

THE TRAILHEAD



Spiritual Formation Pathway – Start here

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Christ Community Church

Each session follows the loose pattern below and can last between 60-90 minutes. For groups who want to spend more time on each session, they're designed with the ability to be repeated with multiple texts.

- Connecting with one another
- Prayer to invite God's presence and sanctifying work (including confession)
- Reading and discussion from the passages/resources
- Key spiritual formation questions related to the passages
- Prayer for one another

In between sessions there are recommended practices for the individual and group to do and then discuss when they regather.



THE TRAILHEAD OVERVIEW

Walked through in community at a pace that suits the group

Session 1

Who is a Disciple?

Session 2

God Almighty, Father & Creator

Session 3

Son: Messiah, Savior, Word

Session 4

Spirit: Speaker, Comforter, Sanctifier

Session 5

Who am I? [Made in God's Image]

Session 6

Scripture

Session 7

Sin

Session 8

The Gospel

Session 9

Salvation

Session 10

Filled with the Spirit

Session 11

Make Disciples

Supplementary Books (encouraged, but optional, to be read throughout your time at the trailhead)



John Stott, *Basic Christianity*



NT Wright, *Simply Christian*



or Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*

Resources for Practice or Reflection



Session 1: “8 Dimensions of Discipleship” by Bob Logan



Session 6: “How to Study the Bible” by Geoffrey Maurer



Session 7: “The Great Sin” by CS Lewis (ch 8, *Mere Christianity*)

Session One

Who is a Disciple?

THE TRAILHEAD BEGINS BY
EXAMINING THE IDEA OF
“DISCIPLE” FROM THE SCRIPTURES
AND EXTENDING AN INVITATION
INTO A LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

“A disciple is a Spirit-led follower of Jesus, one who learns and worships the Triune God.”

- What does this definition imply is required of a disciple?
- Does this definition match with any experience you’ve had with “being disciplined”? What did that look like? Was it a positive experience, why or why not?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Mark 1:16-20; Luke 9:21-27; John 1:35-51

Starter Observation Questions:

- What does this passage say about who God is?
- What does this passage say about what a disciple is / is like?

Key Formation questions:

- Are you a disciple of Jesus?
- How do you know? What are the marks of a disciple?
- To what extent are they true of you?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions)

- Read daily in the Word for 15 minutes (a suggestion: start with the Gospel of Mark)
- Work on memorizing Luke 9:23-24

Read for reflection: “8 Dimensions of Discipleship” by Bob Logan



Notes:



Session Two
God Almighty,
Father & Creator

ALL LIFE AND THE CREATED
ORDER FINDS ITS SOURCE IN GOD.
THIS SESSION FOCUSES ON A FEW
FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF WHO
THE SCRIPTURES SAY GOD IS.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

When you think of God, what image or metaphor comes to mind? Why do you think this is?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Exodus 3; Psalm 103; John 5:16-45; James 1:13-18; Revelation 4

Starter Observation Questions:

- Identify some of the characteristics about God found in this passage.
- How are people asked to walk with God based on this passage (directly or implied)?

Key Formation questions:

- What does it mean to be a worshipper of God in light of the truth we've read?
- Does your life reflect the reality of who God is? How or how not?

Ministry/Prayer to and for one another

Practice (for in between sessions)

Worship! Through music, prayer, art, words... spend time everyday worshipping God this week for who He is.

Notes:

Session Three

God the Son: Messiah,
Savior, Word

THIS SESSION AIMS TO HELP
US EXPAND OUR PERSPECTIVE
OF WHO JESUS IS AND GROW
OUR FAITH IN HIM.

Connect

Share about the 'practice' action steps that have come after sessions 1 & 2

Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- Do your thoughts of Jesus tend to focus more on his life, death, resurrection or ascension? Is he present or past? Why?
- What words might you use to describe your relationship with Jesus?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Isaiah 9:1-7; 11:1-9; John 1:1-18; John 10:1-21; Colossians 1:15-20;
Hebrews 1:1-3

Starter Observation Questions:

- What does this passage say about God's Son?
- What is the Son's relationship with the Father?
- What is the Son's relationship with people?

