggles and we encourage each other by sharing the ways that God has come through for us. We want to encourage you to keep looking for opportunities to share your story with others.

On Pages 41–43 in your participant guide you will find an activity that will help you think through the people who might be most impacted by your personal faith story. We want to encourage you this week to fill out these pages and to begin asking God for opportunities to share your story with others.

3. INFORM: THE HEART OF MEMBERSHIP
(10 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Your Journey Group Leaders have a bag filled with keys. Leaders, please pass that bag around your group so that everyone can pick out a key. These keys are called Kingdom Keys on the site we found them. Kingdom Keys is a very fitting name! Keys like these were used at one time to open the doors of homes. When you had the key, you knew that your home was waiting for you and that you were always welcome. The key symbolized a place where you belonged.

In Ephesians 2:19 it says: “You’re no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You’re no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone.” (MSG)

You belong here, welcome home! You’re part of the family of God and part of the family here at Christ Fellowship. You have Kingdom Keys! Embracing that community in membership is a milestone on your spiritual journey. In this session, we’re going to take a look at what membership in the local church means. Watch this video from Pastors Todd & Julie that shares the heart behind membership at Christ Fellowship.

VIDEO: PASTORS TODD & JULIE

4. INFORM: MEMBERSHIP DEFINED (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: As you heard from Todd and Julie, the heart of membership is family. In every family, there are roles that create healthy rhythms. For the next few minutes we’re going to walk through what those healthy rhythms look like here at Christ Fellowship. You can follow along on page 40 of your participant guide.

One of the first ways you see membership lived out at Christ Fellowship is through the rhythm of gathering, growing and going.

☐ We gather together weekly at our weekend services for inspiring times of worship and learning from God’s word.
☐ We grow through weekly connecting, learning and serving together.
☐ We go daily to take Jesus’ love and message to everyone, everyday, everywhere.
The second way we live out membership is in our commitment to live in such a way that our lives “STICK.” Here’s what we mean by Stick:

☐ Spiritual Practices. Be engaged in practices that foster spiritual growth, such as spending time each day with God by reading the Bible and praying.

☐ Teaming Up. Team up with others in ministry through stewardship of your time, treasure, testimony and talent, including returning the first 10% of income to the Lord through the tithe.

☐ Impacting Our World. Live to impact our world through constantly praying for people in your life to know God and sharing your testimony with others.

☐ Connecting in Community. Be connected with others in community, such as growing with others in a group or team each semester where you will give and receive honest, loving feedback.

☐ Knowing Your Identity. Be secure in knowing who you are in Christ, discovering your purpose in life and using you God given talents to serve others.

Finally, our third way of living out membership here at Christ Fellowship is to know and live by our Statement of Faith and Core Values, which we will talk more about in session six.

5. INFORM: CF’S COMMITMENT TO MEMBERS (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Do you remember the family dinner example that Todd and Julie gave in their video?

Membership is a lot like sitting at a family dinner table. Each member of the family is committed to certain responsibilities. We’ve already talked through your responsibilities as a member, so now we want to share what Christ Fellowship’s commitment is to you!

These are the things that you can expect from Christ Fellowship:

☐ We will provide inspirational worship and biblical teaching for every generation each week
☐ We will create enriching experiences that will equip you to take additional steps in your walk with Christ by:
  ■ Helping you to identify and fulfill the special purpose God has for you
  ■ Regularly communicating what is happening in the Body of Christ and offering opportunities for you to be a part of it through serving
  ■ Organizing opportunities for you to participate in local and global missions

☐ We will care for the needs of our church family by:
  ■ Giving pastoral care for weddings and funerals
  ■ Offering child dedications
  ■ Ministering in times of crisis
  ■ Lovingly praying over every prayer request and ongoing need

☐ We will offer the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion regularly
☐ We will faithfully steward our resources by:
  ■ Caring for those who are poor, disabled, lonely and hurting by partnering only with trustworthy, proven ministries and organizations
  ■ Carefully budgeting and investing finances under the leading of the Holy Spirit and godly counsel
Explaining how our church leadership is stewarding its resources and the impact that is being made globally through our collective giving

- We will represent you well to the community and continue to build upon the reputation of being a place the community comes to for help
- We will love on you, your whole family, and the guests that you bring

As we commit to each other in covenant membership, we can truly experience the dynamic community that God calls us to. It is in this kind of community that we truly know each other, care for each other’s needs and spur each other on towards godliness. We’re going to give you about 10-minutes as a group now to talk about the privileges and responsibilities of membership at Christ Fellowship and to ask any questions you may have about membership. Leaders go ahead and start the conversation.

