

Leader Guide

BASICS

Developing Habits that Change Your Life



 CHRISTIAN CHURCH
IN THE WILDWOOD

NEXT STEP

DISCIPLESHIP

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OVERVIEW

Basics is a twelve-week series designed to help new Christ-followers begin developing some of the practical skills that they'll need as they grow to be more like Jesus. Basics focuses on three essential areas in the life of a Christ-follower:

- Growing like Jesus (spiritual growth)
- Growing by Design (church and service)
- Growing in Purpose (discipleship and missions)

Each of the twelve sessions is loaded with meaningful teaching, thought-provoking conversation and practical assignments that will help individuals to begin growing in these key areas.

FACILITATING A BASICS GROUP

A critical role in every Basics Study is that of the facilitator. A Basics facilitator is someone who has:

- Been equipped to be a Coach in the Discipleship Ministries
- Been trained on the use and facilitation of the Basics Study content
- A deep understanding of the Next Steps and how to disciple others through them

If you're reading this, chances are that you're acting as the facilitator or co-facilitator for a Basics Study. If that's the case, here are the key things that you'll need to do over the course of this study:

- 1. Know the Material:** The material in Basics is simple and straightforward. As a facilitator, you should be prepared by knowing the material, setting the pace, and modeling the content.
- 2. Guide from the Side:** Basics is designed for self-discovery. As the facilitator, you should keep the group focused in their conversations while still allowing them the flexibility to discover spiritual truths for themselves. Act as a guide rather than a guru.
- 3. Recognize the Next Step:** As participants complete the Basics series, you'll discover that they land at a variety of discipleship steps. As a facilitator, you should know each of the individual's Next Steps and be encouraging them to take it.
- 4. Provide Healthy Accountability:** We believe that every session of Basics is essential and that the way we make the information practical is by completing the Challenges found in each session. As a Facilitator, you will need to provide some healthy accountability by (1) connecting with those who missed a session and (2) reinforcing the importance of completing the Challenges.
- 5. Follow Up:** One of the most important by-products of going through the Basics series should be that participants get connected to a disciple-maker. Disconnected Christ-followers struggle to sustain growth and often slip through the cracks. As the facilitator, you need to follow up with those who participated in your group (see pg.53).

SESSION BREAKDOWN

The Basics series is made up of a variety of resources. As the facilitator for the group, you should be familiar with each of them:

Basics Teaching Video: Each session includes one or more videos. Find those videos online:

- www.ccwildwood.com (Grow/Discipleship Resources)
- Rightnow Media (if you aren't connected to these resource yet, call the CCW Office)

Leader Guide: The Leader Guide gives you the full discussion and challenge content for each session.

Basics Handbook: Every participant in the study should have a Basics Handbook. The handbook contains weekly devotional material and the challenges that are needed to complete each session.

The twelve sessions of Basics are easy to navigate once you understand these key terms:

A Note to the Leader: Here you'll find an overview of this weeks session. It includes:

- Focus points for this discussion that will help you keep the conversation on track
- Reminders of what to do in preparation for the session
- A list of desired outcomes from participating in this session

Introduction (15 Minutes): The Introduction includes some an ice breaker question to get the conversation started and one or more review questions designed to reinforce the previous week's focus area.

Transition (1 Minute): The Transition is a simple statement that you can see to help transition the group from talk about the previous session to a focus on the current session.

Teaching Video: Here you'll find some bulletpoints that will outline the major ideas that you will find in each of the teaching videos.

Interact: Each interact section includes discussion questions and activities designed to reinforce the major ideas and outcomes in this session. This is where you will spend the majority of your time each week.

Challenge: The Challenge introduces the group to the take-away activity that will help to make the content from this session practical. In each Challenge section, you will find:

- A transition script that connects the challenge to the study content
- Several principles to highlight for your group of as they begin to complete this challenge

Pray Together: In this section, you will find some key things to pray for as you close out the Basics section.

GROWING ON PURPOSE

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

This week is all about the basics of spiritual transformation. From God's Word we understand that every Christ-follower is in the process of being transformed. That transformation is primarily the result of two things: (1) the Holy Spirit in our lives (John 14:26; Philippians 2:13) and (2) the forward momentum that we take through actively pursuing a relationship with God (2 Peter 1:5 - 8). While we have no control over the Spirit's part, we can take action to place ourselves in the transformative path of the Spirit through our habits (or spiritual disciplines).

Your conversation today should focus on two things:

- 1. Get to know those in your Basics group.** This may be their first exposure to relational discipleship and groups, so make sure to start and end with the importance of building healthy relationships.
- 2. Focus on the attitude with which we approach spiritual transformation.** The disciplines that we'll be talking about in the next few weeks are only impact-filled when we practice them in humility and with submissiveness to the work of the Spirit in our lives. The disciplines are not the end-goal; they are simply our part in the process of transformation. So instead of talking about the disciplines themselves (which you'll have plenty of time to do in the next several weeks), try to keep the conversation focused on HOW we should practice the disciplines and the RESULT of practicing the disciplines.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Understand the necessity of developing a spiritual rhythm with God.
- Discover the posture and attitudes that we should take as we play our part in growing to be like Jesus.
- Begin to practice some simple habits that will lead to some complex transformation.

TEACHING VIDEO 1 (x min)

- Introduction to Basics
- An overview of Basics

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Ask some simple, get-to-know-you questions in order to break the ice. Some examples:

- What is your name?
- Tell us about your family.
- In what area of town do you live?
- What is your occupation?
- What is your favorite movie, music, or type of food?

Overview of Basics: Spend a few minutes explaining the purpose and method of the Basics series. You might say something like this:

Welcome everyone! I'm glad that you're here to join us in this twelve-week, Basics journey. Basics is a series designed to introduce you to some of the basic habits and skills that you'll need as you continue to grow to be more like Jesus. Over the next twelve weeks, we'll be focusing on three major ideas:

1. *Growing like Jesus - which is all about spiritual transformation and what we can do to help in this process.*
2. *Growing by Design - which is a discovery of the Church and how God designed you to play a part in it.*
3. *Growing by Purpose - which is about making the effort to intentionally complete Jesus' mission in this world: to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20).*

Each week in Basics, we'll be watching a teaching video, having some thought-provoking conversations, and learning about a challenge that we'll complete throughout the week. These challenges are essential to developing the skills that you need to continue growing. As a result, when we gather together in the following week's session, we'll always review the progress that we made on the challenge of the previous week.

One last thing, each week of Basics is critical. We ask that you do your best to make every session and make up those that you miss. As the facilitator of this group, I'm here to help out in any way possible as you navigate what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

We're so excited about what will happen over the course of the next twelve weeks. We're excited to equip you with skills and habits that you need to be an effective Jesus-follower in this world. And we're excited to see how you will begin to grow as you continue on this journey that will last a lifetime - so let's get started!

Icebreaker: What is a skill or achievement that you had to pour a lot of effort into in order to accomplish it? What did you have to do in order to discover success in that skill or achievement?

TRANSITION

As Christ-followers, it's our life purpose to become more like Jesus. The actions we take, the thoughts that we think, our motivations - all of these things should be undergoing transformation as we follow Jesus. But the road towards becoming like Jesus is long and transformation doesn't happen by accident. In this session, we're going to discover how we can begin to intentionally place ourselves in a position where the Spirit of God can change us from the inside-out.