Key Formation questions:

- To what extent have you limited Jesus in your mind or practical reality?
- If the passage we read is true, how does it change how you treat others?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions)

- Commit to 15 minutes of prayer each day. 5 of worship; 5 of intercession; 5 for silence and listening

Notes:

Session Four

God the Spirit: Speaker,
Comforter, Sanctifier

THIS SESSION FOCUSES ON THE COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD PERSON OF GOD. IN IT, WE WILL BEGIN TO LEARN WHO THE SPIRIT IS, WHAT HE DOES, AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR US.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- Did you grow up with the Holy Spirit emphasized, de-emphasized, absent, or other?
- What is the role of God's Spirit in your life today?
- What is something you'd like to know or understand about God's Spirit?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Isaiah 44:1-5 and Ezek. 36:24-32 (read together); John 14:15-31; John 15:26 – 16:15; Acts 2

Starter Observation Questions:

- What occurs in people as God gives His Spirit?
- Identify and describe what this passage says the Spirit is like.

Key Formation questions:

- How do you normally seek out refreshment for your soul?
- How could you grow in your relationship with God through the "gift of the Holy Spirit"?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions)

- Seek the Lord several times in between sessions with a combination of prayer, worship and Word.
- Invite God to minister to you through His Spirit.
- Interchange the order of your time with Him and pay attention to differences that makes.

Notes:



Session Five
Who am I?

HUMANS HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT THE QUESTION OF THEIR OWN EXISTENCE FOR MILLENNIA. THIS SESSION LOOKS AT WHO GOD SAYS WE ARE AND WHAT DIFFERENCE THAT MAKES.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- Do you believe people are fundamentally good or evil? Why?
- Describe a time in your life when you experienced someone devalued your dignity.

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Genesis 1:26-31; 2:15-17; 5:1-3; 9:5-7; Ephesians 4:20-24; James 3:9-10

Starter Observation Questions:

- What fundamental truths flow from the reality that God created us “in his image”?
- What are the core ways these Scriptures describe humanity?
- What are the similarities and differences between the created selves we all share and the redeemed person?
- How does faith in Jesus affect our likeness with God (*see the idea of Jesus as the perfect “image of God” along with Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:15*)

Key Formation questions:

- If you are made in God’s likeness according to his BEING (*who you are*) and not just for function (*what you can do*), how does that change your understanding of your identity?
- In what ways are you tempted to devalue the image of God in others?
- In what ways could you step into God’s call to love yourself and others as those created in God’s image?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions):

- Journal – What is most key to my identity, in practice? In what ways am I tempted to devalue the image of God in others? Why?

Notes:



Session Six
Scripture

THIS SESSION BEGINS THE QUESTION ABOUT WHAT THE BIBLE IS, WHETHER WE CAN TRUST IT, AND WHAT ROLE GOD INTENDS FOR HIS SCRIPTURES TO PLAY IN OUR LIFE.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- What role does the Bible play in your life currently? What does this look like in practice?
- Do you have a favorite Scripture passage? What is it and why?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Psalm 19; Psalm 119:33-40; Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17;
2 Peter 1:19-21

Starter Observation Questions:

- What are some ways the Scriptures define and describe themselves?
- Where does the Bible come from? What does the Bible “do”?

Key Formation questions:

- What habits can help God’s Word stay vibrant and weighty in your life?
- What obstacles hinder your time in the Word?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions):

- Read for reflection: “How to Study the Bible” and try to do an in-depth study of one story from the gospels.



OR

- Choose one short passage of 3-4 verses (*or less*) and meditate on it this week. Read it daily, repeatedly, and prayerfully. Sit in silence with God’s words and ask the Spirit to speak what He wants to speak.

Notes:



Session Seven
Sin

IN THIS SESSION WE WILL
EXAMINE WHAT IS WRONG
WITH THE WORLD –
BEGINNING WITH US!

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- How do you respond to the idea of “sin”?
- Are you more inclined to be debilitated by or dismissive of your sin?
- Do you have anyone in your life with whom you can be honest about your struggles with sin?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Genesis 3; Psalm 32:1-5; Luke 18:9-14; Romans 3:9-23; 1 John 1:5 – 2:2

Starter Observation Questions:

- What are the results and impacts of sin?
- What do the Scriptures call people to do with their sin?

Key Formation questions:

- Might the Lord be calling you to turn from a pattern of sin in your life? How can you involve the community of faith to help you?
- In what ways will you remember God’s grace and rely upon the Spirit to bring change?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions):

- Take time each day to reflect upon your day, observe the pull towards sin, and write down the ways you battled temptation or your sinful nature. Ask God to enter into those places to provide forgiveness and also strength to face them the next time.

