

The Next Steps



A Follow-up tool for new believers and disciplemakers

*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18, ESV*

Jack E. Bell and Maxine Omdahl

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Introduction

***Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2 Peter 3:18 (ESV)***

You hold in your hands a unique discipleship tool designed to be used by the local church to follow up with new believers and teach believers to become intentional disciplemakers.

Years ago during a revival meeting at our church, twelve people came to Christ. All we had to follow up with them in their new faith was a church brochure and a desire to help them grow. Our pastor asked us to develop a process to help new believers grow spiritually. From much prayer and with the Holy Spirit's leading, "The Next Steps" was birthed!

Since then the material has been edited and refined to be flexible for one-on-one or classroom use, and we've made it available for broad use. We hope you will customize it to reflect your church culture. Use the recommended copyrighted materials as is, but feel free to adapt other sections to make it your own.

- You may want to change the name to give the material your unique identity. Some churches have called this resource "First Steps," "New Beginnings," or "Building Blocks," for example. Simply replace the cover sheet with an appropriate top sheet for your context. (Please include the copyright page in any reproductions you make.)
- Please use the Bible translation your church prefers. We have used multiple translations but have indicated the translation with each verse cited. We do, however, encourage you to use a translation rather than a paraphrase, as translations are more precise in how they convey the original meaning of the Scriptures.
- In the training you do alongside this resource, we encourage you to add personal faith stories significant to your experience and church history—the more personal and relatable, the better.
- Step 8, "Living in Your New Family," gives you an opportunity to present values and procedures significant to your church body.

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Two resources in particular, *7 Minutes with God* and *Beginning with Christ*, are essential companions to this resource. Each person going through this program should have their own copy. You may purchase them from www.NavPress.com or any bookseller. The cost is nominal.

Working on this project has been a meaningful experience, and we are pleased to be able to share this material with you for your personal discipleship efforts. May God richly bless your ministries and bring a bountiful harvest for His Kingdom.

—Jack Bell and Maxine Omdahl

Step 1

Trusting God's Love

When we personally believe that God loves us and that He sacrificed His Son Jesus to save us from our sin, we begin a walk of faith that takes us from being a spiritual newborn to becoming a mature, Christ-like believer. This material is designed to guide new believers step by step toward spiritual maturity.

Understandably, the first step is to believe that God loves you. In this first step, we guide you through three examples of what it looks like to be in a dynamic relationship with God, trusting His unconditional love.

- 1. "Father's Love Letter" by Barry Adams conveys that God loves us as a father. Each statement in this powerful letter is a paraphrase of Scripture.*
- 2. John 3:16 is a familiar verse to many, but the depth of its meaning might escape us without closer examination. We will help you discover the breadth and depth of God's love in this one beautiful verse.*
- 3. Finally, "The Wheel Illustration," developed by The Navigators founder Dawson Trotman, embodies the believer's relationship with God and others.*

Over the course of 10 weeks, you will take progressive steps of faith that will guide you toward a stronger, more mature walk with Christ.

Step 1: Trusting God's Love

GOALS:

- To get acquainted with one another and the program materials
- To help participants examine their present faith and glimpse God's great love for believers

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *Beginning with Christ*

AGENDA

1. Get acquainted.

- Introduce hosts and leaders/mentors, and share contact information.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves: names, where from, favorite color and why.
- Housekeeping
 - Facilities
 - Materials and any costs
 - Schedule

2. Explain the vision for the course: to guide new believers toward spiritual maturity and make generations of disciples.

3. Read "Father's Love Letter" together.

- Have one or two read aloud to the group.
- Emphasize that this letter is God's Word, completely paraphrased from the Bible

4. Discuss "The Gospel in One Verse."

- Read the explanations of each key word.
- Ask each person to circle the "X" that represents where they feel they are on the illustration and share that privately with the leader/mentor.

5. Walk through "The Wheel Illustration."

- Explain that lives centered on Christ are like a balanced wheel having direction from Christ.
- Look up one Scripture for each point.

6. Discuss assignment for the next session:

- Do the "Affirming Your Faith" study in Step 2, pp. 2.3-2.4.
- Read the three sections of "Memorizing God's Word," Step 2, pp. 2.5-2.6.
- Read the first section of *Beginning with Christ*, "Assurance of Salvation."
- Memorize 1 John 5:11-12, Assurance of Salvation.

The Schedule

Each week, bring your Bible, loose-leaf paper, and a pen.

This agenda is organized for a class setting with a small group. Come prepared to see your faith grow and meet wonderful new friends. Most sessions are designed to last 60-90 minutes.

→ **Mark your calendars to meet weekly:** _____ at _____
(day of week) (time)

Dates:

_____ : Introduction and Step 1: Trusting God's Love

_____ : Affirming Your New Faith, Memorizing Scripture

_____ : Assurance of Prayer, Holy Spirit Your Helper

_____ : Five Assurances/Beginning with Christ

_____ : Prayer, 7 Minutes with God/ Quiet Time

_____ : Reading God's Word, Bible Basics

_____ : Sharing Your Faith, Developing Your Testimony

_____ : Living in Your New Family, Fellowship/Church

_____ : Share Testimonies, Mentoring Others

_____ : Finish Testimony

FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

An intimate message from God to you.

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2 I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28 For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father: 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect father: Matthew 5:48 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4 I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7 I have always been Father, and will always be Father: Ephesians 3:14-15 My question is... Will you be my child? John 1:12-13 I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

*Love, Your Dad...
Almighty God*

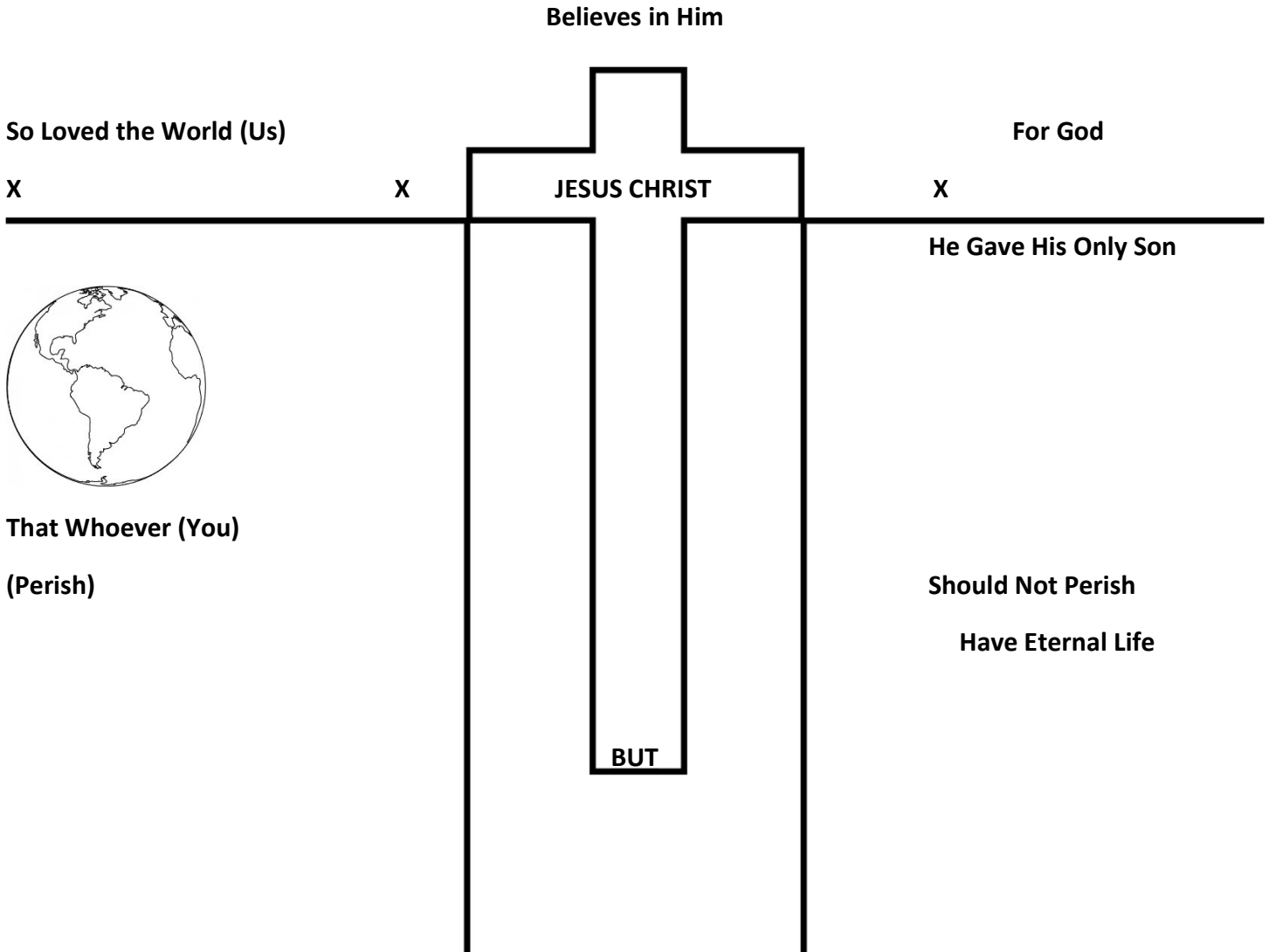


Father's Love Letter © 1999
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Find out more at GodLovesYou.tv

The Gospel in One Verse

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16, ESV



1. On the illustration above, Circle the words “For God.”

God made the world and everything in it for His pleasure and His glory. But sin—the disobedient things we do—came into the world and separated us from God. Sin created a gap between people and God, who is holy and without sin.

2. Circle the phrase “so loved the world (us).”

Even though we have turned from God and His way, He still loves us.

1.4

3. Circle the phrase “He gave His only Son (Jesus).”

To bridge the gap between us because of sin, *God gave His only Son*, born of a woman, to pay the penalty for our sin. Since Jesus was without sin, He was the only acceptable sacrifice. Christ's blood sacrifice paid the price for our sin that we might claim His righteousness and be reconciled with our Holy God.

4. Circle "that whoever" and "believes in Him (Jesus)."

Anyone who believes that Jesus died in their place can now come to God.

5. Circle "should not perish."

If you believe Christ has paid the price for your sin by His sacrifice on the cross, *you will not perish, or die*. Christ died in our place.

6. Circle "but."

Believers who confess Jesus as Lord commit to turn from sin and trust Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins once and for all!

7. Circle "eternal life."

When you place your faith in Jesus, you have the assurance of eternal life. At the time of your physical death, you will enter eternal life with God.

It all starts with a simple prayer that can go like this.

"Dear God, I thank you that you love me so much that you sent your only son, Jesus Christ, to die in my place so that I can know you and have a relationship with you. I turn from my personal wrongdoing and thank you for your forgiveness as I place my faith in Him. Thank you that I can have eternal life with you in heaven for eternity. In Jesus' name, Amen."

If you have prayed that prayer (or prayed it before now) you are on the way to the next steps with God through Jesus Christ.

The Wheel Illustration



Just as any wheel in balance must have the hub directly in the center, any life in balance must be centered on Christ. He is the power source for a dynamic Christian life, just as the wheel is driven forward by the power of the hub. The direction of any wheel also comes from the hub and so every mature believer lives under the Lordship of Christ. He sets the direction for their lives.*

- The rim on a wheel is where the rubber meets the road. This is living the daily life of following Christ by being obedient to His commands.
- The spokes represent the basics of walking with Christ. All believers must have these elements in their lives to grow consistently and fruitfully.
- The vertical spokes depict our relationship with God. The

foundational spoke is the Word. In His Word God speaks to us and gives us direction. Through prayer we speak to God, sharing with Him our needs, praising His greatness, and confessing our sins.

- The horizontal spokes depict our relationships with people. Fellowship is our relationship with believers. We share the love of Christ with one another. Witnessing is our relationship with those who don't know Christ. We share the reality of Christ and His gospel by our words and our lifestyle.

Summarize each verse on the lines below.

Christ the Center

Galatians 2:20:

John 15:7:

Obedience

Romans 12:1:

Fellowship

Hebrews 10:24-25:

The Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17:

Matthew 18:20:

Prayer

Philippians 4:6-7:

Witnessing

Romans 1:16:

* The Wheel is a registered trademark of The Navigators. Used by permission. All rights reserved. For more information on The Wheel and its origin and evolution, visit <https://www.navigators.org/resource/the-wheel-illustration/>.

Assignments for the Next Session

- Do the “Affirming Your Faith” study in Step 2, pp. 2.3-2.4.
- Read the three sections of “Memorizing God’s Word,” Step 2, pp. 2.5-2.6.
- Read the first section of *Beginning with Christ*, “Assurance of Salvation.”
- Memorize 1 John 5:11-12, Assurance of Salvation.

Step 2

Affirming Your Faith in Christ

At the moment we profess Jesus as Lord of our lives, we become children of God. All heaven celebrates our new birth! In contrast, Satan, a fallen angel from Heaven and God's enemy, steps up his attacks and tries his best to make us doubt our salvation. Our goal in Step 2 is to affirm your faith in Christ so that you will trust fully that you are a child of God and that you will enter eternal life at the moment of your physical death.

*In Step 2 we introduce the booklet **Beginning with Christ** produced by NavPress. It is a resource designed for new believers and from it, you will learn how to memorize Scripture, because it is your strongest offensive weapon against the attacks of Satan. We also introduce you to Scripture meditation because the Word of God is our daily food. And we will learn that as God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible, we will learn how to speak back to Him through prayer.*

Your wonderful faith journey has just begun and there are many beautiful rewards awaiting your faithfulness!

Step 2

Affirming Your Faith in Christ

GOALS

- To be assured of your salvation in Christ
- To learn how and why to memorize Scripture
- To learn how to pray with others

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *Beginning with Christ*

AGENDA

1. Warm Up: Ask participants what they hope to learn from this program.
2. Pray.
3. Review Step 1. Discuss any lingering questions.
4. Read the first section of *Beginning with Christ*, “Assurance of Salvation” (p. 4).
5. Go over the study exercise “Affirming Your Faith” (pp. 2.3–2.4).
6. Discuss Scripture memorization.
 - Read aloud “Memorizing God’s Word” (pp. 2.5-2.6).
 - Demonstrate the memorization process.
 - Cite Topic, Reference, Verse, Reference.
 - Encourage looking at the card to assure accuracy; not trusting memory.
 - Review 1 John 5:11-12, “Assurance of Salvation,” in pairs.
 - Share a personal example of a time when you used memorized Scripture.
7. Talk about Scripture meditation (p. 2.6).
 - Work through the AEIOU method with Joshua 1:8 if time allows.
8. Introduce popcorn prayer. (Each shares a short phrase, a sentence aloud, a praise, a thank-you, a need, etc.)
 - Encourage each person to offer a one-sentence prayer as they feel led.
 - Begin and close the prayer time.

9. Assignments for the next session:

- Review the verse on “Assurance of Salvation,” 1 John 5:11-12.
- Memorize the verse on “Assurance of Answered Prayer,” John 16:24.
- Read the entire ***Beginning with Christ*** booklet.
- Do the exercises in Step 3, “Understanding Your New Faith” (pp. 3.2-3.3).

Affirming Your Faith

You have acknowledged that God is at work in your life and you have:

- believed that you are a sinner (broken God’s laws) and that the wages of your sin is death.
- believed that Jesus Christ took your place and died for the payment of your personal sins.
- prayed and asked for forgiveness.
- believed and confessed with your mouth that God raised Jesus from the dead and you are saved (Romans 10:9).
- prayed and invited Him to take control of your life.
- committed your life to Jesus Christ and placed your faith in Him.

What does the Bible (God’s Word) say took place when you put your faith in Christ?

1. You now have eternal life in Jesus Christ and are saved.

“I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, NIV).

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13, ESV).

→ What did Jesus say about himself?

I am the ___ and the _____ and the _____, no one comes to the Father except through me.

→ What will happen when a person calls upon the name of the Lord (receives Jesus Christ)?

He will ____.

2. You are God’s child.

God’s Word says, “To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become *children of God*” (John 1:12-13, NIV).

→ What happened when you believed and received Jesus Christ?

I became a _____.

3. You have received eternal life.

The Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23, NIV).

→ Now that you believe and have received Jesus Christ, what can you say with full assurance?

I have _____!

4. You have been saved by God's grace and not by your own good works.

God's Word says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV).

➔ What did you do to earn forgiveness and eternal life?

God saved me by His _____.

I did nothing except believe by _____ that Jesus saves me.

5. Your forgiveness and future are secure in Christ.

Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24, NASB).

➔ What does Jesus promise?

He gives me _____.

I shall not come into _____.

And am passed from _____ to _____!

My Personal Response

Write out a personal prayer and give thanks to God for the gift of eternal life you have received by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Memorizing God's Word

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Psalm 119:11, NIV

God's Word, the Bible, is referred to as "bread" to nourish the soul, a "sword" to fight off the attacks of the enemy, and even as a "hammer" that breaks the rocks of sin.*

Jesus quoted Scripture when He was battling Satan. He used Scripture when teaching and ministering to others. There are many reasons to memorize Scripture; here are a few:

- When you are tempted, it will help you resist the devil and defend yourself.
- When you are discouraged, the Holy Spirit will speak to you through the Word you have memorized.
- When you feel weak, it can give you strength.
- When you are joyful, it will help you express praise.
- When you witness, you will speak with power and authority.
- It will keep your prayer life fresh and biblical.

Beginning with Christ gives you a number of verses to memorize, related to topics of particular value to new believers. After you've memorized those verses, you can find additional verses to memorize by looking at a topical Bible index or by asking a friend who is knowledgeable about the Bible.

How to Memorize a Verse Effectively

1. Before you start to memorize a verse, read it aloud several times.
2. Learn the topic, reference, and the first phrase as a unit. The topic of a verse is a brief, basic explanation of what the verse is about. This may be obvious from the verse itself or its surrounding context. Memorizing the topic will help you recall verses that address specific needs.
3. After you have reviewed the topic, reference, and first phrase a few times, add the second phrase. Gradually add phrases until you know the whole verse.
4. Work on the verse audibly whenever possible. Reciting the verse out loud will reinforce your memory of it.
5. As you memorize and review the verse, think about how it applies to your own life. Considering a verse's personal application will help you memorize it but will also help you guard against falling into a habit of memorizing Scripture just to say you did it.
6. Always review the verse in this sequence:
 - a. TOPIC: "Assurance of Salvation."
 - b. REFERENCE: "First John five, eleven and twelve."
 - c. VERSE(S) "*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life*" (NIV).
 - d. REFERENCE: "First John five, eleven and twelve." Memorizing the reference both before and after the verse aids in recall and in considering the verse's context.
7. The most critical element in Scripture memory is REVIEW, REVIEW, REVIEW. The most important time to review a verse repeatedly is right after you can quote the whole verse (topic, reference, verse, reference) without making a mistake. Review the verse a minimum of once daily after that, preferably several times a day. The more review, the greater your retention.

* "Memorizing the Word" is adapted from the booklet *Beginning with Christ*. Used by permission of NavPress.

8. An important concept is the principle of OVERLEARNING. Don't consider a verse to be memorized simply at the point when you can quote it accurately. You have truly memorized a verse only when you have reviewed it frequently enough for it to become *ingrained* in your memory.

There will come a day when your memorized verse(s) will be your sure defense against the schemes of the evil one, "For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword . . ." (Hebrews 4:12, NIV).

Scripture Meditation

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Joshua 1:8, ESV

The true secret of Scripture memory and living in light of it is to meditate on Scripture, to soak it up with your heart and mind. One effective method of meditating on Scripture is known as the AEIOU method.*

A – Ask yourself questions and answer them from the verse (who, what, where, when, how).

E – Emphasize individual words vocally to separate thoughts.

I – In your own words, say the verse the way you would speak it (paraphrase).

O – Other verses: check your Bible or use a search engine online to find cross-references (verses with similar wording or concepts) online.

U – What are you going to do about it (application)?

* The AEIOU method of Scripture meditation is described in detail in Bill Mowry, *The Ways of the Alongsider* (Colorado Springs, CO: 2.6NavPress, 2016).

Assignments for the Next Session

- Review the verse on “Assurance of Salvation,” 1 John 5:11-12.
- Memorize the verse on “Assurance of Answered Prayer,” John 16:24.
- Read the entire ***Beginning with Christ*** booklet.
- Do the exercises in Step 3, “Understanding Your New Faith” (pp. 3.2-3.3).

Understanding Your New Faith

Sometimes we struggle to believe that our sins can be forgiven by “merely” confessing them or that we can trust that we now have the promise of eternal life. Since this doubt can be a stumbling block to our faith walk, we once again share Scriptures with you in another exercise to affirm your faith and help you to understand you are now a new creation in Christ.

In Step 3 you will see what the Bible says about being “born again.” You will also see that God places His Holy Spirit within each new believer to comfort and teach us, to walk alongside us on our faith journey. You will never be alone!

*You will also continue to memorize key Bible verses as you study **Beginning with Christ**, because strength and blessing come from hiding God’s Word in your heart.*

May God strengthen and keep you as you progress in your walk of faith.

Step 3

Understanding Your New Faith

GOALS

- To understand the significance of our “new birth” in Christ
- To understand that God gives us His Holy Spirit to help and comfort us
- To become more confident in memorizing Scripture

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *Beginning with Christ*

AGENDA

1. Warm-up: Name one fun thing you’d like to accomplish before you leave this earth.
2. The leader/mentor prays.
3. Review memory verses 1 John 5:11-12 and John 16:24
 - Share the memory verses in pairs.
 - Discuss any questions about the verses.
4. Review “Memorizing God’s Word,” pp. 2.5-2.6.
5. Go through the Step 3 study “Understanding Your New Faith” (pp. 3.2-3.3)
 - Discuss any questions about the verses.
 - Discuss how can we recognize the Holy Spirit helping us.
6. Pray popcorn prayers.
 - Encourage everyone to participate.
 - The leader/mentor closes.
7. Assignments for the next session:
 - Review the “Assurance of Salvation” verse, 1 John 5:11-12.
 - Review the “Assurance of Answered Prayer” verse, John 16:24.
 - Memorize the “Assurance of Victory” verse, 1 Corinthians 10:13 (pp. 5-6 *Beginning with Christ*).
 - Read the complete *Beginning with Christ* booklet.
 - Do the Step 4 *Beginning with Christ* study (pp. 4.2–4.4).

Understanding Your New Faith

1. You are a new creation!

God created you to be in fellowship with Him, but everyone is a sinner (has disobeyed God's laws or done wrong things). As a sinner, you could not have a relationship with Him because He is a Holy God. When you received Jesus into your life as your Master and Savior, you became a new creation.