6. INTERACT: WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS (10 MINUTES)

**JOURNEY GROUP LEADERS**: Lead your table in a discussion about membership at Christ Fellowship. You can begin the conversation by using questions like the ones below:

- What does membership mean to you?
- What help would you need to live out this membership commitment?
- Do you have any questions about membership at Christ Fellowship?

7. WRAP-UP (2 minutes)

**FACILITATOR**: Before we end this session, we want to give you one minute to reflect on what you’ve heard. Take this time to write in your participant guide on page 41.

**ONE MINUTE TAKE-AWAY**

**FACILITATOR**: We’re going to give you another 10-minute break before we wrap up our class today with session six.
SESSION OBJECTIVES
■ Review the Core Beliefs and Core Values of Christ Fellowship.
■ Provide an opportunity for participants to make Christ Fellowship their home church by becoming a covenant member.
■ Take a next step for spiritual growth out of The Journey.

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER TIPS

Encourage Continued Group Connection: Over the past five sessions, God has built a relational and spiritual support system for participants through your Journey Group. Celebrate the rich relationships that have been built, and encourage members to continue meeting together after The Journey concludes by developing/joining a Life Group or serving together.

Be prepared to lead the INTERACT sections. Review the Interact questions and try to reserve them for that section in conversation six.

Strongly Encourage Next Steps: We want every person at Christ Fellowship to be actively growing in their faith. As you celebrate the conclusion of The Journey, make sure each member of your group is leaving this final session with a committed next step.
Session Six
Celebrating Membership

FACILITATOR: Welcome participants back from their break.

1. INFORM: SESSION OVERVIEW (2 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: In the last session, we talked about why membership is important and what membership at Christ Fellowship looks like. Now we want to spend some time taking a closer look at our core beliefs and core values, which act as important milestones for our journey.

2. INFORM: Core Beliefs (10 minutes)

FACILITATOR: Theology is man’s study of God. It’s important to look at theology to understand the foundation of our faith, however, because it is man’s study of God, church history is full of questions and conflicts in theology. When the early Church realized the conflicts that were surrounding our faith, they came together to determine the baseline beliefs that all Christ followers must agree on. Those beliefs were written in the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed which we will read together later in this session. Those early creeds are still the foundation we use to determine our core beliefs here at Christ Fellowship.

Those Core beliefs are the foundation of our faith. They directly impact the way that we view ourselves, how we interact with others, how we relate to God, and how we live our lives. Take a look at this video, which creatively shares what we believe.

VIDEO — WE BELIEVE
I love how this video ends... We believe that what we believe matters. That’s why our Core Beliefs are listed in your participant guide on pages 45-46, along with scripture references that clearly show the foundation of each belief. We encourage you to take time this week to read through each of our beliefs and to study what the Word of God has to say about those beliefs. If you have any specific questions about our Core Beliefs you can connect with your Journey Group Leader or Discipleship Pastor.

3. INFORM: SPINE VS. RIB ANALOGY (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: If you’ve been involved in church for any period of time, you’ve probably noticed that there are many other theological topics that we haven’t talked about today. Those other topics are important but they are not essential to our salvation and faith.

The best way to explain the difference between the essentials and the non-essentials is to look at the human body, and the difference between our spinal cord and our rib cage. The spinal cord is the primary structure of the body that supports everything else. When our spinal cord is not functioning properly, our entire body suffers. We consider our Core Beliefs to be the “spine” issues that act as the foundation for our faith. These beliefs will not change and we will stand in unity on them.

The human rib cage plays an important role in protecting our vital organs, however, our body can function with injuries or missing ribs. Many topics discussed in the church are “rib” issues. These are significant issues that are important to discuss but are not essential to the foundation of our faith. When these issues come up, our best response is to study God’s Word, ask the Holy Spirit to guide our views, and to extend grace to each other. In this way we choose to major on the majors and maintain unity as a church.

We agree with St. Augustine that in all matters of theology we show charity or love to each other. We’re going to give you some time around your tables now to take a closer look at the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed found on page 47 of your participant guide. Leaders, take about 15 minutes to read these creeds as a group and to discuss the questions that go along with them.

4. INTERACT: WHAT WE BELIEVE (10 MINUTES)

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Read both the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed together as a group. Then take a few minutes to discuss the following questions:

☐ What key points are listed in both the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed?
☐ How do those key points relate to the Core Beliefs we hold here at Christ Fellowship?

Apostles’ Creed
(Circa 200 AD)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.
Do you have any specific questions about our Core Beliefs?

**JOURNEY GROUP LEADER** **TIPS**

As you read through the Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed, you may notice the phrase, ‘we believe in the catholic church.’ The word catholic in these creeds actually means ‘universal’ and refers to the church as a whole.

5. **INFORM: THE CORE VALUES (5 MINUTES)**

**FACILITATOR:** Now that you’re familiar with our core beliefs, we want to share with your our core values. The core values give us a framework for how to live out our core beliefs in community. They are deeply held convictions and priorities that influence how we do what we do.