TEACHING VIDEO 2 (x min)

- The goal of Spiritual Growth
- Jesus Habits: Habits that put us in the path of the Spirit
- Spiritual Rhythm: Being intentional about spiritual growth

INTERACT (x min)

- How would you explain spiritual growth to someone else?
- What fears or hesitations do you have about beginning down the path towards spiritual transformation?
- **Read Colossians 1:9 - 12.** According to the writer of Colossians, what are some of the primary reasons for spiritual growth?
- **Read Romans 12:1 - 2.**
 - According to the writer of Romans, what is true worship?
 - What might it mean to 'offer your body as living sacrifices'?
 - What is the result of true worship (12:2)? (*transformation and an understanding of God's will*)
- What are the two essential elements of spiritual growth? (*Spirit and habits*) How have you seen these elements showing up in your own life?
- There are a variety of spiritual disciplines or habits that the Bible prescribes. Over the next few weeks, we're going to dig into several of these habits; but in this session, let's discover what some of them are. Read each of these verses and then write down the habit:

Joshua 1:8 (*Meditation*)

2 Timothy 3:16 - 17 (*Bible Reading/Study*)

Luke 5:16 (*Solitude*)

Ephesians 5:21 (*Submission*)

Colossians 3:16 (*Worship/Celebration*)

Matthew 6:16 - 18 (*Fasting*)

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (*Prayer*)

John 13:14 - 15 (*Serving Others*)

- Which of these habits do you have a personal desire to discover in greater detail?
- **Read Matthew 6:1.**

- What does Jesus warn against as we practice our spiritual habits?
- Why do you think He gives this warning?
- Using what Jesus said, what might be some healthy practices for developing spiritual habits?
- What attitudes might you personally need to cultivate as you begin to practice healthy habits?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

As a reminder, every week we are going to have a challenge - something that you can go and begin to do during the week to begin growing right away. Ultimately, the goal of every Biblical study is transformation towards becoming more like Jesus. It's not enough to simply learn or talk about it - we need to take what we've gained and put it into action. During our next session, we'll review the previous week's challenge and talk over what we learned and what God is doing in our lives as a result of the efforts we made this week.

This week's challenge is called the '**The Spirit of Spiritual Transformation**'. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.6 - 8).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals of Jesus habits:
 - **The discipline or habit is not the end-product itself.** These habits are a way for us to put ourselves in the path of the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. Remember that goal as you begin to practice these habits over the course of the week. It's about a RELATIONSHIP not a CHECK-LIST.
 - **Start with just a few things per day.** Don't overwhelm yourself. These habits have much more power to transform when partnered with longevity than with intensity.
 - **Start small** (e.g. read the Bible for five minutes per day) and not with some lofty goal (e.g. read the whole Bible in a month). As you begin to grow in that habit, stretch or expand the Rule of Life.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit begins to work in the lives of each participant, transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

READING THE BIBLE

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

The Bible is big. Really big. It can be a bit intimidating to those who are just starting on their walk towards becoming like Jesus. This week, we'll be focusing on the basic skills that a person needs in order to navigate the Bible and really comprehend it. In this session, your conversation should focus on these things:

- 1. Spend time on the basics.** Be careful not to jump to any conclusions about what your group may or may not know about the Bible. Start with the basics (Old/New Testament, books, chapters, verses) before trying to have a conversation about Revelations (OK - just don't go there with your group at all).
- 2. Biblical truth should lead to God-shaped transformation.** Keep in mind that reading the Bible is a habit that leads us to being more receptive to the transformation that the Spirit is doing in our lives. We aren't more 'saved' if we've read God's Word in its entirety or read an hour per day. Reading God's Word is a glimpse into the heart of God and it should lead to change.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Discover some Bible basics.
- Begin reading God's Word on your own.
- Practice meditating on God's Word through the practice of memorization.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: What is a story that you read that has stuck with you the longest? What made that story so memorable?

Review Last Week: Spend a few minutes reviewing 'The Spirit of Spiritual Habits' activity. Potential questions you might ask include:

- After completing this challenge, what role would you say that the Spirit of God has in our transformation towards becoming more like Jesus?

- How can you rely more on the Spirit of God as you move towards transformation?

TRANSITION

One of the most valuable habits that we can develop is that of regularly spending time in the Bible. We often refer to the Bible as 'God's Word' because that's what it is - a way for God to speak directly into our lives. Through the Word we discover the heart and mind of God. We encounter the very life that Jesus lived. And we discover the will of the Spirit for our lives. Today, we'll be learning some of the basics of navigating and understanding the Word of God.

TEACHING VIDEO 3 (x min)

- The big idea of the Bible
- Translations and Versions of the Bible
- Key tools for navigating the Bible
- Using the SOAP Acronym (Scripture, Observe, Apply, Pray)

INTERACT (x min)

- What's your experience with the Bible (e.g. I've read the whole thing a dozen times; it collects dust on my bookshelf)?
- What do you find challenging about spending time in the Bible?
- Why might it be important to spend time in the Bible?

Before moving on, take some time to make sure that every participant knows the basics of navigating the Bible. Specifically: (1) how to use the table of contents and (2) the chapter and verse references.

- **Read 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105.**
 - According to these verses, what power does the Word of God have?
 - Have you ever felt the Bible have this power in your life?
- **Take some time to use the 'SOAP' steps to navigate this passage together: Luke 15:11 - 32.**
 - Read the **S**cripture

- Make **O**bservations (e.g. Characters, Setting, Big Ideas)
- **A**pply it to Your Life
- Talk to God About it Through **P**rayer
- Review the **Types of Biblical Literature** in your Basics Handbook (p.12 - 14).
 - Which of these types of literature sounds the most engaging to you?
 - Which would you be hesitant to jump into?
- What is the goal of meditating on God's Word? How might you go about practicing meditation?
- What's something that you have memorized in your life? What value might memorization have as we continue to grow in Bible understanding?
- What are some of the hopes and goals you have in your relationship to God's Word? How will you begin to spend time in God's Word this week?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

As a reminder, every week we are going to have a challenge - something that you can go and begin to do during the week to begin growing right away. Ultimately, the goal of every Biblical study is transformation towards becoming more like Jesus. It's not enough to simply learn or talk about it - we need to take what we've gained and put it into action. During our next session, we'll review the previous week's challenge and talk over what we learned and what God is doing in our lives as a result of the efforts we made this week.

This week, we have two challenges. The first challenge is called the '**Bible Reading Plan**'. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.15).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals of reading the Bible:
 - **Choose a time when you can focus on what is being read.** For many this may be in the morning, but don't get stressed out if that doesn't work for you. Find a time and commit to sticking with it this week.
 - **Use the SOAP method to connect the Scripture to your life.**
 - **If reading isn't your thing, try listening.** The YouVersion Bible App gives you the ability to listen to the Bible!

The second challenge is the '**Memorization Challenge.**' Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.20).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Share with each other what verse you chose to memorize.
3. Review some basic principals of memorizing:
 - Review the verse often.
 - Be creative in how you memorize: write the verse on a note card and take it with you, turn the verse into a song.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit begins to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on asking that God (1) gives each participant the discipline they need to make His Word a central part of their life and (2) gives each individual understanding as they read His Word.