→ *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV

When you received Jesus Christ into your life, God nailed your sins on the cross to die with Jesus and the righteousness (holiness) of Jesus was placed on you!

→ *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree [cross], so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness."*

1 Peter 2:24, NIV

You have been spiritually born again. Read the story about Nicodemus, a rich man who asked Jesus how he could enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:1-16).

→ I am a new creation; I am _____ !

The process that takes place is called *conversion*. You are converted, or changed, from your old, sinful nature to a new Spirit-controlled nature in Christ.

The Apostle Paul instructs the new believer "to put off the old self, which is being corrupted by evil desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24, NIV).

2. You are a spiritual newborn.

From the day you received Christ, you began a new life as a child of God. As a child, you will grow every day to be more like Christ. You will come to know God better as you read your Bible, pray, worship Him at church, and fellowship with other believers. Like newborn babies, this process takes time and nurturing. Your teacher/mentor will come alongside you these first few weeks to help you grow.

The Bible says, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Peter 2:2,3, NIV).

→ What does a newborn baby need?

To grow spiritually, you will need to feed on the Word of God by reading in your Bible every day. This will help you to become strong in the Lord.

3.2

→ What does the Bible say in these passages?

Matthew 4:4:

Psalm 119:105:

We will learn more about reading your Bible in another session.

3. God has given you the Holy Spirit to help you know Him.

At the moment of your salvation, you were filled with the Holy Spirit.* When Jesus returned to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to live within believers so the Spirit could help them understand the Bible, help them pray, and teach them truth. Read what Jesus said to his disciples a few days before He died on the cross.

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you." John 14:16,17, NASB

→ What other actions or characteristics of the Holy Spirit do you see in these verses?

1 Corinthians 2:12:

Galatians 5:16:

Galatians 5:22:

Romans 8:16:

How exciting it is to know you have a "Helper" to guide you to know God!

→ Write any questions you have here so you'll remember to discuss them with your leader/mentor.

3.3

* For more information about the Christian life as led by the Holy Spirit, read *Design for Discipleship*, vol. 2, *The Spirit-Filled Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress).

Assignments for the next session:

- Review the “Assurance of Salvation” verse, 1 John 5:11-12.
- Review the “Assurance of Answered Prayer” verse, John 16:24.
- Memorize the “Assurance of Victory” verse, 1 Corinthians 10:13 (pp. 5-6 *Beginning with Christ*).
- Read the complete *Beginning with Christ* booklet.
- Do the Step 4 *Beginning with Christ* study (pp. 4.2–4.4).

Step 4

Beginning with Christ

*You have been reading through **Beginning with Christ**, but in Step 4 you will study the whole booklet to get the full picture of the five assurances believers are given in the Bible. There are many more promises in the Bible, but these five were selected to address key areas important in our faith walk. Each of them is related to a Bible verse that you will memorize as we go on. It is important that our trust be in Christ alone, for our flesh is weak and we cannot have victory over Satan without the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit.*

We have provided a “progress record” in this step so you can keep track of how you are moving through this material. Be encouraged by what you’ve accomplished and share your challenges with others in the group. Discuss any hurdles with your leader/mentor so they can be praying for you.

Step 4

Beginning with Christ

GOALS

- To understand the assurances we have as believers
- To find strength in memorized Scriptures
- To trust that we can be victorious in Christ

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *Beginning with Christ*

AGENDA

1. Group warm-up time: Have each person share
 - What has been the most challenging area of this learning experience so far?
 - What has been the most exciting so far?
2. Prayer: Have someone offer a brief opening prayer.
3. Review last week's session, "Understanding Your New Faith." Discuss any lingering questions.
4. Share memorized Scriptures in pairs.
 - 1 John 5:11-12
 - John 16:24
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13
5. Read aloud the section "Assurance of Victory" from ***Beginning with Christ*** (pp. 5-6).
6. Go through the Step 4 ***Beginning with Christ*** study together (pp. 4.2-4.4).
7. Introduce the Progress Record, p. 4.5.
8. Closing Prayer: Do popcorn prayer together.
9. Assignments for the next session:
 - Memorize the "Assurance of Forgiveness" verse, 1 John 1:9.
 - Read the ***7 Minutes with God*** booklet.
 - Read and complete the first section of Step 5, "Talking and Listening to God" (pp. 5.3-5.5). You will do the rest together in class or with a leader/mentor.

Beginning with Christ

In this session you and your leader/mentor will be going through the booklet *Beginning with Christ*, as it outlines the principles of your new relationship with Christ. You may have already read through this but now you will look at it piece by piece.

As unbelievers, we were formerly “children of disobedience” who walked in darkness. Satan was the ruler of your life (Ephesians 2:1-2, NASB). Now you are child of God and Satan is your new enemy. He will come against you to try to hinder your walk of faith.

The material that follows is based on Scripture and emphasizes memorizing Scripture as a primary way to remember God’s promises and use them to defend against Satan’s attacks. The memory cards in *Beginning with Christ* can be torn out to keep with you as you memorize them. They are printed in two versions, the King James Version (KJV) or New International Version (NIV), so you can memorize the version you prefer.

→ Read pages 1-3 of *Beginning with Christ*. Glance through the rest of the booklet and list the five assurances you have in Christ.

Assurance of _____

Assurance of _____

Assurance of _____

Assurance of _____

Assurance of _____

The New Century Dictionary defines *assurance* as “a positive declaration intended to give confidence or certainty.”* In the spiritual sense, an assurance is a promise from God that you can claim now that you are a child of God.

1. Assurance of Salvation

→ Look at 1 John 5:11-12.

Who gives eternal life?

Where is eternal life found?

Who has eternal life?

4.2

* H. G. Emery and K. G. Brewster, *The New Century Dictionary of the English Language* (Appleton-Century, 1948), s.v. “assurance.”

Who does not have eternal life?

Do you have eternal life? On what do you base your answer?

2. Assurance of Answered Prayer

→ According to John 16:24,

How do we communicate with God?

What is prayer?

In whose name should we pray and why?

What results from prayer?

3. Assurance of Victory

→ Look at 1 Corinthians 10:13. The Bible tells you that Satan is a tempter who draws and entices you to be disobedient in weak areas of your life.

What is true of every temptation that you face?

Who gives you victory when you are tempted?

What does God do for you?

4. Assurance of Forgiveness

→ Read 1 John 1:9.

What does it mean to confess our sins?

To whom do we confess our sins?

What does God promise to do if we confess our sins?

5. Assurance of Guidance

→ Look at Proverbs 3:5-6.

In whom should you trust?

What does it mean to “trust”?

What should you “not” do?

What does God do if you trust in Him?

New Believer Progress Record

The progress record is designed to help you keep track of your movement through these important early steps to establish and grow your faith. You'll return to this page regularly over the remaining sessions to check off exercises as you complete them.

Scripture Memory

Initials

Date Complete

Beginning with Christ memory verses:

"Assurance of Salvation" – 1 John 5:11-12

"Assurance of Answered Prayer" – John 16:24

"Assurance of Victory" – 1 Corinthians 10:13

"Assurance of Forgiveness" – 1 John 1:9

"Assurance of Guidance" – Proverbs 3:5-6

Quoted all *Beginning with Christ* verses in one sitting

Reviewed *Beginning with Christ* booklet 7 days

Quiet Time – 7 Minutes with God

Completed *7 Minutes with God* for seven consecutive days, utilizing the journal (p. 5.6).

Study Exercises

"Affirming Your Faith" study

"Understanding Your New Faith" study

"Beginning with Christ" study

"Talking and Listening to God" study

"Reading your Bible" study

"Living in Your New Family" study

Bible Reading

Read the entire Gospel of John.

Sharing Your Faith

Develop a short personal testimony

Mentoring

Review "Discipling the New Believer"

4.5

Leader's/Mentor's Check of all entries

Graduating from the follow-up class

Assignments for the Next Session

- Memorize the “Assurance of Forgiveness” verse, 1 John 1:9.
- Read the **7 Minutes with God** booklet.
- Read and complete the first section of Step 5, “Talking and Listening to God” (pp. 5.3-5.5). You will do the rest together in class or with a leader/mentor.

Step 5

Talking and Listening to God

Communication is key to any relationship, and that is no different in our relationship with God. He takes delight in His children and wants to hear from us! In this step we discuss how and why we pray. Prayer is not intended to be a memorized liturgy but a more casual, open conversation. Talk to God as you would to a close friend:

- *Tell Him about your feelings, confusion, concerns*
- *Share your struggles with Him*
- *Ask Him for help, wisdom, guidance*
- *Share your joys and victories*
- *Thank Him for your salvation*

In other words, talk to Him about anything on your mind! Then be sure to be still and listen for His reply. We will model prayer in our sessions and guide you to pray with others. Don't despair; prayer is learned, it doesn't always come naturally.

*In this step we also introduce you to the “**7 Minutes with God Journal**” that you can use to have a “quiet time” with God. It will help you read and study the Bible as well as journal your prayers. This will become an important daily habit once you recognize how valuable time with God can be.*

Prayer is one discipline that will reap rewards far beyond the effort you put into it!

Step 5

Talking and Listening to God

GOALS

- To focus on the elements of prayer
- To learn how to pray
- To practice a seven-minute quiet time exercise

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *7 Minutes with God* pamphlet

AGENDA

1. Group warm-up: What's your favorite meal? Why?
2. Prayer: Have someone pray for the session.
3. Review last week's "Beginning with Christ" study.
4. Review memory verses as a group, looking at Scripture cards *only* if necessary.
 - Assurance of Salvation, 1 John 5:11-12
 - Assurance of Answered Prayer, John 16:24
 - Assurance of Victory, 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - Assurance of Forgiveness, 1 John 1:9
5. Go through the Step 5 study, "Talking and Listening to God" (pp. 5.3-5.5)
6. Discuss the importance of regular quiet time with God.
 - Leader/mentor shares a personal example.
 - Introduce the "7 Minutes with God Journal" (p. 5.6).
 - Each person will need seven copies.
7. Practice using the journal with Psalm 1.
 - Share one thing that God spoke to you.
 - How did you pray back to Him?
8. Close in prayer using the ACTS format (see pp. 5.3-4).

9. Assignments for the next session:

- Memorize the “Assurance of Guidance” verse, Proverbs 3:5-6
- Read the section “Assurance of Guidance” in *Beginning with Christ*
- Use the “7 Minutes with God Journal” each day starting with John 1. Do one chapter each day. Strive for five consecutive days.
- Read Step 6, “Reading God’s Word.”
- Keep practicing and reviewing your memory verses.
- Hang in there; IT IS getting easier!

Talking and Listening to God

“Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’”

ISAIAH 58:9, NASB

Relationships cannot exist without communication, and there certainly cannot be intimacy without communication. As a member of the family of God, you will want and need to talk with God. He delights in hearing from you and often has something to say to you if you are still and open your heart to listen. In this session, you will learn about how to pray and how to listen.

Jesus prayed often with His Father. He taught His disciples how to pray. He prayed before making big decisions, before starting His day; He prayed to seek His Father’s will. Surely, if prayer was so important to Jesus, who is one with God the Father, (see John 10:30) it must be even more important for us!

When we pray, our relationship with God becomes real to us; prayer connects us to God through the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot have power without being connected to the power source: the Holy Spirit. Prayer is vital to living a victorious life in Christ.

What Is Prayer?

→ **Talking to God.** According to *The New Century Dictionary*, prayer is an act of communion or fellowship with God.* We fellowship with God simply by talking to Him.

→ **Open, honest conversation.** Prayer does not need to be complicated. It is more important that it be an open, honest conversation.

Elements of Prayer

When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, He gave them a model for prayer that we now call the Lord’s Prayer (read Matthew 6:9-13). You may have memorized this Scripture as a prayer, but it was intended to teach us how to pray. These basic elements should be included in our personal prayers.

- 1. Praying to the Father** (*Our Father, who art in heaven*)
Address Him with a proper salutation (Dear heavenly Father . . .).
Approach the throne of God with confidence—you’re His son/daughter.
- 2. Adoration (Praise)** (*hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done*)
Honor God for who He is, how great He is, and what He’s done for you.
Reflect on His greatness, holiness, and majesty.
Tell God you love Him.
- 3. Confession** (*Forgive us our debts . . .*)

Admit your sin. God is faithful to forgive (1 John 1:9).

Whoever confesses and renounces their sin finds mercy (Proverbs 28:13).

5.3

* H. G. Emery and K. G. Brewster, *The New Century Dictionary of the English Language* (Appleton-Century, 1948), s.v. “prayer.”

4. Thanksgiving

Thank God for *everything*: family, health, job, your salvation, sunshine, rain, food, the Bible, even trials (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

5. Supplication (*Give us this day . . .*)

Ask humbly and earnestly for specific needs:

- Personal needs (health, finances, family, etc.)
- Wisdom and knowledge of God (see James 1:5)
- Other believers: your church, missionaries, persecuted Christians (see Ephesians 6:18)
- Unbelievers: unsaved family, friends, people who haven't heard the gospel
- Government leaders, judges, politicians

Sometimes we don't know what we need or how to pray. At those times, the Holy Spirit within us intercedes on our behalf. Express how you feel (sad, confused, empty, worried, etc.) and allow the Spirit to communicate for you.

. . . The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Romans 8:26, ESV

6. Listening

You should not do all the talking in prayer. Ask God to answer, guide, and reveal His will for you; then *take time to sit quietly and listen*. You probably will not hear an audible voice, but Scripture that relates to your situation may come into your mind or the Holy Spirit may give you better understanding, confidence to proceed, uneasiness about a course of action, or other discernment concerning your situation. Sometimes God uses other people to answer our prayers, so don't disregard advice from mature believers. In fact, you may ask a mature believer, your pastor, or one of your church leaders what they think about what you've discerned from your time of prayer.

Additional Guidance for Prayer

- Be patient. Prayer is a learned behavior and may not come easily at first.
- Establish a regular time and place to pray, but don't forget that you can talk to God anytime, anywhere. Pray while you walk, do the dishes, take a shower, or drive to work. God is never off duty!
- Consider starting a prayer journal. List your requests; schedule topics.
- Watch for answers and praise God for them; even if He says no or "Not now."
- Expect to be amazed!

5.4

Read the booklet *7 Minutes with God*. It suggests how to have daily "quiet time" with God using prayer and the Bible. Here is an acrostic to help you remember key elements of prayer.

A doration

C onfession

T hanksqiving

S upplication

→ Write out a brief prayer asking God to teach you how to pray or how to read the Bible.

7 Minutes with God Journal

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

1. Begin with prayer for guidance (1/2 Minute).

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.

PSALM 143:8, NIV

2. Read the Bible (4 Minutes). Today I read: _____: _____

God's Word **TEACHES** us! Look for: **T**ruth about God, **E**xample to follow, **A** prayer to pray, **C**ommand to obey, **H**is promise to claim, **E**rror to avoid and **S**in to confess. (Look for any one or more of these in what you read.)*

T

E

A

C

H

E

S

To keep your prayer life fresh, pray your notes back to God. As He talks to you, talk to Him.

3. Pray the ACTS method based on your reading (2 1/2 Minutes).

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7, NASB

Adoration:

Confession:

Thanksgiving:

Supplication:

7 Minutes with God Reading Exercise

(Read and mark this passage using the TEACHES and ACTS and record your notes in the 7 minutes Journal)

Psalm 1, ESV (English Standard Version)

1 Blessed is the man
 who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.
3 He is like a tree
 planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
 and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
4 The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.

He talks to you, you respond to Him . . .

T-Truth about God
E-Example to follow
A-A prayer to pray
C-Command to obey
H-His promise to claim
E-Error to avoid
S-Sin to forsake

ACTS Prayer
A-Adoration/praise
C-Confess sin/Lament
T-Thanks
S-Supplication/requests

Assignments for the Next Session:

- Memorize the “Assurance of Guidance” verse, Proverbs 3:5-6
- Read the section “Assurance of Guidance” in *Beginning with Christ*
- Use the “7 Minutes with God Journal” each day starting with John 1. Do one chapter each day. Strive for five consecutive days.
- Read Step 6, “Reading God’s Word.”
- Keep practicing and reviewing your memory verses.
- Hang in there; IT IS getting easier!

Step 6

Reading God's Word

Most people know what the Bible is, but not everyone agrees that it is the inspired Word of God. It is the best-selling book of all time, but still relatively few read it diligently or accept that it is truth.*

As Christ-followers, we believe you cannot really know God without reading the Bible. God inspired every word recorded in the Bible to show us the relationship He has with His people through history and to reveal His character to us.

In this step, we will teach you some basics to help you read the Bible and to establish a daily habit of reading it. God's Word is the bread of life and feeds and sustains us when we "take it in" daily.

Matthew 4:4 (ESV) says, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

The Bible is the preserved Word and story of God and His people. We pray that you will come to hunger and thirst for the Word of God and cherish its message.

* "Best-selling Book of Non-fiction," Guinness World Records, www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction.

Step 6

Reading God's Word

GOALS

- To learn some basics about the Bible
- To learn the differences between Bible versions
- To learn some tools to help you read and understand the Bible

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *7 Minutes with God* and companion journal
- *Beginning with Christ*

AGENDA

1. Group warm-up: If you could live in any point in time, past or future, when would it be and why?
2. Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to help you read and understand the Bible.
3. Review and share your "7 Minutes with God Journals."
 - How did it go? What did you learn?
 - Share one thing God spoke to you about.
 - Did you learn something new about Jesus?
 - What was helpful? Difficult? Confusing?
4. Read "Assurance of Guidance" in *Beginning with Christ* (p. 7).
5. Review your memorized verses. Sign off memorized verses on the "Progress Record" (p. 4.5).
 - 1 John 5:11-12
 - John 16:24
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - 1 John 1:9
 - Proverbs 3:5-6
6. Read and complete Step 6, "Reading God's Word," together. (pp. 6.3–6.4).
7. Prayer: Thank God for giving us the Bible.

8. Assignments for the next session:

- Read Step 7, "Sharing Your Faith."
- Read Paul's testimony in Acts 27. Look for his before, how, and after he became a Christ-follower.
- Complete a page in the "7 Minutes with God Journal" each day this week, beginning where you left off last week. Strive for seven consecutive days.
- Review your memory verses.

Reading God's Word

Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action), so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17, AMPLIFIED BIBLE, CLASSIC EDITION

1. The Bible Is the Word of God

Christians believe the Bible is the holy Word of God. Men who wrote the Bible were inspired by God to record every word. If you want to know who God is and to grow in your faith, you must read His Word (Romans 10:17). This section will explain some basics about the Bible and give you some guidance on how and what to read.

You may have tried to read the Bible in the past and found it confusing or difficult to understand. If you were an unbeliever at the time, you did not have the Holy Spirit within you to give you understanding of what you read (1 Corinthians 2:12). Some of the Bible, however, can be confusing, especially without understanding the setting and culture of the times in which it was written. Many books have been written about the culture and history of the Bible, and these can be helpful.

The Bible says, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1 Corinthians 2:14 NASB). As you grow spiritually, the Bible will come alive for you and it will no longer seem "foolish."

2. Faith Comes Through the Word of Christ

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

ROMANS 10:17, NIV

You came to trust Jesus as your Savior by hearing or reading the words of God. Your faith will continue to grow as you read the Bible every day. The Word of God is the "spiritual milk" we need as spiritual newborns. Like a baby, you need to eat every day. (1 Peter 2:2)

➔ You may want to start reading your Bible in the Gospel of John. Many feel this is the best place to meet Jesus "up close and personal." Read a chapter every day and as you read, underline and make a list of everything you learn about Jesus: who He was, what He did, what He taught. When you've finished, share with your leader/mentor all you've learned. Discuss any questions you have with him or her.

Bible Overview

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time!

- The Bible contains 66 books written over 1,600 years by more than 40 authors. It was originally written in Hebrew, Greek, and some Aramaic. The Bible is divided into two sections known as testaments, the Old and the New Testaments.
- The **Old Testament** is largely the history of God’s people, Israel, and prophecy of God’s promise of a Messiah to save His people from their sins. See the chart of the books of the Bible (p. 6.5).
- The **New Testament** is the story of the promised Messiah, Jesus, and the history of the early church. It teaches us how to live by the Holy Spirit and contains prophecy about when Jesus will return.

Though the Bible was written over 1,600 years by 40 authors, it has a unifying theme of redemption: “God works all things according to the purpose of his will . . . to save a people who love and worship him alone.”*

These facts alone speak of God’s divine design and providence. Its manuscripts were written, preserved, and protected over thousands of years, and today the Bible remains the bestselling book of all time!

Different Versions of the Bible

The manuscripts, which scholars determined to be preserved from the original languages, needed to be translated into English for our Bibles today. There are three basic methods employed in these translations.

- **Word for Word** (ESV, KJV, NKJV, NASB, RSV)
Substitutes the English words closest to the original language
- **Thought for Thought** (NIV, NLT)
Expresses the thought of the original language in English
- **Paraphrase** (The Living Bible, Good News for Modern Man, The Voice)
More loosely restates to relate to a specific culture or reader. Paraphrases are often more readable and can help to clarify particularly confusing passages, but they lack the precision of a translation and can be vulnerable to the biases and preconceptions of the person doing the paraphrasing.

We are fortunate to have many Bibles and many versions in the United States.

→ You will want to compare different translations before selecting one. You may want to check out suggestions at <https://www.cokesbury.com/FreeDownloads/BibleTransGuide.pdf>

→ Ask your leader/mentor which he/she uses and why.

* William W. Klein, *Handbook for Personal Bible Study* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2008), 31.

Books of the Bible

The Bible contains different types of literature. This chart lists them by type.

-----Books of the Bible -----

OLD TESTAMENT

Historical

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 and 2 Samuel
1 and 2 Kings
1 and 2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job

Poetry and Wisdom

Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

Prophetic

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

Gospels

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

History

Acts

Epistles (Letters)

Romans
1 and 2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 and 2 Thessalonians
1 and 2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1 and 2 Peter
1, 2, and 3 John
Jude

Prophetic

Revelation

→ How many books are in the Old Testament? _____

→ How many books are in the New Testament?

→ Books total:

6.5

Reading Your Bible

Some Bible books (for example, Matthew) are named after the person who wrote them (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit); others (for example, Romans) are named after the people they were written for; other Bible book titles are descriptive (“Revelation” is literally a revelation given to the Apostle John; Proverbs is a collection of proverbs). The Bible is organized into numerical chapters and verses for easy reference. The name of the book is given followed by the chapter number: verse number. (John 3:16 is verse 16 of chapter 3 of the book of John.)

→ What does John 3:16 say?

→ Find the following references in your Bible. Mark the boxes when you find them.

Mark 10:27 Philippians 4:13 Colossians 3:23,24 Psalms 119:105

Where to Read

1. Many new believers who are not familiar with the Bible find it helpful to start by reading books of the New Testament. The Gospels tell the story of Jesus from different perspectives. Once you have read the Gospel of John, read the Gospel of Mark.
2. After the Gospels, begin reading historical books like Acts in the New Testament or Genesis, Joshua, Judges, or Ruth in the Old Testament.
3. Leviticus, Job, and Revelation are more complex books and you might want to put off reading them until a later time.

How to Read Your Bible

1. Always pray before you read your Bible, asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and your understanding.
2. Set aside a specific time every day to read your Bible. It takes anywhere from one to two months of a repeated behavior to establish a habit. Reading your Bible every day is a good habit, important to your spiritual growth.
3. Finish one book before starting another.
4. Ask questions when you read to see what God’s Word **TEACHES** us.

Are there:

Truths about God?
Examples to follow?
A prayer to pray?

Commands to follow?
His promises to claim?
Errors to avoid?
Sins to confess?

5. Watch for key words or repeated phrases. In the Bible, repetition adds emphasis to a point. Noticing key words will help you identify the theme or focus of a particular passage.
6. Keep a notebook to jot down insights, warnings, commands, and questions.
7. If there’s something you don’t understand, don’t labor over it. Ask your pastor, mentor, or a mature Christian to help you understand it.
8. Look for a main idea or thought in each chapter.

6.6

9. Don't be afraid to mark or underline key verses that really "speak" to you.
10. Expect to learn something new every time you read your Bible and expect to "hear" from God as you read.

Applying God's Word to Your Life

1. When you read, look for an application. Ask these questions:
 - What response does God desire?
 - How does the passage apply to me?
 - What truths am I to embrace, believe, or order my life by?
 - What changes should I make in my life?*
2. Record and date your personal applications in a notebook.
3. Share what you've read with others!

➔ Read Psalm 19:7-11. List the seven benefits of studying God's law (Word):

- **Revives the soul**
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

* Kay Arthur, *How to Study Your Bible* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2014).

Assignments for the Next Session:

- Read Step 7, "Sharing Your Faith."
- Read Paul's testimony in Acts 27. Look for his before, how, and after he became a Christ-follower.
- Complete a page in the "7 Minutes with God Journal" each day this week, beginning where you left off last week. Strive for seven consecutive days.
- Review your memory verses.

Sharing Your Faith

Each believer has a story about how he or she came to believe in Jesus as Savior and how they are changing day by day in their walk of faith.

- *This story is personal and unique.*
- *This story is an exciting revelation of our transformed lives.*
- *This story can be an effective tool for sharing the gospel message.*
- *This story can draw others to faith in Jesus.*

God's Word commands believers to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One way to do that is to share the gospel. Romans 1:16 (ESV) says the gospel is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."

There is no easier way to share the gospel than to tell others how the gospel has brought us to faith. In this step, we talk about ways to share your faith and give you some practical tools to write your personal testimony. In the remaining weeks we will help you write and refine a concise testimony that you can be confident to share whenever the opportunity arises.

When you share your story, the Holy Spirit can use it to bring others into God's kingdom. You may become a spiritual father or mother to a "newborn" believer!

Step 7

Sharing Your Faith

GOALS

- To understand the importance of Christ's command to go and make disciples
- To share your excitement about what Christ has done for you personally
- To compose a concise testimony of how you came to faith in Jesus

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *7 Minutes with God* and companion journal

AGENDA

1. Open with prayer.
2. Review "Reading God's Word." Does anyone have questions?
3. Have participants review memory verses and update their "Progress Record" (p. 4.5).
4. Share from "7 Minutes with God Journals."
5. Go over the testimony preparation information in Step 7, "Sharing Your Faith."
6. Have everyone share their paragraphs about how they came to know Jesus.
7. Close with group prayer.
8. Assignments for the next session
 - Reread the testimony information in Step 7.
 - Decide which format you want to use for your story.
 - Start your first rough draft.
 - ▶ If you chose the Chronological format, do the Before, How, and After you became a Christian
 - ▶ If you chose the Overview/Flashback format, write a *brief* overview of your life; flash back to the time of your salvation, and come back to the present day.
 - Fill out the "7 Minutes with God Journal" each day, continuing in John. Try to do a chapter a day for seven consecutive days.
 - Keep reviewing your memory verses.

Sharing Your Faith

Whether or not we realize it, everything we do bears witness to who we are and whose we are. Sometimes our behavior reveals how kind, caring, or generous we are and other times perhaps how selfish, opinionated, lazy, or prideful we are.

Now that you are “in Christ” and He dwells within you through the Holy Spirit, you will gradually desire to be more Christ-like. As you submit to God’s will for your life, a change in your behavior will become evident to others. Those who know you best will ask what has happened. That simple question will open an opportunity for you to share your faith. More significantly, many who receive Christ can’t wait to tell someone! In this session you will learn how and why to share your story (testimony), and how important it is.*

Developing Your Testimony

- A testimony is an affirmation of fact or witness of your experience. Every believer has a personal story of how they came to know Christ. Your story is unique and you will want to be able to share it with others. As you share your story, others may be moved by the Holy Spirit to follow your example. We will be discovering a specific process to help you share your personal story.
- Ask God to reveal to you what to say. You don’t need to know vast amounts of theology or doctrine, simply relate how you learned about Christ and how he has changed your life. *The story of a life changed by Christ is a powerful testimony.* Strive to keep your story brief, generally four minutes or less. (See John 9 and Acts 26.)
- Ask your leader/mentor to share his/her testimony.

Be Baptized as a Public Testimony of Your Faith in Jesus Christ

Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize believers in Matthew 28:18-20. Baptism is an act of obedience in response to this command. In baptism you identify with Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. In baptism, you give a public testimony that you have placed your faith in Christ. You will share your brief testimony at the baptismal ceremony. Take this step soon after your decision to receive Christ.

Witness to Others

Romans 1:16 (NIV) says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.” Jesus wants us to share our new faith with others and He promises that He will make us “fishers of men” if we follow Him (Matthew 4:19). You do not have to teach or argue religion. Share your story, your experience with Christ, and let the Holy Spirit influence the hearer. We do not win souls to Christ; that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Pray for opportunities to witness and ask God to tell you what to say. As you are obedient to the Lord’s leading you will see lives transformed.

Reproducing

- Jesus wants us to become “spiritual parents” and to share Him with others so they, too, can believe. 2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) says, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” As you mature spiritually, you will be ready to “parent” new believers and have the joyous experience of watching others grow and eventually become parents as well.
- There are many booklets like *The Bridge to Life* and *The 4 Spiritual Laws* that are helpful tools to help you concisely present the gospel and our need for a Savior. Using these is a

7.2

* This section adapted from *The 2:7 Series* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2011).

great way to show someone how they can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
Find one that can help you share the gospel.*

7.3

* For tools to help you share the gospel, visit https://www.navigators.org/topic/evangelism/?post_type=resource.

Preparing Your Personal Salvation Testimony

The Apostle Peter challenges us, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV).

One of the most effective tools you have for sharing your faith is the story of how Jesus Christ gave you eternal life and how he has enriched your life. The Apostle John wrote, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard” (1 John 1:3, NIV). John was testifying about his relationship to Jesus Christ. When the Apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa (Acts 26), he spoke simply, logically, and clearly about his life **before** salvation, **how** he met Christ, and what his life was like **after** conversion. Paul’s testimony takes three or four minutes to read aloud in a conversational manner.

In this step, you will work on completing and reading aloud your salvation testimony.*

Testimonies can be prepared on many subjects and tailored to various audiences. This testimony is

- Designed to give to a non-Christian.
- Best suited for sharing one-on-one or in a small group.
- Primarily a “door opener,” not a convincing tool.

Before, During, and After

Paul’s testimony in Acts 26 is a biblical model you can follow in writing your own personal testimony. Here’s Paul’s format in Acts 26:

Lead-in	Verses 2-3
Before	Verses 4-11
How	Verses 12-20
After	Verses 21-23
Close	Verses 24-29

Follow these practical suggestions for developing the before, how, and after sections in your personal testimony.

1. Before

- a. Many people’s actions spring out of unsatisfied deep inner needs. What were one or two of your unsatisfied inner needs before you came to know Jesus Christ? Some examples:

lack of peace	need to be in control	lack of significance
fear of death	loneliness	no real friends
something missing	lack of security	no motivation
no meaning in life	lack of purpose	

7.4

* This section adapted from *The 2:7 Series* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2011).

- b. Non-Christians are usually trying to satisfy their deep inner needs through unsatisfactory solutions. In the past, what unsatisfactory solutions did you use to attempt to meet those deep inner needs? As you develop your testimony, list positive as well as negative solutions you may have tried. Some examples:

marriage/family	sports/fitness	hobbies/entertainment
work	money	sex
drugs/alcohol	education	friends

2. How

- a. Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your deep inner needs. Identify the events that led to your conversion. In some cases this may have taken place over a period of time.
- b. State the specific steps you took to become a Christian. If there is a particular passage of Scripture that applies here, use it.
- c. Include the gospel clearly and briefly. Some examples of pertinent Scripture:
1. All have sinned (Romans 3:23, Isaiah 53:6)
 2. Sin's penalty (Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:27)
 3. Christ paid the penalty (Romans 5:8, 1 Peter 3:18)
 4. Must receive Christ (John 1:12, Revelations 3:20)

3. After

- a. State how Christ filled or is filling your deep inner needs. In the "before," you expressed your needs and how you tried unsuccessfully to meet them. You now want to briefly show the difference that Christ has made in your life.
- b. Conclude with a statement such as, "But the greatest benefit is that I know for certain that I have eternal life." The person you talk to will tend to comment on the last thing you say. Often, it is natural to move from the testimony into a clear presentation of the gospel.

Two Ways You Might Organize Your Story

You will use one of the three formats on pp. 7.7-7.9 to prepare your testimony. Start considering which format you want to use for your salvation story. In addition, here are a couple of options that many have found helpful: the chronological sequence or a quick overview/flashback.*

1. Chronological

In this approach, you tell your story in the order in which it happened.

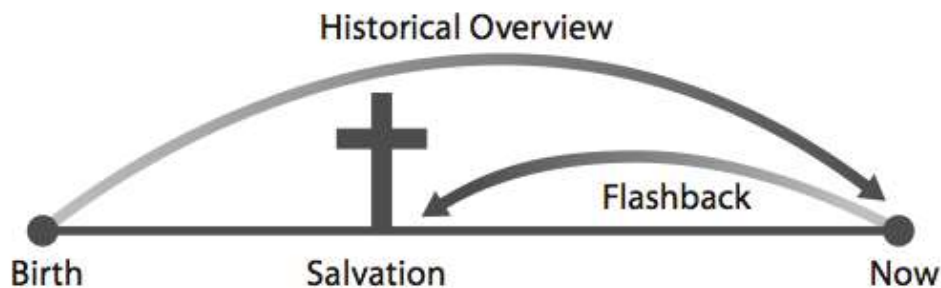


You might use this format if:

- you were converted later in life
- you have enough interesting material to share prior to your conversion
- your interesting *how* takes up a large portion of your story (the *before* then becomes relatively short).

2. Overview/Flashback

In this approach, you give an interesting, rapid overview of your life right up to the present and then flashback to the spiritual dimension of your life. The flashback may go directly back to the *how* or to just preceding the *how*.



You might use this format if:

- you came to Christ at an early age
- you had an uneventful early life but have had a more interesting adult life
- your *how* is very short

* Material in this section adapted from *The 2:7 Series* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2011).

Choosing Your Testimony Format

Sample Formats and Worksheets

Read the three condensed sample salvation stories below. Then choose the format that best fits your own story and fill in the worksheet for that format. As you write the first draft of your story, you may find it helpful to refer to the sample story and its worksheet that you filled out.

Format 1: Adult Conversion

You trusted Christ as an adult. You have a distinct *before*, *how*, and *after*.

Format 2: Early Conversion/Adult Deeper Commitment

Evaluate whether the early conversion experience was genuine. If you conclude that it was not, then you might use Format 1 as your model. If it was genuine, your life may have been characterized by spiritual immaturity or a lifestyle similar to people without faith in Christ.

Format 3: Early Conversion/Consistent Growth

You probably grew up with Christian parents and have a strong church background. You might have very little *before* to share. (Often the “overview/flashback” model works well with this format. See p. 7.6.)

Format 1: Adult Conversion

- Before** A few years ago, I found myself lacking purpose in my life. Something was missing. Nothing seemed to fill the void. I had majored in electrical engineering in college and got a good job when I graduated. For three years, I put in extra hours and finally got a promotion, but I had no real satisfaction in that. I began working longer and longer hours, giving myself to my profession. This began to have a negative effect on me. I kept telling my wife that I was only doing it for her and the kids, but I knew that was a rationalization. What started out as the “ideal” marriage was coming apart at the seams. I got to the point that I did not want to go home at night. “Happy hour” was more fun than arguments.
- How** In my next job, I was asked to attend an engineering seminar with David and Jack from work. David seemed to have a certain something that was missing in my life. On the way home from the seminar, David told me about how Christ had changed his life and had given him a whole new reason for living. Many of the things he said seemed to be similar to my situation. He talked about being successful in business, but somehow falling short of what he wanted out of life. Then he said that the answer to his frustration was committing his life to Jesus Christ. He admitted to God that he had done many things that he knew were very wrong. He turned control of his life over to God. David told me that the Bible said that Christ had died on the cross so we could be forgiven for everything we had ever done wrong. I had heard this before, but now it seemed to make a lot more sense. A couple of days after the seminar, I took a walk down by the lake near our home. I confessed to God some of the things I had done that I knew had hurt and displeased Him. I asked Christ to come into my life and take over because I wasn’t doing a very good job with it by myself.
- After** Well, there was no flash of light or strong emotion, but I do know that I felt as if a large weight was lifted from my shoulders. Not everything is perfect now, but I do feel as if I have a whole new purpose for living. God has given me more stability and purpose. It is now very important to me to know that I will be with God after this life.

Format 2: Early Conversion/Deeper Adult Commitment

Before Full Commitment

Not too long ago, you could have characterized my life as lacking any real inner peace.

Everything around me seemed to be in utter turmoil. Nothing I did would ease the tension in my life. It didn't seem as if anything could fill the longing that was growing in my heart. I thought I could fill that emptiness by getting involved in activities. I joined the health spa, took golf lessons, and was involved in transporting our children to their various sports and lessons. I considered going back to work part-time. Then my husband received a promotion and we were transferred to another city. If I had felt tension before, the move just added to its intensity. It seemed that the only relief I found was from taking tranquilizers, but that was only temporary and it scared me to realize that I was beginning to depend on them.

How

We had gotten out of the habit of attending church over the years, but the Johnsons invited us to go to church with them, so we started going. After we had attended for a couple of months, we decided to participate in a Bible study group. There, we met people who were fun but took their Christianity seriously. They began to encourage us to really commit our lives to Christ. We reviewed some things I had heard while growing up: We were all breaking God's laws and deserved to be separated from Him, but God provided the way to restore that relationship with Him through the death of His only Son, Jesus Christ. I learned that I needed to acknowledge my disobedience to God, turn from it, and ask Christ to take over my life as my Savior and Lord. So I asked Christ to apply His death to me and to take over.

After

It wasn't until we got involved in that Wednesday night Bible study that I really understood what it meant to be committed to Jesus Christ. I was learning that I couldn't experience inner peace while neglecting God. As a result of the Bible study, I made a whole new commitment to Christ. The inner peace that I was striving for so desperately was finally there. But the greatest thing of all is that I know for certain that I have a personal relationship with God through Christ and have eternal life.

Format 3: Early Conversion/Consistent Growth

Before

As a single person, I see other singles feverishly trying to put together a happy, fulfilling life. They are into travel; some try the bar scene, dating, high-tech toys, sports, and even substance abuse. I also see married men and women (where I work) trying to put their lives together without really knowing how. I'm involved in many of the same social activities as other singles. I enjoy working out and running. I save up my money to take short overseas trips when I find a good price. But I have a contentment and stability that elude many people. This new stability began in my life during high school.

7.8

How

As I was growing up, my parents were very active in church. Because they were active, they figured that I should be also, so every Sunday, there we were. It was real for them, but for me it was just socializing with friends. Then one summer I attended a church camp. This changed my whole view of "religion." I discovered at this camp that Christianity was more than just a religion; it was a personal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Some of the discussion groups centered around who Jesus Christ was and what He did. One day after sports, my camp counselor asked me, "Have

you ever personally committed your life to Christ, or are you still thinking about it?" I said that I was still thinking about it. We reviewed some key Bible verses about steps I could take to establish a meaningful relationship with God through Christ. From the Bible, I saw that I needed forgiveness and that God was offering the gift of eternal life. I put my trust in Jesus Christ's death on the cross for me. Then and there, I asked Jesus Christ to apply His death on the cross to me, personally.

After

Now I find that when I try to do things my way and leave God out of the picture, I have the same struggles as everyone else. But when I let Him be in control, I experience a stability that can come only from Him. The contentment I am experiencing through my relationship with God has impacted my job performance in positive ways and has helped me be less self-centered. But the greatest benefit is knowing that I have eternal life through Christ.

Guidelines for Telling Your Story

1. Make it sound conversational. Avoid literary-sounding statements. Use informal language.
2. Share, don't preach. Say "I" and "me," not "you." This keeps your story warm and personal.
3. Avoid religious words, phrases, and jargon.

Religious terms

Possible substitutes

Believe/Accept Christ	Trusted or relied on Christ for my salvation
Sin	Rebelledd against God's ways, hurt God by my actions
Went forward	Decided to turn my life over to God
Under the blood	God forgave the wrongs I had done
Saved/Born again	Received God's forgiveness
Christian	A follower of Christ, real Christian

(However, you can use these terms if you qualify them, e.g. "When I sinned—did wrong things in God's eyes.")

4. Generalize so more people can identify with your story. It is better not to name specific churches, denominations, or groups. Avoid using dates and ages.
5. Include some humor and human interest. When your listener smiles or laughs, it reduces tension. Humor is disarming and increases attention.
6. Use word pictures to increase interest. Don't just say, "Pat shared the gospel with me." You might briefly describe the setting so a person listening can visualize it.
7. Explain how Christ met or is meeting needs in your life, but avoid implying that your struggles and problems ended at conversion.
8. Sound adult, not juvenile. Reflect an adult point of view even if you were converted at an early age.
9. Avoid dogmatic or mystical statements that skeptics can question, such as, "I prayed and God gave me a job" or, "God said to me."
10. Simplify; reduce "clutter." Mention a limited number of people and use only their first or last names. Combine information when you can.
11. Poor: "Martha Smith, Nancy Van Buren, and her cousin Jane Matthews came by my office at Digital Binary Components Corporation."
Good: "Martha and two other friends talked with me at work one day."*

7.10

* Material in this section adapted from *The 2:7 Series* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2011).

Worksheet — Format 1: Adult Conversion

Following is a list of questions for an adult conversion salvation story. Please jot down some of your thoughts under each question. This provides you a rough outline from which you can write sentences and paragraphs about your experiences. This can help you put together the first draft of your personal salvation testimony. *

Before

1. Before you met Christ, what were some of your needs, what was lacking, or what was missing in your life?

2. How did you unsuccessfully try to fill these voids?

How

1. What circumstances caused you to consider Christ?

2. Tell how you trusted Christ, and briefly include the gospel.

After

1. Give an example of how Christ met your needs or how He is now contributing to your life.

2. End with a sentence to the effect that you know that you have eternal life through Christ.

Worksheet — Format 2: Early Conversion/Deeper Adult Commitment

Following is a list of questions for a story of Early Conversion/Deeper Adult Commitment. Please jot down some of your thoughts under each question. This provides you a rough outline from which you can write sentences and paragraphs about your own experiences. This can help you put together the first draft of your personal salvation testimony.*

Before

1. Before your new commitment to Christ, what were some of your needs, what was lacking, or what was missing in your life?

2. How did you unsuccessfully try to fill these voids?

How

1. What circumstances led you to make the deeper commitment to Christ?

2. Refer to your conversion experience, when you put your faith in Christ, and briefly include the gospel.

After

1. Give an example of how Christ is meeting your needs or contributing to your life now.

2. End with a sentence to the effect that you know that you have eternal life through Christ.

Worksheet — Format 3: Early Conversion/Consistent Growth

Following is a list of questions for an Early Conversion/Consistent Growth salvation story. Please jot down some of your thoughts under each question. This provides you a rough outline from which you can write sentences and paragraphs about your own experiences. This can help you put together the first draft of your personal salvation testimony.*

Before

1. What are some needs or things missing that you have observed in other people?

2. What solutions do you see that aren't working for people?

How

1. Explain how your relationship with God through Christ has made many of these things less of a problem for you.

2. Refer to your conversion experience. Briefly including the gospel and state how you trusted Christ.

After

1. Give an example of how Christ is meeting your needs or contributing to your life.

2. End with a sentence to the effect that you know that you have eternal life through Christ.

Assignments for the Next Session

- Reread the testimony information in Step 7.
- Decide which format you want to use for your story.
- Start your first rough draft.
 - ▶ If you chose the Chronological format, do the Before, How, and After you became a Christian
 - ▶ If you chose the Overview/Flashback format, write a *brief* overview of your life; flash back to the time of your salvation, and come back to the present day.
- Fill out the “7 Minutes with God Journal” each day, continuing in John. Try to do a chapter a day for seven consecutive days.
- Keep reviewing your memory verses.

Living in Your New Family

God created people to have fellowship with Him and with one another. After creating Adam, He saw it was “not good” for him to be alone, and so God made Eve (Genesis 2:18, ESV). Family and fellowship had its beginning.

Throughout the Bible you will see God’s people together in community. People in unity with one another meet to worship God, to study God’s Word, to share meals together, and to share one another’s burdens. It’s all part of God’s master plan from before creation!

As a new believer it is important to enter into community with other believers. We urge you to seek a fellowship that will come alongside you and nurture you to grow in your faith and protect you when Satan tries to detour your journey.

A community of believers is a place to share your gifts and talents and to share Christ’s love with others. “Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples” (John 13:35, NLT).

*If you’re not already in an active, Bible-believing fellowship, pray about it and let the Holy Spirit lead you to a new fellowship family.**

* Permission is given to adapt the material in “Step 8: Living in Your New Family” to the particular needs of the church or organization going through this curriculum.

Step 8

Living in Your New Family

GOAL

- To understand that God places each believer in a “family” so the new believer can be nurtured to maturity and utilize his or her gifts for the benefit of His family
- To see the depth and importance of fellowship with other believers

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen
- *7 Minutes with God* and companion journal

AGENDA

1. The leader opens with prayer.
2. Participants submit the first draft of their testimonies to the leader, who will review them while everyone else reviews their memory verses with a partner.
 - 1 John 5:11-12 Assurance of Salvation
 - John 16:24 Assurance of Answered Prayer
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13 Assurance of Victory
 - 1 John 1:9 Assurance of Forgiveness
 - Proverbs 3:5,6 Assurance of Guidance
3. Sign off any completed tasks on the Progress Record.
4. Ask the group to share from their **7 Minutes with God Journal**.
5. Go over Step 8, **Living in Your New Family** (pp. 8.2-8.4). Discuss questions as they arise.
6. Community sharing: Ask anyone who has finished to read his or her testimony to the group.
7. Prayer: Pray popcorn prayers using ACTS.
8. Assignments for the next session
 - Finish your final testimony draft.
 - Write in the “**7 Minutes with God Journal**” daily, continuing through John.
 - Review all memory verses. Try reciting them in one sitting.
 - Read Step 9, “**Discipling the New Believer.**”

Living in Your New Family

Now that you are a “new creation in Christ,” what does God want your life in your new family to look like?

Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV) says, “So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord *continue to live your lives in Him*, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” Being involved with other believers is an essential part of this growth process.

- Attend Church Regularly for:

- **Fellowship**

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV) says, “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”

As a new Christian, you need mature believers to guide and help protect you as well as to teach you spiritual things. Scripture directs us to seek the companionship of other believers.

- **Worship**

“. . . Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19, NKJV).

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs” (Psalm 100:1-2 NIV).

God commands us to worship Him, and there is great joy when a body of believers sings and gives praise to the Lord! To worship is to acknowledge God’s worth, to love or pursue devotedly. God certainly deserves our worship.

- **Communion**

Communion is a time when we remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On the night before Christ died, He established taking the bread and the cup as a ceremony of remembrance of His sacrifice on the cross for the forgiveness of sin.

→**Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.**

Communion gives us an opportunity to confess personal sin and commit our lives to Christ in a corporate setting. Jesus commanded at the Last Supper to “do this in remembrance of Him” until He comes back for us. The communion wafer and the cup represent the body and blood of Christ.

- **Corporate Prayer**

Matt 18:20 (ESV) says, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Here we acknowledge His presence, give praise and thanks, confess wrongdoing, and make requests for one another. We do this at church periodically and in life groups. It is a wonderful time when family gathers to pray for the church and one another.

- Join a life group for:

- **Discipleship Training**

Join a life group to study God’s Word together and witness discipleship in action within a close-knit group.

- **Friendship and Encouragement**

Life groups are a way to connect, build stronger friendships with other believers, be encouraged spiritually, study the Bible, lift one another up in prayer, and form a support network when needs arise.

- **Support and Accountability**

Develop caring relationships where you can be transparent and share your trials and victories. People in your group can laugh with you, cry with you, and gently hold you accountable to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

- **Mission Opportunity**

Each life group will seek the Lord for an opportunity to reach out to the community on a mission project.

- **Good Food**

In Acts 2:42 (NIV) we see believers devoting themselves “to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Each group shares food in some fun way whether a whole meal or “just desserts.”

- Serve the Body of Christ.

- **Share your time and talents.**

Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Galatians 5:13 (ESV) says, “through love serve one another.” Look for ways to help your fellow believers, following the example Christ set.

Ask about opportunities to serve at your church. The options are limitless: anything from rocking babies to mowing lawns to cooking a meal to share with someone recovering from illness.

- **Give financially**

God told us in Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV) to “honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits . . . then your barns will be filled to overflowing.”

God gave us everything we have and we are to be good stewards of it. As was the custom in the Jewish culture of the Old Testament, we give a portion of what we have earned back to God. Traditionally and historically this has been 10 percent, a tithe. Your giving supports the ministries at your church, benevolence programs at church and in the local community, and funds the work of missionaries all over the world. Each dollar you give can impact many others with the gospel.

- **Value church membership**

Discover our church classes that are offered regularly to help you understand what we believe at our church and introduce you to the various ministries. This is a great forum to ask questions and receive answers so you can consider church membership. It is also a good way to meet others new to the church and the pastors/elders. The class is interactive and fun and provides you with the information you need as you consider becoming a member of our church family. Following the class you will interview with one or two elders.

As a member, you can vote in decisions made for the whole church and you feel a greater sense of belonging and “ownership.” Membership is required to serve on ministry teams and will place you under the protection of the church leadership.

→ Ask the Lord to show you what gifts and talents you’ve been given, and to lead you regarding how and when you might serve.

→ Pray about whether you should pursue church membership.

Assignments for the Next Session

- Finish your final testimony draft.
- Write in the “**7 Minutes with God Journal**” daily, continuing through John.
- Review all memory verses. Try reciting them in one sitting.
- Read Step 9, “**Discipling the New Believer.**”

Discipling the New Believer

What a fantastic journey we have been on! As we said in the beginning, we have designed this material to guide new believers step by step toward Christian maturity. Let's retrace our steps:

- *Trusting God's Love*
- *Affirming Your Faith*
- *Understanding Your New Faith*
- *Beginning with Christ*
- *Talking and Listening to God*
- *Reading God's Word*
- *Sharing Your Faith*
- *Living in Your New Family*

Now we have the assurance that God is actively engaged in our lives—growing us toward greater godliness, enabling us “to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age” (Titus 2:12, NIV). As this happens, people take notice! Thus, we have an opportunity to share our faith and invite people to join us in the family of God.

As God is at work in and through your life, He will give you opportunities to “give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV). When others respond, you are in the very best position to provide follow-up—to help them take each of these steps as well! But what does that look like?

*“Side-by-Side” is an easy, inviting way to walk alongside a new believer to help him or her take each of the steps you have taken. In fact, we encourage you to walk through these “next steps” one meeting at a time—and to do so in an environment where you commit to grow together, support and encourage one another, and find healthy accountability along the way.**

* Adapted with permission from Dean Ridings. Find more information on Side-by-Side and how Dean helps churches grow intentional discipling cultures at www.navstaff.org/ridings.

Step 9

Discipling the New Believer

GOAL

- To help you take the practical resources you have learned in the Next Steps and to share them with someone else in a side by side relationship.
- Identify a person you could start a side by side relationship and do the Next Steps with them.
- To create spiritual generations of disciple-makers who make disciples.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen

AGENDA

1. The leader opens with prayer.
2. Participants submit their final drafts of their testimonies to the leader, who will review them while everyone else reviews their memory verses with a partner.

1 John 5:11-12	Assurance of Salvation
John 16:24	Assurance of Answered Prayer
1 Corinthians 10:13	Assurance of Victory
1 John 1:9	Assurance of Forgiveness
Proverbs 3:5, 6	Assurance of Guidance

3. Sign off any completed tasks on the Progress Record.
4. Ask the group to share from their 7 Minutes with God Journal.
5. Go over Step 9 Discipling the New Believer
 - Read through and discuss “How to Walk Side-by-Side.”
 - Read through and discuss “What happens in a side by side relationship.”
6. Community sharing: Ask anyone who has finished to read his or her testimony to the group.
7. Prayer: Pray popcorn prayers using ACTS.
8. Assignments for the next session
 - Finish your final testimony draft.
 - Write in the “7 Minutes with God Journal” daily, continuing through John/Mark.
 - Review all memory verses. Try reciting them in one sitting.
 - Read Step 10, “Sharing and Wrapping Up.”

How to Walk Side-by-Side

Do you have a friend you can trust and share openly with? A friend who brings out your best, prods you in your Christian life, and holds you accountable? Are you this kind of friend to at least one person? Would you like to be?

The following process is a way to make that happen—man to man, woman to woman. It's two people who make a commitment to meet regularly for mutual growth, mutual support, and mutual accountability. More than merely going through the Bible study of their choice, Side-by-Side partners help each other “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (see Jude 3, NIV) in the midst of 21st century reality.

A Side-by-Side relationship may be between a “mature” and a “young” disciple, such as Paul and Timothy or Elijah and Elisha. Or it may be a co-mentoring relationship between any two believers no matter where they are along the discipleship journey—such as David and Jonathan or Paul and Barnabas.

God's Word paints a powerful picture of what happens when two people meet Side-by-Side. After Jesus' crucifixion but before His followers grasped that He had risen from the dead, two down-in-the-dumps disciples walked together on the road to Emmaus (see Luke 24:13–36). Though they didn't recognize Him at first, suddenly walking right alongside them was their Master Jesus, the one who had promised them the Holy Spirit and said their works would even exceed His (see Acts 1:8; John 14:12). They talked of the day's sad events and examined them in light of the Scriptures—Jesus traveling with them—and everything changed. Their hearts burned within them as Jesus opened their eyes to the truth of His Word and to Himself. Their lives would never be the same!

When you commit to meet with a Side-by-Side partner, be assured that Jesus is in your midst. “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them,” He promises (Matthew 18:20, NIV). He will use you in your Side-by-Side partner's life, and vice versa.

What Happens in a Side-by-Side Relationship

Side-by-Side partners commit to:

- Meet weekly or regularly.
- Prepare for meetings by completing each lesson in the selected study.
- Be honest with and accountable to each other.
- Pray for and encourage one another.
- Repeat the process with another individual, as God leads.

Here is what you and your Side-by-Side partner can expect between and during your meetings. Between meetings you should

- Complete the lesson—again, using the Bible study of your choice.
- Continue to pray for one another and needs that have surfaced along the way.
- Give a call; drop a note or e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter message; or stop by simply to “check in.”

Here is generally how you should engage each other during Side-by-Side meetings:

- “Touch base”: Ask, “What are the best and worst things that happened to you since we last got together?”
- Ask God to bless your meeting.
- Go through the lesson. In an environment of grace and trust, watch for application and life evaluation in light of Scripture.
- Hold one another accountable to mutually agreed-upon goals that emerge from your conversations, committing to God and each other to make head knowledge heart knowledge.
- Close in prayer. Entrust to God commitments you’ve made along the way and prayer needs you’ve shared.

As you journey together with Jesus, Jesus will grow the two of you toward greater godliness (see Romans 8:28,29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Along the way, you and your Side-by-Side partner will have a friend you can trust and share openly with, bringing out one another’s best and in fact living out the “one another” exhortations sprinkled throughout Scripture.

Assignment for the Next Session

- Finish your final testimony draft.
- Write in the “7 Minutes with God Journal” daily, continuing through John/Mark.
- Review all memory verses. Try reciting them in one sitting.
- Read Step 10, “Sharing and Wrapping Up.”

Sharing and Wrapping Up

We hope over the past weeks you have made big strides in your walk of faith. Many of your questions were answered but many more questions may have arisen. Do not despair, for “I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” (Philippians 1:6, NLT)

Our God is faithful to His promises and you can trust that He will never forsake you. This week you will finalize your testimony and share with one another the challenges and rewards of your journey. We trust you have made some new friends along the way. You may even want to get together with them in a small group.

You will also find in this section a list of suggested resources to help you as you continue in your walk of faith. Know that you’ve really just begun and there are many treasures yet for you to explore and savor.

As the apostle Paul prayed for the believers in Philippi, we pray for you,

“. . . that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ’s return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11, NLT

Step 10: Sharing and Wrapping Up

GOALS

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Bible
- Loose-leaf paper and pen

AGENDA

1. Open with prayer.
2. Review Step 9, "Discipling the New Believer."
3. Review all the memory verses together
 - 1 John 5:11-12
 - John 16:24
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - 1 John 1:9
 - Proverbs 3:5-6
4. Sign off on the New Believer's Progress Record.
5. Ask anyone who has not yet shared their personal testimony to do so.
6. Invite open discussion about this 10-week process. Ask participants,
 - What unexpected blessing have you seen in these past 10 weeks?
 - What unexpected challenges have you faced?
 - Have you used any of the verses you memorized?
 - Whom do you know that needs to hear your testimony?
7. Congratulations! You've run the course! Trust that God will be with you as you continue this beautiful and challenging walk of faith.
8. Assignments going forward:
 - Finish the final draft of your testimony.
 - Continue your daily "7 Minutes with God Journal" or start a daily Bible reading program.
 - Pray about telling a friend or family member about your new faith.
 - Find a church home, join a small group of believers; pray about how God might use you to serve others.
 - Rejoice that God is not done with you yet and your future in Christ is certain!

Discipling the New Believer

A four-session guide for one-on-one follow-up

This section is a guide for individuals working with a new believer one-on-one. The material is divided into four sessions rather than 10. In a more personal setting, the participants will spend more time together. It is likely that these will be two- or three-hour sessions with more time between sessions for the new believer to accomplish the homework.

Between sessions we recommend that the disciplemaker contact the new believer regularly at church or by phone to gauge their progress. Every situation will be different, and the disciplemaker needs to be discerning and flex according to the new believer's progress.

We have given some specific guidelines for who, what, where, and when regarding one-on-one meetings. Flexibility is key in this entire process as no two situations will be the same. This is not meant to be a four-step or 10-step recipe for success, but rather a guide and list of subjects to address.

The key to any teaching situation is the ability to assess where the learner is and to assist with their progress. You cannot estimate the role and power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's will for each new believer. Always pray before each session and lean into the Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance.

Appendix
Discipling the New Believer
A four-session guide for one-on-one follow-up

As a one-on-one disciplemaker, one option is to take a new believer through the following four sessions to follow them up in their new faith. You may also use the entire follow-up process if you and your young disciple prefer a more comprehensive discipleship encounter.

- Remember that the second page of each Step contains a leaders' guide.
- The sessions outlined here should serve only as a guideline. They are not intended to be rigid or constraining but rather to facilitate use of these materials.
- Always assess and pace material depending on the new believer's responses.

Pray before every session and ask the Holy Spirit to give you discernment regarding the individual's grasp of the material and to direct your steps as you progress. You don't need to have all the answers to questions that arise. Ideally, you can lead them to Scripture to seek answers and/or direct them to one of the pastors/elders or another mature believer. Do your best to follow through with the new believer to resolve these questions.

Pick a comfortable place to meet and a place agreeable to both parties. For your convenience, we suggest the new believer come to you. Control distractions (pets, background noise, telephone, etc.) as much as possible. Remember to always silence the ring on your cell phone.

To allow for deep vulnerability in a safe environment, only disciple a new believer of the same gender (unless it's your family member). Decide how long you will meet and stick to it. When the sessions are completed, encourage the person to become connected in some way with other believers. During the discipleship process, invite them to church activities with you. Encourage them to join a Life Group or small Bible study group.

Document their progress on the Progress Record. Encourage them for their efforts and pray for them every day. Satan will make every effort to steal their joy, but you play a vital role in grounding them in God's truth and helping them become strong.

May God richly bless you for accepting this call to ministry and may your efforts bear much fruit!

Before You Begin

As you begin this discipling relationship, you should first tend to your own relationship with God.

Memorize the Scriptures for the five Assurances from God

- 1 John 5:11-12
- John 16:24
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 1 John 1: 9
- Proverbs 3:5-6

Prepare your four-minute testimony

→ Now, go disciple a new believer!

Session 1
Overview

- A. Look over the notebook together and note the focus of each section.
- B. Do not overwhelm the new believer with details but share your excitement for the journey ahead.
- C. Work through Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 together, letting them fill in the blanks.
- D. Be sure they understand that you expect them to complete their homework assignments.

I. Affirming Your Faith

A. "Father's Love Letter"

Read this aloud to the new believer without references.

Show them that each phrase has a reference from the Bible.

B. Assess where the new believer is using the diagram on p. 1.4.

Read the One-Verse Gospel material p. 1.4-1.5.

Ask, "Where are you on this illustration?"

- Have them circle the "X" that signifies where they think they are.
- If they are anywhere but the far right, go through and explain the illustration again.

C. "Affirming Your Faith" Study

Work through the worksheet with the new believer emphasizing:

- Assurance of **salvation by grace**
- **Child of God**; heir with Christ
- Promise of **eternal life**

D. Have them write the date of their decision in their Bible.

E. Have them write out the Personal Response on p. 2.4.

II. Understanding Your New Faith

A. Do the "Understanding Your New Faith" study together. Work through this together but be sensitive to the eagerness or comfort of the individual to proceed independently.

B. Emphasize two main topics here:

- **New Creation, New Nature**
Discuss what happened to the old nature.

Make a correlation between physical and spiritual newborns.

Discuss what newborns need.

- **Indwelling Holy Spirit**

Emphasize that we are sealed with the Spirit *at the moment* of salvation.

Talk about the Trinity so they can get the distinction between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- C. Go to Step 2, p. 2.5 and 2.6, and read “*Memorizing God’s Word.*” This will show them how to memorize a verse for their Session 2 assignment.

Homework

- Read ***Beginning with Christ***
- Complete Step 4 and do the “Beginning with Christ” Bible study
- Memorize the “Assurance of Salvation” verse, 1 John 5:11-12

Allow enough time between sessions to complete homework but not so much time that you lose momentum.

Session 2

Student should have read *Beginning with Christ* before this session.

Beginning with Christ

Go through the homework under Step 4.

Emphasize:

- Assurances from God
- New enemy, Satan/Spiritual Warfare
- Memorizing Scripture, the sword of the Spirit
 - Practice Scripture memory
 - Check their memory work

Homework

- Memorize the Assurance of Answered Prayer verse, John 16:24.
- Read "*Seven Minutes with God.*"
- Read Steps 5 and 6 before meeting again.

Session 3

I. Talking and Listening to God

A. Discuss how important communication is to a relationship.

B. Discuss the suggested quiet time format in *Seven Minutes with God*.

- Look at journal sheets (print eight extra sheets and give to them).
- Practice a seven-minute quiet time with them using Psalm 1.

C. Discuss why it's important to pray in Jesus' name.

D. Have them write out the short prayer in the blanks on p. 5.5.

II. Reading God's Word

A. The Bible

Look at the new believer's Bible and discuss its features.

Discuss different translations.

Do the exercise on page 6.7.

B. Reading the Bible

Discuss where to read

Show samples of various reading schedules. See the recommended resources for a link to Bible reading plans.

- Chronological Bible
- Through the Bible in 1 Year, 2 Years

C. Biblical Application

Emphasize,

- God desires lives to be transformed by His Word.
- His Word contains commands and instructions for our lives.

Work through the exercise on page 6.7.

Homework

Memorize the Assurance of Victory verse, 1 Corinthians 10:13

Do the exercise on p. 6.7 if not completed.

Start reading the Gospel of John, one chapter a day. Keep an ongoing list of discoveries about Jesus: who He is, who others say He is, what He did, etc.

Memorize the Assurance of Forgiveness verse, 1 John 1:9.

Read Steps 7 and 8 before the next session.

Session 4

I. Sharing Your New Faith

A. Developing Your Testimony

Talk about when and why they might want to share their testimony

Help the new believer condense their testimony to less than five minutes. Help them focus on key information in Step 7. Emphasize changes in their life since receiving Christ rather than their former life.

Be prepared to share your testimony

B. Be Baptized as a public testimony of your faith in Jesus Christ

Look at Scripture commanding believer to repent and be baptized.

C. Witnessing to Others

Guide them to develop a prayer list for lost family and friends.

Pray together for an opportunity to share their testimony.

D. Reproducing/Parenting

Look at the new believer's journey to this point and discuss how these sessions will help them to become spiritual parents eventually.

Homework

- Prepare your four-minute testimony
- Memorize the Assurance of Guidance verses, Proverbs 3:5-6
- Finish reading John and share what you learned about Jesus

II. Living in Your New Family

Read and discuss each topic. Share your experiences. Note that some aspects of this section may need to be adapted to the particular requirements of your church.

A. Attend Church regularly for:

1. Fellowship

Stress the importance of being fed and protected by a body of believers.
(See Ephesians 2:19-22.)

2. Worship

Discuss what worship is and isn't. It isn't to be entertained!

Answer any questions they have.

3. Communion

Look at 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

Discuss why Jesus established communion.

Answer questions as they arise.

4. Corporate Prayer

Congregational prayer meetings are scheduled quarterly.

Invite them to come with you

5. Discipleship Training

Look at our church website for discipleship classes.

Help them plan what class they might take next.

B. Join a Small Group for:

1. Community

Group options: Men, Women, Couples, Singles, Recovery groups, etc.

Groups can provide friendships, support, accountability, connection, and security.

Discuss the importance of these.

Groups can help them experience the Christian life in community.

2. Worship and Prayer

Some small groups worship together and pray for one another.

C. Serve the Body of Christ

1. Share time and talents

Talk about their interests and hobbies and how these might involve talents they could share with church ministries.

→ Look at Ephesians 4:7-16

→ What causes the body to grow? (When the “whole body [is] fitted and held together . . . according to the proper working of each individual part.”)

2. Financial Giving

→ Look up Scriptures relating to offerings: Matthew 6:1-4, 1 Chronicles 29:3-9, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, 1 Corinthians 16:1,2

D. Pray about Church Membership

Encourage them to consider membership and inquire about the process.

It's up to both of you whether you choose to meet again. At the very least have them connect with you at church to recite their memory work.

Recommended Resources

Bible reading plans. <https://www.navigators.org/resource/bible-reading-plans/>

The 2:7 Series. <https://www.navpress.com/search?q=In+God%27s+Family&f=>

Design for Discipleship Series.

<https://www.navpress.com/search?q=Design+for+Discipleship&f=>

The Ways of the Alongsider. <https://www.navpress.com/p/the-ways-of-the-alongsider/9781631465727>

The Topical Memory System.

<https://www.navpress.com/search?q=Topical+Memory+System&f=>

7 Minutes with God. <https://www.navpress.com/p/7-minutes-with-god-25-pack/9789900732563>

Beginning with Christ. <https://www.navpress.com/p/beginning-with-christ/9781617479588>

Discipleship Library. <https://www.navigators.org/resource/discipleship-library/>

Born to Reproduce by Dawson Trotman https://www.navigators.org/resource/born-to-reproduce/?mwm_id=238263484277&APCode=W04&gclid=Cj0KCQiAg_HhBRDNARIsAGHLV53BP4MnVXAfVh-

[gIHAZ0gxvkMfl_KCBW6ek076BzEZ_X1VIn84ejzoaApl7EALw_wcB](https://www.navigators.org/resource/born-to-reproduce/?mwm_id=238263484277&APCode=W04&gclid=Cj0KCQiAg_HhBRDNARIsAGHLV53BP4MnVXAfVh-gIHAZ0gxvkMfl_KCBW6ek076BzEZ_X1VIn84ejzoaApl7EALw_wcB)

The Father's Love Letter <https://www.fathersloveletter.com/>