**CORE VALUES**

**ALL FOR ONE**

Unity centered on Jesus and our core beliefs.

**INSIDE OUT**

Living a life marked by prayer and integrity.

**GROW TO GO**

Remaining teachable to become usable.

**LIVE TO GIVE**

Stewarding our lives for eternity.

**PASSION FOR PEOPLE**

Impacting humanity with the love of God.
6. INTERACT: MEMBERSHIP COVENANTS (5 MINUTES)

**FACILITATOR:** We’d like to invite you during this time to read through and sign the membership covenant on pages 49–50 of your participant guide. We’re going to give you just a few minutes in your groups to discuss the covenants and then sign and return them to your Journey Group Leaders.

**JOURNEY GROUP LEADER:** Use this time to read through the membership covenant as a group. After you have read through the entire covenant, invite participants to sign and date them to become official Christ Fellowship members. When all the covenants have been signed for your group, bring them to The Journey Facilitators. If participants are not ready to make a commitment of membership to Christ Fellowship, that’s okay! There is no pressure. We understand that everyone is at a different place on his or her spiritual journey, and we are always here to walk beside each person.

7. INFORM: RESOURCE STATIONS (8 MINUTES)

**FACILITATOR:** Congratulations and welcome home to all of our new members! We’re going to walk you through a very important tool as a new member at Christ Fellowship, our Arena database!

As part of the family, we want to make sure that you are known and that you have access to all of the amazing resources available here at Christ Fellowship. When you create an account on Arena, you can update your personal information, register for classes and give online. Arena also allows us to keep track of individual prayer requests or information requests you may have. In your participant guide, you can find step-by-step instructions for how to set up your Arena account on page 52. Let’s walk through the process together now.

Take two to three minutes to walk through the Arena steps, which are included in The Journey visual presentation.

Another important tool for our Discipleship team is The Journey evaluation. We’re going to give you a few minutes right now to fill out the evaluation and let us know the good, the bad and the ugly about your experience! We personally read each evaluation and are always looking for ways to improve The Journey experience. The evaluation can be found on pages 53–54 in your participant guide and is front and back, so please be sure to fill out both sides. When you’ve finished filling out your evaluations please give them to your Journey Group Leader.

Take three to five minutes to fill out evaluations.

Before we end our time together today, we want to celebrate our journey together with a group picture! We need everyone to gather around our photo booth area! As soon as the picture is done we will pass out your membership certificates! After we finish today we will have the photo booth station and other resources available for you to take photos with your fellow group participants and leaders as well as to update your arena profile and to help you take your next step at Christ Fellowship! All right, come on up for the photo!
8. WRAP-UP (5 MINUTES)

FACILITATOR: Congratulations again to all of our new members! We’ve enjoyed getting to know each of you today! Before we end our time together, we want to give you one-minute to reflect on your experience with The Journey. Take this time to write in your participant guide on page 52. After our 1-minute take away, we’ll reconnect to give you some final instructions.

ONE MINUTE TAKE-AWAY

FACILITATOR: We’re so glad you made the choice to join us in The Journey today. We truly believe that God has an amazing adventure lined up for each of you as you continue to grow in faith. Before you leave today, we want to encourage you to commit to a next step of discipleship and to share your commitment with your Journey Group Leader. Use pages 56–57 to write your commitment to next steps on your journey with God! You can turn one of those pages into your Journey Group Leader so that they can help you to take your next step. We’re going to pray to close out our time together and then we hope that you’ll take advantage of the photo booth and information stations we have available for you before you leave today.

PRAY TO CLOSE OUT THE JOURNEY

JOURNEY GROUP LEADER: Please exchange your groups signed covenants for their membership certificates during the one-minute take away. Celebrate this important milestone as you pass them out!

Direct to Resource Stations: After the facilitators close out The Journey, direct participants to the different stations set up around the room. Have fun with the photo booth and let your group know that any pictures taken can be found the next week on your campus’ Journey Facebook page.

Encourage Next Steps: Directing each participant to a next step is a major goal of completing The Journey. After engaging in the photo booth, direct participants to the next step station where they can ask questions about specific next steps they would like to take.

Follow up with participants this week to see how they are doing on connecting into a next step. Use this follow-up as an opportunity to also answer any questions from participants who did not take the next step of signing our membership covenant. Your personal follow-up and care could help bring the spiritual break-through needed for a participant to thrive in their relationship with God and connect into our spiritual family.

Encourage Daily Devotionals: Let participants know that reading the Bible on their own everyday is the #1 catalyst for spiritual growth. Remind participants of the daily devotionals that can be found in their participant guide. Encourage them to use the devotionals or another Bible reading plan as they conclude The Journey.