TALKING TO GOD

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

Prayer is our direct line to God. It's our most direct form of communication with the Creator of all things. For a Christ-follower, prayer is non-negotiable; and yet so many people seem hesitant to approach God in prayer. In this session, your conversation should focus on these things:

1. **Prayer is simply a conversation with God.** There's no formula to 'making prayer work'. You don't have to ask a certain amount of times to make God hear you. He hears you and He's desperately waiting to have a real conversation with you. Prayer comes in many forms. Sometimes it's with reverence as we approach the King of all things; sometimes it's with love as we climb into our Heavenly Father's lap; sometimes it's with anger and frustration as we confront an injustice; and sometimes it's with tears as we plead with the Restorer of life and the Mender of all things broken. The point is: there is no right way to systematically approach prayer that will work in every season of our lives. But we need to start somewhere and that somewhere is just being willing to hold a conversation with God.
2. **The value of both speaking and listening.** Communication goes two ways, but too often we only speak to God without taking the time to hear from Him. In our prayer life, we need to be more intentional in listening for God and what He has to say to us through His Spirit.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Learn the purpose of prayer.
- Expand your ability to talk to God.
- Discover the Jesus Habit of fasting

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: What is your prayer life like? What are some of the things that you often pray about?

Review Last Week: Spend a few minutes reviewing the **Bible Reading Plan** and **Memorization** activities that everyone in the group completed over the course of the last week. Potential questions you might ask include:

- What was your experience as you completed the Bible Reading Plan? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God's Word?
- How did your memory work go? What was it like focusing on one verse so much this week?

TRANSITION

Imagine getting to have a conversation with the God of the universe. The God who created all things and holds all things together. The God who loves you deeply and knows the very number of hairs on your head. Through the Jesus Habit of prayer, we can do just that. Today, we'll be looking at two more Jesus Habits that will help us to grow in our relationship with God.

TEACHING VIDEO 4 (x min)

- Jesus Habit: Prayer
- Types of Prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Requests
- Jesus Habit: Fasting

INTERACT (x min)

- What comforts/discomforts do you have in living out the prayer-life the Bible models?
- **Read Luke 18:9 - 14.** What does this story teach us about authentic prayer? What holds you back from full sincerity while praying?
- **Review the Four Types of Prayer (Handbook, p.24).**
- **Read Psalm 100:1 - 2.** What type of prayer is modeled in this verse? What are some things that you love to praise in God?
- **Read 1 John 1:9.** What type of prayer is modeled in this verse? Why might it be important for our prayers to include confession?
- **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 18.** What type of prayer is modeled in this verse? What are some things that you are currently grateful God has promised?
- **Read James 4:2 - 3.** What type of prayer is modeled in this verse? What would be your reaction if God answered your request with a 'no'?
- Which of these four types of prayer are you most comfortable with practicing? Which do you struggle

with the most?

- **Read Matthew 6:9 - 13.** Which of the four types of prayer are reflected in Jesus' example?
- What would it look like to listen for God? How can you go about growing in your ability to listen for what God is trying to say to you?
- How could fasting be a powerful Jesus habit in your life? If you were to fast, what would you abstain from?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

As a reminder, every week we are going to have a challenge - something that you can go and begin to do during the week to begin growing right away. Ultimately, the goal of every Biblical study is transformation towards becoming more like Jesus. It's not enough to simply learn or talk about it - we need to take what we've gained and put it into action. During our next session, we'll review the previous weeks challenge and talk over what we learned and what God is doing in our lives as a result of the efforts we made this week.

This week's challenge is called the '**Prayer Journal**'. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.26 - 30).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals about praying:
 - **The prayer journal is a guide.** If you're not comfortable writing your prayers down, simply say them out loud to God.
 - **Prayer is a conversation, so remember to spend some time listening to what God through His Spirit may be saying to you.**
3. Don't give up on the other habits that you have been developing. Keep digging into God's Word and let your prayer time build on the previous habits and the rule of life that you've been developing.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit begins to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Have an extended prayer time at the end of this session. Say something like:

We're going to wrap up this session by praying together. Prayer is something better experienced than just talked about, so I'm going to give you the opportunity to jump into the prayer time. We're going to pray using the four types of prayers that we learned about in this session: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and requests. I'll start off with a brief prayer and then will give you some time to jump in with a sentence prayer on the topic.

As you move through each of the categories of prayer, make a short prayer and then be silent for a short time and allow others to jump in with their own sentence prayers. Don't pressure participants to pray out loud

with you, simply give them the opportunity. After an appropriate time, wrap up with a thanks to God for His willingness to talk to us.

TRUSTING GOD

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

Jesus had a lot to say about the 'stuff' in our lives. In fact, 'money' and 'stuff' come up more in Jesus' teaching than almost any other topic. This is for good reason. More than anything else in this world, 'stuff' seems to vie with the Lordship of Jesus in our lives.

In this session, your conversation should focus on these things:

1. **We are stewards of God's resources.** The starting point for trusting God is recognizing that all we have ultimately belongs to Him. He has entrusted those things (whether resources, time, or abilities) into our care. In this sense, we are stewards of what belongs to God - we responsibly take care of these things in order to honor Him. It's easy to get off track with this concept, but be sure to consistently remind your group of this 'stewardship' principle.
2. **A key habit of stewardship is to give generously.** Understanding stewardship should dramatically transform our lives. One of those transformations is that we will become people who live out the habit of generous giving - with all of our resources. The conversation about 'Biblical tithing' is something that often can cause discomfort, so be sure to keep the focus on these two facts:
 - Generous giving is more about obedience to Jesus rather than giving money to a non-profit.
 - Generous giving is an investment in God's Kingdom and it's work in this world.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Pick up some copies of the **Stewardship Challenge** from the CCW Next Step Station.
3. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Understand the call to biblical stewardship.
- Discover the habit of generous giving.
- Take up the challenge to grow in the habit of generous giving.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker:

- What is the best gift that you have ever received? What is the worst?
- What's the easiest for you to give - time, talents, or abilities?

Review Last Week: Spend a few minutes reviewing the *Prayer Journal* activity. Potential questions you might ask include:

- What did you discover while practicing prayer using a prayer journal? What challenges did you face?
- What are your hopes for developing an ongoing practice of prayer?

TRANSITION

In this session of Basics, we're going to look at a foundational habit that every Christ-follower needs to develop: the habit of generous giving. Too often, we allow the 'stuff' in our life to have ownership. Living in a culture that is shaped around the idea of getting more, we don't have to look too far to see how detrimental this attitude towards our resources can be. Let's discover what Jesus had to say about 'stuff' and how we can choose to chase something bigger than 'more'.

TEACHING VIDEO 5 (x min)

- God has entrusted us with time, talents, and treasures
- Stewardship: Learning to honor God by trusting Him with the things that He has entrusted to us
- Jesus Habit: Generous Giving

INTERACT (x min)

- **Read: 1 Timothy 6:17 - 19**
 - Where should we place our hope?
 - What should be the result of placing our hope in God rather than in wealth?
- **Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6 - 8**
 - Who should we attempt to please when we are giving?
 - What should be our attitude while we give? What is the blessing to being a cheerful giver?
 - What do you find challenging about being a generous giver?

- **Read: Colossians 3:23 - 24**
 - Stewardship is also about how we spend and invest our time. According to the writer of Colossians, how should we approach work and other time investments?
 - What do you find challenging about having a steward-attitude when investing your time?
- **Read: 1 Peter 4:10**
 - The writer, Peter, says that our gifts/abilities/talents are also a part of what it means to be a steward. How should we use those gifts?
 - What gifts/abilities do you have that you could see being used to serve others?
- After reading these verses, how would you explain the idea of Biblical stewardship to someone else? What are the key habits that a biblical-steward should develop?
- What would it look like to honor God with your time? Talents? Resources?
- What steps do you need to take this week to begin growing as a steward?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

As we discovered, developing a stewardship mentality is part of what it means to follow Jesus. What you give and how you give it - that's between you and God. But no matter how you approach stewardship, generosity should be one of the core attitudes. This week, your goal is to unleash your generosity and find ways to trust God with what He has entrusted to you. As part of this, we've put together what we call the Stewardship Challenge.

This week's challenge is called the '**Stewardship Challenge**'. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.34).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals about giving generously:
 - **We give generously because God gave to us without limit.** He blesses us so that we can then bless others.
 - **Giving is between your family and God.** Ultimately, it is God that you should seek to please through generous giving.
3. Don't give up on the other habits that you have been developing. Dig into God's Word daily, spend time in prayer with God, and begin finding ways to unleash your generosity.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit begins to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on asking that God (1) helps each of us discover how we can better steward His resources and (2) that He helps us to unleash radical generosity.

BEING THE CHURCH

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

So often our concept of 'church' is wrapped up in our cultural upbringing and falls far short of God's actual design of His Church. In this session, we'll be seeking to discover what God intended the church to be and what it means for us to be a part of it. In this session, your conversation should focus on these things:

- 1. The Church as God designed it.** Let's try to steer clear of human conception of the Church and dig into what God's design actually is. We'll do that keeping our conversation in what the Bible says about the Church and by looking at the Church of the 1st Century.
- 2. Our part in the Church.** God's Church is not a club, membership or location. It's His people doing His work in His created world. Over the course of the session, steer clear of viewing the Church through the lens of a 'Sunday worship service' and instead emphasize: we are the church.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Find out through the pages of Acts how the early church thrived as God formed it
- Discover the purpose and design for the Church
- Begin to understand your role in the God's Church

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker:

- What is something that you love about your family?
- How would you describe the idea of 'family' to someone who has never experienced it before?

Review Last Week: Spend a few minutes reviewing the *Stewardship Challenge* activity that everyone in the group completed over the course of the last week. Potential questions you might ask include:

- In the last week, how have you seen your new understanding of stewardship begin to shape how you use your time, talents, and resources?

TRANSITION

In the first few sessions of Basics, we focused on the personal disciplines that we should intentionally develop. In this session, we're going to transition to talking about the role of the Church in our lives - what it is, what it does, and how we can be a part of it.

TEACHING VIDEO 6 (x min)

- The birth of the Church in the 1st Century
- The Global and Local Church
- The Purpose of the Church

INTERACT (x min)

The first thing that we need to discover is what the Church is. The Bible provides a wealth of images of the Church. Looking at a variety of them will help us get a better picture of what God designed the Church to be. Read each of these passages and connect it to the appropriate word-image:

Ephesians 2:19 - 22

God's Field & Building

1 Corinthians 3:17

A Building & Dwelling Place for God's Spirit

1 Peter 2:9

The Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 3:9

A Temple

1 Corinthians 12:27

God's People & a Royal Priesthood

- Talk over these pictures of the Church. What does each reflect about the Church?
- Which of these pictures resonates with you the most? Which does the least?
- Using these pictures, how would you describe the Church to someone else?

Say: Now that we've talked about what the Church is, it's time to take a look at what the Church does.

- **Read: Acts 2:42 - 47**
 - The book of Acts records the birth and initial growth of the Church. How is the early church described in these verses?
 - What are the habits that the early church modeled?

- **Read: Romans 12:4 - 5**
 - This passage from Romans describes some of the spiritual gifts that God gives His people. According to the writer, what is the purpose of these gifts?
- Being the Church implies a host of other responsibilities that we have towards one another. Take a look at the list of 'one another's' that are found throughout the New Testament in your Basics Handbook (p. 39).
 - Which of these surprise you?
 - Which of these do you recognize as something you need to grow in?
- **Read: Matthew 18:18 - 20**
 - Another key purpose of the Church (which we'll talk about in detail in a later session) is to complete the mission that Jesus set for us. According to Jesus, what is that mission?
- If someone asked you, 'what does the Church do?' what would you say?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

We are God's Church in this world. We're called to be His hands and feet - growing, challenging and loving one another - all for God's glory. Next week, we'll be taking a deeper dive into what this looks like on a personal level. In preparation for that, the challenge this week is about discovering the gifts that God has placed in your life that will be used to build up His Church.

This week's challenge is called the '**Spiritual Gifts**'. In this challenge, participants will take time to discover their spiritual gifts through completing an online spiritual gifts assessment. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.41).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals about giving generously:
 - **Record what you discover.** After completing the survey, make sure to write down your top gifts in the Participant's Guide.
 - **Spend time on reflecting over how you can put your spiritual gift(s) into practice.** Our gifts are a way to grow God's Church and Kingdom. If we aren't using them, then we are wasting the resources that God has entrusted to us and His Church will suffer for it.
3. Don't give up on the other habits that you have been developing. Dig into God's Word daily, spend time in prayer to God, and begin finding ways to unleash your generosity.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit continues to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on asking that God (1) helps each of the participants to love the church like God does and (2) that they discover their part in being the Church.

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

So often our concept of 'church' is wrapped up in our cultural upbringing and falls far short of God's actual design of His Church. In this session, we'll continue to discover what God intended the church to be and what it means for us to be a part of it. In this session, your conversation should focus on these things:

1. **Jesus served and so we serve.** Jesus is our model for right-living. Jesus came to this earth and served so that we might do likewise (Philippians 2). Remind participants: serving is done out of humility, love and to please God, not for personal gain.
2. **Spiritual gifts.** Spiritual gifts and their usage can cause quite a bit of controversy inside of the Church (you don't have to look past the book of 1 Corinthians to see them being abused). Remind participants that no matter their spiritual gifts, these gifts are designed to build and grow God's church - not divide. As a group, don't get so bogged down in the details of spiritual gifts that you lose sight of the big idea.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Form a solid perspective for why we serve one another in the Church.
- Discover how God has designed you to serve through your unique SHAPE.
- Choose a Ministry Team to join in order to use your spiritual gifts.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: What was the kindest thing that someone has ever done for you?

Review Last Week: Spend a few minutes reviewing the *Spiritual Gift* activity that everyone in the group completed over the course of the last week. Potential questions you might ask include:

- According to the assessment you took, what are your primary spiritual gifts? How do you see these being used?

TRANSITION

Last week, we discovered what God designed the Church to be. In this session, we'll be looking at what our role is in the worldwide body of Christ, specifically when it comes to serving others. As we'll discover, God has uniquely designed each of us to play a key role in His Church.

TEACHING VIDEO 7 (x min)

- Jesus the Servant
- Understanding your SHAPE (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Ability, Personality, and Experiences)
- Using your gifts to build the Church

INTERACT (x min)

- **Read: Philippians 2:5 - 11; Matthew 20:28; John 13:12 - 15**
 - How did Jesus model serving others?
 - What should be our attitude as we serve others?
- **Read: Matthew 5:16**
 - What should be the outcome of our serving others?
- **Read: Ephesians 2:10**
 - How do you feel knowing that God uniquely designed you for good works?

Say: According to Ephesians, each of us has been uniquely designed by God to do good works in this world. CCW uses the acronym SHAPE to describe the elements that make up our unique design.

- **Spiritual Gifts**
 - **Read: 1 Corinthians 12:7**
 - Spiritual gifts are abilities that the Spirit of God brings out in us when He resides in our lives. According to this verse, what is their purpose?
- **Heart:** We all have things that we love and get excited about.
 - What is something that your heart beats for that you and how could you use it to build up the Church?
- **Abilities:** Abilities that we have been equipped with as a result of training or natural gifting.

- What are some natural abilities that you have that could be used for God?
- What are some skills that you have developed as a result of training? How could they be used for God's Church?
- **Personality:** Our personality is made up of a variety of different things - how we relate to people, how we process events, how we express various emotions. Understanding our personality is an important step towards understanding your SHAPE.
 - Would you describe yourself as an introvert or an extrovert? How might God use both of these types of personalities to grow His Church?
 - What is something that you believe is a strong part of your personality?
- **Experiences:** Experiences are events in our lives that have equipped us to better serve others.
 - How might God use negative experiences to grow His Church?
 - What is a life-experience that you've had that can be used in service to others?
 - Based on what we discussed, what will you do this week to begin serving in God's Church?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

This week's challenge expands on our conversation by developing a deeper understanding of your God-chosen design and how you can use it to serve others.

This week's challenge is called the '**SHAPE**'. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.47).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals about serving in the church:
 - **Our SHAPE is unique.** God has designed each of us to play a role in His church. In this activity, you'll spend time figuring out how your unique SHAPE fits into the wider church.
3. Don't give up on the other habits that you have been developing. Dig into God's Word daily, spend time in prayer with God, find ways to unleash your generosity, and serve in a ministry.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit begins to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on asking that God grows each participant in their ability to use their unique SHAPE to bring God glory.

GOD'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

The word 'evangelism' evokes many different feelings in our culture. Many of those feelings are less than pleasant. But evangelism should be something beautiful. When we break down the word to its original form, it means 'good news'. As Christ-followers, we have the greatest news in the world to share! We need to redeem our vision of evangelism and begin lovingly sharing the good news of Jesus with this world.

As you lead this discussion, keep in mind:

- 1. Mission is not an option.** Throughout the Bible, we see that the sign of authentic transformation is obedience to Jesus (1 John 2:3 - 6). One of Jesus' final commands to His people is that we bring Him glory by going and making disciples (Mt. 28:18 - 20). Living on mission is not an option. It's a natural outflow of what it means to be a Jesus-follower.
- 2. The Good News with the wrong attitude can come off as the bad news.** Evangelism methodology is all over the board (e.g. 'turn or burn' signs; random acts of kindness), but our approach to sharing the good news should model how Jesus did it. We can do evangelism in the wrong way and turn people off to the Truth, so our attitude in how we share that Truth is central to the conversation.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Identify the purpose and mission of God's people.
- Adopt God's mission as your own.
- Gain the basic skills you need to begin influencing the people right around you.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: If you could travel to any location in the world, where would it be and why would you go there?

Review the Challenge: Spend a few minutes reviewing the **SHAPE** activity. Potential questions you might ask include:

- How can you put your SHAPE into action inside the local church?
- How easy has it been to maintain a Christ-like attitude while serving others this week?

TRANSITION

The Church was created with purpose and for a purpose. In this session, we'll look at our responsibility to be the Church to the lost and broken and what the central mission of the Church is.

TEACHING VIDEO 8 (x min)

- The Mission of God's Church (Matthew 28:18 - 20)
- Recognizing your Ponds (places of relational influence)
- Developing a Neighbor Chart

INTERACT (x min)

- When you hear the words 'mission' and 'missionaries' what do you think of?
- **Read: Matthew 28:18 - 20**
 - Underline the action words in this verse. What is Jesus telling His followers to do?
 - How does it make you feel to know that you are part of Jesus' mission in this world?
- **Read: Acts 1:8**
 - What does Jesus mean by telling the disciples that they are His 'witnesses'?
 - Jesus lists four locations in this verse. Where does He tell His disciples that they should begin being His witnesses? How does this reflect on us?
- **Read Matthew 9:35 - 38**
 - How did Jesus feel about the people that He met?
 - How do you view people who are living a life apart from Jesus?
 - How can we grow to see people as Jesus sees them?
- How should understanding that you are on mission shape...

- ...how you spend your time?
 - ...your relationship with your friends and family?
 - ...how you talk to strangers?
 - ...how you pray?
 - ...how you view your community?
- What are some healthy ways to share your faith in Jesus? What are some unhealthy ways?
 - What fears or doubts do you have in sharing your faith?
 - According to the video, what is a Pond? What Ponds do you have in your life? **Complete the Ponds activity in the Basics Handbook (p.50 - 51).**

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

Being on mission can be intimidating, but that's why we should start small. We're going to look at a tool called a Neighbor Chart that will help us be a little more intentional in sharing the Good News right around us.

This week's challenge is called the '**Neighbor Chart**'. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.53).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals about using the neighbor chart to live on mission:
 - **The Neighbor Chart can be used anywhere (e.g. a work environment).** Don't limit it to your physical neighborhood. You can use this chart in your workplace, in a hobby that you frequent, or any other Pond that you can imagine.
 - **Start with gathering information.** Good news is shared through relationship, so start with a relationship. Genuinely get to know each of the individuals on your list: their name, the names of their children, their likes/dislikes, what they're excited about, what they're worried about. Start a relationship!
 - **Ask how you can pray for them.** An easy next step to a spiritual conversation is to simply ask if there is anything you can be praying about for them. After praying, follow up a week later by letting them know that you have been praying for the situation.
3. Don't give up on the other habits that you have been developing.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit begins to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on asking that God (1) makes it clear where in our lives we should begin wading in with His life-changing mission and (2) that He gives us the boldness and wisdom to share the Good News in love.

SHARING GOD'S STORY

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

Now that we've established the mission of the Church and our part in it. During the next two sessions we'll focus on some specific habits and skills that we can learn that will help us complete the first half of that mission: going and sharing the news of Jesus with others. This session focuses on sharing God's big story for this world and how we can begin that conversation with other people.

As you lead this discussion, keep in mind:

- 1. The goal of sharing God's Story is to help others encounter Jesus.** The end goal of sharing God's Story is that others will have an authentic encounter with Jesus. It's not about going to church, reading your Bible or living a better life. All of those things are great, but ultimately they mean nothing apart from making Jesus the Lord of our life.
- 2. God's Story is not a one-time conversation.** We wish that people would hear God's Story and decide to follow Jesus, but it's rarely that simple. More often, this is a conversation that we begin and then will continue to have over time.
- 3. God does the transformation.** We can't force truth on anyone. The Bible makes it clear that transformation is the result of the work God's Spirit in the heart of those who do not yet believe. We must do our part, but we can't reside in guilt when they choose to ignore the truth.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
- 2. Pick up 'Know Jesus' guides from the CCW website or the Next Step Station.** These guides are a big part of this session, so make sure you have them in hand before you begin.
3. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Find how you can share God's story in a simple way.
- Discover what the Bible says is God's plan for our salvation.
- Learn how to use **Know Jesus** - our tool for having a salvation conversation with others.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: In the natural world, what most reminds you of the presence of God?

Review the Activity: Spend a few minutes reviewing the 'Neighbor Chart' activity that everyone in the group completed over the course of the last week. Potential questions you might ask include:

- What did you do to get to know some of the people that you added to your Neighbor Chart?
- How willing were people to share a prayer request with you?

TRANSITION

Last week we discovered our role to be on mission. In this session, we're going to learn what it is we're supposed to share with this world - the most important that has ever unfolded in this world: God's Story. Not only is it an amazing story, but it has the power to save and transform lives. It's our privilege to carry and share this story wherever we go!

TEACHING VIDEO 9 (x min)

- The first half of the mission: sharing the story of Jesus
- God's Story in four images
- Salvation according to the Bible

INTERACT (x min)

- Read Romans 10:11 - 15:
 - According to the writer of Romans, what is our role in sharing God's Story?
 - Who had the 'beautiful feet' that brought you the news of Jesus?
- The story of Jesus is often called the 'Gospel' which means 'Good News'. Why is Jesus' story such good news to us?
- What is God's Story? As a group, let's sum up this story in our own language.
- We're going to pair up and practice sharing God's Story. Find a partner and talk them through God's Story using the four images found in the Basics Handbook (p.56 - 59). *(Allow enough time for both partners to practice sharing God's Story.)*
- What was the most challenging thing about sharing God's Story with someone else?

- What challenges do you expect to encounter when sharing God’s Story with those outside of a relationship with Jesus?
- Why is it essential that we point to the Bible as we talk to others about salvation?
- What are some specific things that you can do to prepare yourself for sharing God’s Story with others?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

We know that it’s our responsibility to share God’s story with others, but one of the biggest challenges is knowing when this is appropriate. In the challenge this week, we’ll be learning about how to connect His story to the story of others who are in our lives and how to recognize the right opportunity to share this amazing news.

This week’s challenge is called the ‘**Connecting His Story**’ challenge. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.60 - 62).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals about sharing God’s Story:
 - **Mission responsibility.** We all have a personal responsibility to carry and share God’s Story with others who need to hear this message.
 - **We don’t need to overcomplicate God’s Story.** Keep it simple and let the Bible speak for itself. Position yourself as a GUIDE in the conversation rather than as a teacher.
 - **If you encounter a question that you cannot answer, don’t fret!** Be clear that you’re unsure of the answer to the question and that you would love to help your conversation partner discover the answer. Then tap into the many resources that CCW has to offer to help in the situation (check with a Next Step Coach to discover what those resources are).
3. Don’t give up on the other habits that you have been developing.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit begins to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on (1) thanking God for including us in His Story and (2) that He might give us the boldness to share His Story with others.

SHARING YOUR STORY

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

There are two stories we need to be ready to share: God's Story and our story. Often enough, it's through our story that people are able to grasp the great love of Jesus for the first time. In this session, we will look at the importance of recognizing the key elements of that story and polishing it to bring God glory.

As you lead this discussion, keep in mind:

1. **Our Story is actually part of God's Story.** The surprising twist to our story is that it's actually a part of God's Story. Motivation is important as we share this story. It's not about our glory or to develop sympathy - it's all for the glory of God and building up His Kingdom. Beware of stories that include a lot of "I's" and not enough "He's".
2. **Share it in Ten Minutes.** Be direct and concise. There will be opportunities when we get to share the long story, but people rarely have a challenge with that - but they do struggle with keeping it short.
3. **You should provide an example.** Be the example. Be prepared to share your own story this session during the challenge.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Discover how to recognize when people are ready to hear the Good News.
- Learn how to share what God has done in your own life.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: If you were to choose a movie title to describe your life, what would it be?

Review the Challenge: Spend a few minutes reviewing the **Connecting His Story** activity. Potential questions you might ask include:

- When are some of the opportune times to connect God's story to the stories of those around you?

- At what time were you ready to hear God's story?

TRANSITION

Last session we talked about the first story that we need to be ready to share: God's Story. In this session, we're going to look at the second story: Our Story. Our Story describes the transforming power of God in our own lives and gives a reason for the hope that we have placed in Jesus.

TEACHING VIDEO 10 (x min)

- The importance of our story
- Recognizing the key pieces of your story

INTERACT (x min)

- **Read 1 Peter 3:15.** How would you answer someone who asked about the hope that you have?
- Why is your story so important?
- Let's talk about the key questions that make up the core of Our Story:
 - Who were you before you encountered Jesus?
 - What circumstances surrounded your choice to believe in and follow Jesus?
 - How has God transformed your life since you began following Jesus?

TEACHING VIDEO 11 (x min)

- How to recognize when people are ready for this conversation: crisis; transition; and spiritual questions
- Listening to their story
- Growing relationships: sacrificial love; asking permission; finding opportunities

INTERACT (x min)

- Why is important to listen to other people's stories? What should we be listening for in other people's stories?

- How can you grow in your ability to be an effective listener?
- Read **Matthew 5:15 - 16**
 - What does Jesus say should cause others to praise God?
 - How do good works (or serving others) act as a precursor of sharing God's Story and Our Story?
- Looking at your Ponds, what are some 'good works' that you could start right now (Handbook, p.65 - 66)?
- What else might you do to grow the amount of influence you have to speak into the lives of those around you?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

The 'My Story Timeline' is the challenge to complete this week. In this challenge, we'll find a way to expand on the questions that we asked earlier so that we're more ready than ever to share the story of God's work in our lives. Next week we'll be sharing our stories with one another, so come prepared!

This week's challenge is called the '**My Story Timeline**' challenge. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.67 - 69).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Review some basic principals about sharing Your Story:
 - **Keep it Concise:** There will always be opportunities to share our long story, but we need to develop the skill to share a concise version of our story. While developing this skill, you should aim to tell your story in 10 - 15 minutes.
 - **Stick to the Main Story:** It's tempting to draw in a variety of anecdotes from our childhood, but this story is about the work of Jesus in your life. Make sure that each part of your timeline answers one of the key questions:
 - Who were you before you encountered Jesus?
 - What circumstances surrounded your choice to believe in and follow Jesus?
 - How has God transformed your life since you began following Jesus?
 - **Provide an example by sharing your own story** (5 - 10 minutes).
3. Don't give up on the other habits that you have been developing.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit continues to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on (1) giving gratitude to God for a new life-story full of hope and (2) asking for wisdom and discernment for knowing who we should wade in to share the story of our hope in Jesus.

SHARING YOUR STORY, PART 2

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

Last session you were able to have a conversation about the importance of sharing the story of how God's will and your personal life intersected. In this session, you're going to put the previous conversation and the My Story Timeline challenge into practice by sharing your stories with one another.

As you lead this discussion, keep in mind:

1. **Don't force the issue.** Even though we believe it's key that everyone be able to share their own story, some individuals will find this extremely difficult. Provide grace. Allow people an out if they simply don't feel comfortable in sharing their story. Perhaps God will bring it out in a greater way at some point.
2. **Limit the time.** Everyone should get an opportunity to share during your session. Limit stories to between 10 - 15 minutes.
3. **Provide some feedback in private.** Publicly, thank each person for boldly sharing their story. Privately, give some feedback to each person on how they might better share their story (e.g. keep the focus on Jesus, spend less time on the less important details).

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Grow more comfortable in your ability to share your story.
- Every participant gets the opportunity to share their story.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Review the Challenge: Spend a few minutes reviewing the 'My Story Timeline' activity that everyone in the group completed over the course of the last week. Potential questions you might ask include:

- How easy was it putting together your story in the 'My Story Timeline' this week?

TRANSITION

In our time together, we're going to share our stories. A few reminders before we jump into sharing:

- *Keep Jesus at the center of your story. Our story is an extension of the gratitude that we feel towards Jesus for salvation and transformation.*
- *Keep it short. Each person can only take up ten to fifteen minutes of time. Please honor everyone by keeping your story concise.*

I'm encouraging all of you to share, but if you're not comfortable doing this - that's alright. Keep practicing and keep putting yourself in a place where God can use your story.

TEACHING VIDEO 12 (x min)

- Our shared story: Each of our stories links back to the main story (the Gospel)

INTERACT (x min)

- **Acts 22:3 - 21**
 - What are the highlights of Paul's story?
 - How does he answer the three key questions? (Who were you before you encountered Jesus? What circumstances surrounded your choice to believe in and follow Jesus? How has God transformed your life since you began following Jesus?)
- **Take turns sharing your own stories. Keep each story around ten minutes.**

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

I want to thank each of you for sharing your story tonight. You showed some boldness, and I'm sure that God will use each of your stories in great ways to grow His Church. In preparation for next week, we have a challenge called 'The Core of Discipleship'.

This week's challenge is called the **'The Core of Discipleship'** challenge. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.72 - 74).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Remind your group of the Basics that they've been developing: Reading the Bible, Prayer, Sacrificial Giving, Serving, Sharing God's Story, and Sharing Your Story.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit continues to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on (1) giving gratitude to God for a new life-story full of hope and (2) asking for wisdom and discernment for knowing who we should wade in to share the story of our hope in Jesus.

BECOMING LIKE JESUS

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

God doesn't just tell us to share the Gospel message, but to help those who respond to it grow to be more and more like the Jesus they proclaim. We call the journey towards becoming more like Jesus 'discipleship'. For the purposes of a new believer, discipleship is largely about developing the habits that they need to continue growing by being connected to a Disciple-maker - a guide in that development. At CCW, our language about discipleship is wrapped around the Next Steps, which will be explained in the video portion of this study.

As you lead this discussion, keep in mind:

1. **Discipleship is at the core of the mission that Jesus gave us.** It's easy to get confused and think of discipleship as something that only elite Christians do. But the truth is, when we choose to follow Jesus, we become disciples of Jesus. And ultimately, as we continue to grow as a disciple, Jesus wants to form us into disciple-makers. As a result, every Christ-follower is a disciple and has the mission of a disciple-maker.
2. **There is not one right way to disciple others, but there are plenty of wrong ways.** At CCW, we've chosen to use the Next Steps as a framework for discipleship. That being said, there are plenty of ways to make discipleship work and we don't believe that we have a monopoly on that market! So as you facilitate the conversation about discipleship, make it clear that the right kind of discipleship is the kind that aligns with the character and words of Jesus. The wrong kind is that which fails to accomplish that.
3. **Next Steps are a framework for discipleship, not a checklist.** The Next Steps are a framework for discipleship, but it's so easy to turn them into a checklist of things to do to be a good Christ-follower. We want to stay away from that misconception! Be sure to remind your group that the Next Steps are just resources (tools and environments) that can help us along the path towards becoming more like Jesus, but treating them like a checklist certainly won't get you there any quicker.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Develop a Biblical concept of what a disciple is (Core Values)
- Understand CCW's Next Step Discipleship

- Recognize one's own Next Step
- Grow in one's ability to disciple others by helping them find their Next Step

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: Who was the best teacher that you ever learned from and what made them such an excellent educator?

Review Last Week: Spend a few minutes reviewing the 'The Core of Discipleship' activity that everyone in the group completed over the course of the last week. Potential questions you might ask include:

- After completing the Core of Discipleship activity, how would you explain the purpose of discipleship to somebody new to Christ and the church?

TRANSITION

During our last session, we were able to share our stories. The goal of sharing the two stories - God's story and our story - is so that someone might come to know who Jesus is. Once they have decided to make Jesus Lord of their life, they begin the life-long journey of discipleship. Today, we're going to talk about our path along the discipleship journey and how we can grow and help others grow as well.

TEACHING VIDEO 13 (x min)

- What is Discipleship?
- What is a Disciple? (CCW Core Values)
- How do we Disciple others? (CCW Next Steps)

INTERACT (x min)

- In the video, we discovered that a disciple is someone who follows Jesus and is attempting to live like Him. What are the five values that we see showing up in the life of Jesus?
- **Take time to talk about each of the Core Values (Biblical Truth, Real Relationships, Selfless Service, Inspired Worship, and Spirit-led Living). With each, ask these three questions:**
 - How would you explain this value to someone else?
 - What are some examples of this value showing up in the life of Jesus?
 - What might this value look like in the life of a disciple? In your own life?

- **Read Matthew 28:18 - 20, John 8:31 - 32 and 13:15.** According to Jesus, what does a disciple do?
- As you continue to follow Jesus, what are some ways that you see your life changing?

Say: *Discipleship is a journey that takes a life-time. At CCW, we want to help you along the journey through Next Step Discipleship. The next part of our conversation is going to be about these Next Steps. It may be helpful to turn to the page titled **Next Steps** in your Handbook (p.79 -80).*

- **Take a few minutes to walk through the Next Steps, making sure that those in the group have an understanding of the purpose of each step and how it can be taken.**
 - Which of these Next Steps do you feel that you have taken?
 - What is the current Next Step that you need to take?
- In our mission statement (Matthew 28:18 - 20), Jesus tells us that it is the responsibility of all His followers to be a part of the discipleship of others. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus has entrusted you with such an important task?
- How can you play a part in the discipleship of others?

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

Next session will be our final week together. In this session, we're going to be having a conversation about the true spiritual state of the world, the cosmic war that has been raging since the beginning of the Bible, and how each of us has a role to play in the battle. As Christ-followers, we often refer to this as 'spiritual warfare'. In preparation for this session, we're going to complete an activity called Light and Darkness.

This week's challenge is called '**Light and Darkness**'. Find this challenge in the Basics Handbook (p.81 - 83).

1. Read over the challenge together.
2. Remind the group not to give up on the other habits that they have been developing.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit continues to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on (1) thanking Jesus for providing us a model to follow, (2) that each of the participants will continue to grow to be more like Jesus by taking Next Steps and (3) that God would open their eyes and hearts to the need to take part in the discipleship of others.

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

In this session, you'll be discussing the concept of spiritual warfare and the Christ-follower's part in this universal battle.

As you lead this discussion, keep in mind:

- 1. There is much we don't know about spiritual warfare. Instead of speculating, we'll learn what the Bible has to say about it, do our part, and learn to accept our lack of knowledge.** God's Word is vague on the concrete answers about the details of spiritual warfare, but God gave us exactly what we need to do our part. As always, we use the Bible as our filter for understanding this important concept; not speculation, hearsay, or feelings.
- 2. The war has been won - but battles are still being fought.** The great war has already ended in a victory for God and His people. That decisive victory was made when Jesus died and then rose again. That being said, the Adversary and his cohort will fight until their last moments to cause as much damage to God's Kingdom as possible. Remind your group that, while we may find ourselves in difficult spiritual situations, we have the assurance of being on the victorious side.
- 3. There is Light and Darkness and we have to choose a side.** In our culture, we're tempted to assume that there is some middle-ground in the battle between Light and Darkness. According to the Bible, there is not. Depending on who (or what) we decide is lord of our life, we will find ourselves in one camp or the other. Remind your group that there is no halfway with God and this spiritual battle - we are in it and we need to commit ourselves.

Before this session, be sure to:

1. Review the material for this week. Watch the video. Check out the Scripture references. Familiarize yourself with the Interact questions. Do whatever it takes to become an 'expert' in the material.
2. Spend some time praying for participants in your group. Pray that they will have hearts that are receptive to God and the transformation that He wants to do in their lives.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your Coach or the Discipleship Minister. We're on your team and it's our goal to see you excel as you pass the Basics on to a new group of Christ-followers!

Outcome for this Session:

- Develop a basic understanding of what the Bible has to say about spiritual warfare.
- Grow in the key skills that you need as you participate in the spiritual battle.

INTRODUCTION (x min)

Icebreaker: What is the most ridiculous fight that you have ever found yourself in?

Review Last Week: Spend a few minutes reviewing the **Light and Darkness** activity that everyone in the group completed over the course of the last week. Potential questions you might ask include:

- On your chart, what are some of the things that the Bible says are of the Light?
- What are some of the things that the Bible says are of the Darkness?

TRANSITION

In this final session, we're going to talk about an important truth that every Christ-follower needs to know: we are taking part in a spiritual war that has been raging through all of history. Whether or not we realize it, we have a part to play in that war. Let's check out a video that will introduce us to this idea.

TEACHING VIDEO 14 (x min)

- The realities of spiritual warfare
- Getting equipped for the battle
- Jesus has won the war!

INTERACT (x min)

- After listening to the video, what are your initial thoughts and feelings on spiritual warfare?

Say: The goal of this session is to help you discover the basic skills and tools that you'll need to stand firm in the spiritual battle and to begin growing in them. First, let's check out what the Bible says our part in this battle is:

- **Read Ephesians 6:10 - 18.**
 - According to the writer of Ephesians, who are we struggling against? How do you think we might we see these 'spiritual forces of evil' present in our world?
 - What are the tools in our arsenal that help us to stand our ground in a spiritual battle?
 - **Take time to talk about each of the tools that are mentioned in this passage (e.g. belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness). Use the 'Armor of God' excerpt (p.86 - 87) to guide this discussion. With each ask:**
 - What is this tool?
 - How is it used in our spiritual arsenal?

- How can we grow in our ability to use this tool?
- In verse 18, what are we told to do as we continue to stand firm?

Say: As you can see, our ability to resist the Adversary is largely based on many of the basics that we've practiced over this study - reading the Bible, prayer, and following the Spirit. Even with those tools, spiritual warfare can be a scary idea. Let's look at some of the promises that the Bible gives us about God's part in this battle.

- **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.**

- What is temptation?
- What promise are we given by God?

- **Read Romans 8:35 - 38**

- According to Romans, what can separate us from the love of God?
- Through Jesus Christ, what have we conquered?

- While participating in the spiritual battle, why is it essential for us to hold on to promises such as these?
- How will knowing the truths about spiritual warfare change how you approach life, the Church, and a relationship with Jesus?

TEACHING VIDEO 14 (x min)

- Keep living the Basics
- Take your Next Step
- Get connected to a disciple-maker

CHALLENGE

As you transition into the wrap-up time, say something like this:

This was our final Basics session together, but I want to see you to continue to thrive as you grow to know and be like Jesus. As the video noted, there are three things we would love to see you do:

1. *Keep living the Basics*
2. *Take your Next Step*
3. *Get connected to a disciple-maker*

I want to help you succeed in doing these things and would be happy to answer any questions as you step up to these challenges. In just a few weeks, I'll be following up with you to see how things are going and to make sure that you've gotten connected to the environments, people, and resources that you need to continue to grow to be the person that God designed you!

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together. Remember to pray that: the Holy Spirit continues to work in the lives of each participant; transforming them to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Focus your prayer time on (1) thanking God for winning the war, (2) asking that He help each individual in the group to develop the skills that they need to stand strong, and (3) receiving guidance from the Holy Spirit as Basics ends and each person takes their Next Step into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

The Armor of God

The armor of God is a breakdown of spiritual resources that help us to stand against the Adversary and against those things that are from the Darkness. Below, you'll find a brief explanation of each of the tools that the Apostle Paul introduces on this list:

Belt of Truth: Christ-followers are people of the Truth. We know the Truth (who Christ is and what He has done) and desire the Truth. In Paul's illustration, this Truth holds everything else together. Jesus refers to Satan as the father of lies (John 8:44), so he stands opposed to the Truth. In addition, Christ-followers are called to integrity and transparency. In other words, we are called to live a truth-centered life.

Breastplate of Righteousness: Righteousness is the word that the Bible uses to describe a good and upright life (from God's standard). We become righteous in accepting Jesus as Lord of our life and then we are called to live like He does - a righteous and pure life.

Shoes of Readiness: Knowing who Jesus is and what He has done should create an urgency within us to share this great news. As people on mission, we need to be ready to go where our Lord directs.

Shield of Faith: Faith keeps us steadfast by allowing us to focus on the source of that faith - Jesus. Faith reminds us that Jesus has already been successful in this war. He already has the victory! As a result, when our faith stays centered on Him, there is nothing that the Adversary can do to truly harm us.

Helmet of Salvation: Jesus has saved us! A true knowledge of salvation protects our thoughts and mind from the incursions of the Adversary. At all times, we can firmly remind ourselves that we have a hope that stretches beyond this lifetime into eternity.

Sword of the Spirit: This is the only weapon in the list and it refers to God's Word - the Bible (Heb. 4:12). In Matthew 4, we see Jesus masterfully using this 'sword' to combat the Adversary. Through knowing God's Word, we develop a powerful spiritual weapon in our lives.

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

As a Basic's Leader, your job's not done. You still have some very important tasks to accomplish:

- 1. Report Completion:** Make sure to report the completion of your Basics study to the Discipleship Ministry leader.
- 2. Make sure they're connected.** The Basics group may be one of the first places that these individuals have developed relationships in the church. After Basics is complete, the last thing we want to see is disconnection from relationship and purpose. After two weeks, follow up with each of the participants in the study to make sure that they have:
 - Connected to a Discipleship Group
 - Know their Next Step

You can find the resources and the coaching that you'll need at the ***Next Step Station***.

- **Sign up for another go at leading a Basics Study!** If you loved introducing new Christians to the basics and getting them moving in discipleship by discovering their Next Steps, then this is the perfect place for you. We offer the Basics study quarterly, so jump on board to lead in another of these studies.