Read for reflection:



C.S. Lewis, “The Great Sin” (Ch. 8, *Mere Christianity*)

Notes:



Session Eight
The Gospel

IN THIS SESSION, WE
CELEBRATE GOD'S RESPONSE
TO OUR SIN AND WHAT IT
MEANS FOR US.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- “The Gospel” is a common phrase – how might you define it in one sentence or less?
- Are you confident you belong to God? Why?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Isaiah 12; 52:7-10; Mark 1:1, Mark 1:14-15; Romans 1:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Starter Observation Questions:

- What are the various ways the Scripture defines the ‘gospel’? What are the key elements?
- What does the gospel show us about God? About ourselves?

Key Formation questions:

- What type of response does the gospel call for?
- What role does the gospel have in your life today?
- What are the signs that you believe the gospel, if that is the case?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions):

- Apply the gospel to your life. Observe your life choices, thought patterns and heart posture.
- Explain in your journal how believing the gospel did/could make a difference in those situations. Try to find three of these ‘case studies’ before the next time your discipleship group meets.

Notes:



Session Nine
Salvation

THIS SESSION EXPLORES THE
IMPLICATIONS OF THE
GOSPEL AND HOW WE LIVE IN
LIGHT OF GOD'S WORK.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- What does the word “salvation” mean to you?
- If you were living in a perfect world – what would be there? What wouldn't? Be specific!

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Exodus 15:1-5; Psalm 18:1-5; Isaiah 12; Luke 19:1-10; Acts 4:1-12;
Romans 3:21-26, 6:23; Revelation 19:1-8

Starter Observation Questions:

- The Bible uses various metaphors for salvation: redemption or liberation from slavery, death to life, unclean to clean, entering the Kingdom, adoption, invited to the feast – which of these stand out to you most personally at this point in your life?
- How do these verses describe the process of receiving salvation?

Key Formation questions:

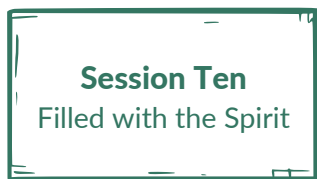
- Do you struggle to believe that you are truly forgiven? What is the obstacle?
- How can we apply our salvation to our thought patterns and behaviors?
- How does the hope of future salvation impact our experience of it today?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions):

Just as you journaled reflectively about sin last time, now keep a journal of gratitude. Aim to be aware of God's richness toward you and the expressions of his kindness. This week, list at least five things to be grateful for each day.

Notes:



Session Ten
Filled with the Spirit

IN SESSION FOUR WE DISCUSSED THE IDENTITY AND ROLE OF THE SPIRIT. THIS SESSION FOCUSES ON LIVING OUT OUR FAITH BY WALKING IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT.

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- Describe a time when you felt like you knew you were doing what God wanted. How could you tell?
- What assumptions do you have about the phrase “filled with the Spirit”? How has it been used in your experience?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

John 7:37-39; Acts 2:1-4, 37-40; Acts 10:44-48; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5:13-26

Starter Observation Questions:

- How does one receive the Spirit?
- What stands in contrast to the Spirit?
- What impact does the Spirit make in people?
- What characterizes those who walk by the Spirit?

Key Formation questions:

- What gets in the way of you living by the Spirit?
- Which fruit of the Spirit you would like to see develop further in your life at this point? (Gal 5:22-23). Why?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions):

- Commit yourself to surrendering your life to God’s Lordship and for the filling of the Spirit (on your own and with others).
- Search the Scripture for other truth about the fruit God has identified for you.

Notes:



Session Eleven
Go and Make Disciples

ONE OF JESUS' LAST MESSAGES TO HIS DISCIPLES WAS TO SEND THEM WITH A GLOBAL TASK: MAKING DISCIPLES. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US TODAY?

Connect | Pray/Pause

Discussion Starters:

- What do you imagine are some of the key qualities of those who “make disciples”?
- What obstacles have you encountered (or imagine might arise) for those who seek to make disciples?

Read from one (or more) of the following texts:

Matthew 5:1-10; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-16; John 4:27-41;
2 Timothy 2:1-2

Starter Observation Questions:

- With what does Jesus equip his disciples as he sends them out?
- What is an important quality of those who make disciples?
- What truths are key for those who obey Jesus in this venture?

Key Formation questions:

- Are there relationships I currently have that could be shaped or deepened more toward the goal of growing in Christ?
- What stands in the way of me actively taking part in this command of Jesus?
- Is making disciples one of my primary values/commitments in life? Why or why not?

Ministry to/Prayer for one another

Practice (for in between sessions):

- Pray and ask the Lord: Are you calling me to invest my life into someone for the sake of disciple-making? What is one next action-step?

Notes:
