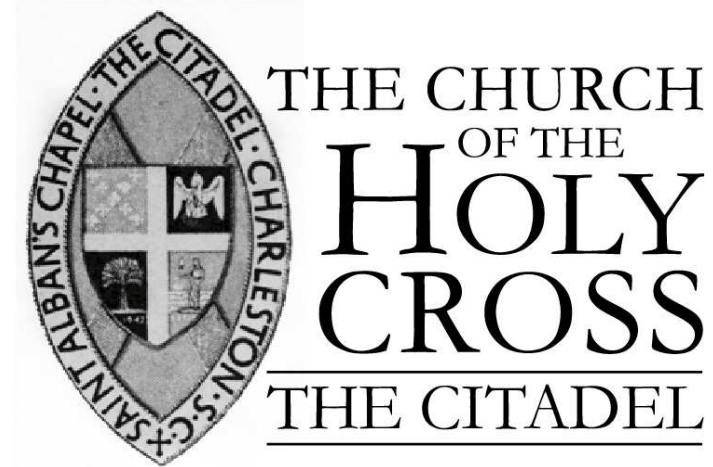




Seven Basic Premises

1. Holy Cross exists for those who are not yet members.
2. We welcome and accept people wherever they are in their faith journey, and trust God to take them where He wants them to be, and on His timetable.
3. People want relationships not religion.
4. Positioning - we play to our strengths. We are not interested in being another church, we learn from others, but adapt what we like to our situation.
5. Just because we have always done things in a certain way is not, in and of itself, a sufficient reason for continuing to do it that way.
6. We are not financially anxious. God pays for what He orders.
7. With God nothing is impossible.



Small Group Starter Guide

Credits

Articles adapted from YW Walk through the Bible Ministries June 2008 www.ywspace.org

Daily Liturgy is adapted from Drawing Near by Kenneth Boa and Max Anders

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Yet Jesus did die. **Why?** Although he had the power to heal the sick, walk on water and even raise the dead, Jesus allowed himself to be executed on a cross. Jesus died as a substitute for rebels like us. The debt that we owed God, Jesus paid by dying in our place, so that forgiveness and pardon might be available to us. It is a generous gift, from start to finish.



- God raised Jesus to life again as ruler of all
- Jesus conquered death and now offers life

1 Peter 1:3 John 3:16-17

God accepted Jesus' death as payment in full for our sins, and raised him from the dead. The risen Jesus is now what humanity was always meant to be: God's ruler of the world. As God's ruler, Jesus offers us new life, both now and eternally. Now, our sins can be forgiven through Jesus' death, and we can make a fresh start with God, no longer as rebels but as friends.

Two ways to live

A. Our way

Reject the ruler – God
Try to run our own life

Result? Separation from God

B. God's way (John 3:36)

Admit you can't be the ruler
Believe that Jesus died in your place
Confess publicly that He's in charge



Result? Forgiveness and Eternal Life

We can continue in our rebellion against God, and, in the end God will give us what we ask for... the messy consequences of a rebellious life, and an eternity of separation from him. **However, if we turn back to God** and appeal for mercy, trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection, then everything changes. God wipes our slate clean and gives us new life... forever. We are no longer rebels, but family. God adopts us as His own and we live with Jesus as our ruler.

So ask yourself... Which way do I want to live?

If this makes sense to you... then take the next step:

Pray – Take a couple of moments to pray the ABC's .

Dear God, I **admit** that I can't be the ruler of my life... and I'm sorry for trying. I **believe** that Jesus died in my place because of my rebellion. Thank you! I **confess** that I want you to be the ruler of my life. Please forgive me and change me so that I can live with you forever. **Amen**



TWO WAYS TO LIVE



- *God is the loving ruler of the world*
- *He made the world*
- *He made us the rulers of the world, under him*

Genesis 1:31 Revelation 4:11

The first point of the Christian message is that God is in charge of the world. Unlike human rulers, however, God always does what is best for his subjects. He also made us like himself, and put us in charge of the world—to rule it, to care for it, and to enjoy all its beauty and goodness. But everything is obviously not right—with the world or us. **What happened??**



- *We all reject the ruler*
- *We want God's job*
- *We fail in ruling ourselves or the world.*

Romans 3:1-12; 23

People everywhere reject God by doing things their own way. We don't like someone telling us what to do or how to live—least of all God—and so we rebel against him. This rebellious, self-sufficient attitude is what the Bible calls 'sin'. The trouble is, if everyone does their own thing... the result is misery. By rebelling against God, we've made a terrible mess of things.

The question is: what will God do about it?



- *God won't let us rebel forever*
- *God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgment.*

Romans 6:23 Hebrews 9:27

God cares enough about humanity to take our rebellion seriously. In rebellion we are saying to God, "Go away. I don't want you telling me what to do. Leave me alone." God's judgment on rebels is to withdraw from them—permanently. But since God is the source of life and all good things, being cut off from him means death and hell. **Is that it then? Are we all destined for death and everlasting ruin?**



- *Because of His love, God sent His Son*
- *Jesus always lived under God's rule*
- *By dying He took our punishment and brought forgiveness*

Romans 5:8 1 Peter 3:18

Because of his great love, God did not leave us to suffer the consequences of our foolish rebellion. He did something to save us. He sent his own divine son into our world to become a man—Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus didn't rebel and did not deserve death.



YOU CAN START A LIFE GROUP... AND MULTIPLY IT!

Life groups are at the heart of Holy Cross... and anyone can start one. Here's a helpful guide to starting, growing, and multiplying your Life Group...

1 - Read through the “Discipleship Overview” and “Beliefs and Values” pages (4-7) for background on our strategies for Knowing Jesus.

2 - Organize your Life group. Read through the “Introduction to Life Groups” page (8-9) and assign roles as a group.

3 - Choose a curriculum with your coach or pastor's help. Pray through what your group needs and what your congregation needs and try to build on synergies.

4 - Work through the “Week 1 Questions” individually and then as a group (pages 10-14)

5 - Report Back! Let your coach or pastor know what's happening so that they can celebrate, coach, and encourage your group! (A weekly email is a great help!)

Most of all... Enjoy the process!! We pastors trust you and know that you are God's “Plan A” for changing the world! Communicate often and let us pray for you!! You can do it!!



DISCIPLESHIP OVERVIEW

Holy Cross exists for those who are not yet members.

To accomplish this goal we invite people to Know Christ, keeping them connected to Christ, and moving them to become servant leaders with Christ.

But how do you do that? Start with yourself! Do you know Christ? Are you connected to Christ (through his body!)? Are you becoming a servant leader of Christ?

If you were to go to a gym today, before you joined, met an instructor, or spent time with a trainer, you'd be asked one simple question: "What are your goals". In a gym those goals might range from gaining information about how to eat and exercise better, to working with someone to lose weight and gain muscle, to being challenged to go further and harder as an athlete.

In the Church we should use the same simple question:

What is your goal?

Maybe you...

- Need to get the facts and need help understanding the story
- Want to shed the weight of living life according to your own rules
- Are looking for a community to train with
- Long to train harder and go further as a disciple
- Are ready to be a trainer yourself – ready to live the life of Knowing Jesus and help others in their journey.

What are some of the goals you have???

How would you like to grow as one who "knows Jesus and makes Him known in the context of authentic community"?



Prayers for seeking friends

Heart Surgery – May they understand their need...

May _____ know that he/she cannot stand on his/her own righteousness. No one can because there is no one righteous, not even one. (Ro. 3:10)

May _____ know You are Lord; and there is no Savior besides You (Is 43:11)

Repentance — May they be brought to repentance...

May _____ know that his/her sin has caused a separation between him/her and You, God. (Is. 59:2)

Help _____ to understand that he/she can have forgiveness through the blood of Christ

Salvation — May they trust the Lord for their salvation...

May _____ understand that he/she can be saved by grace and that it is a free gift from You (Eph. 2:8)

Father, I pray _____ will repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)

Laborers — May there be people who will share the Gospel...

Father, please send a faithful witness who can go to _____ and preach the gospel (Mk. 16:15)

Teach me to make the most of every opportunity I have to share the gospel with _____ (Col. 4:5)



3:1:M PRAYER GUIDE

Use these pages as a reminder to pray for your friends who don't yet know Christ!

3 Names – 1 Chair – Many Prayers

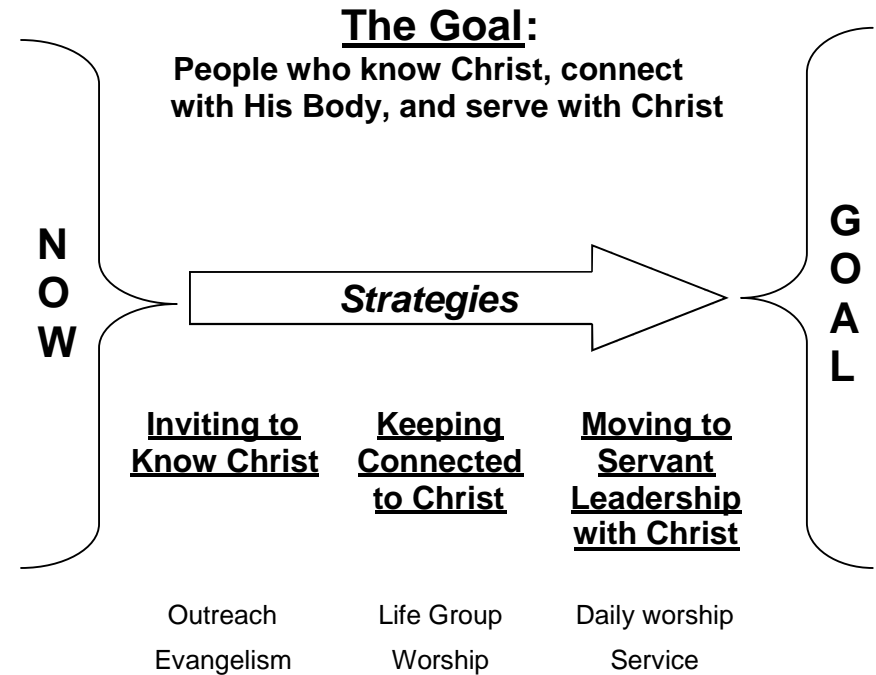
Always have an empty chair at small group and pray that God will fill that chair with YOUR friend!

1. Choose 3 friends who live close by and don't Know Christ
2. Talk with each friend individually let them know you're working on your prayer life, and then ask if they have any needs or concerns that you can pray about.
3. If appropriate, share some of the prayer requests with your small group. (You can leave out names too.)
4. Using the prayers below, or your own prayers...
PRAY - PRAY - PRAY!!!
5. From time to time, check back with each friend to let them know you've been praying and to see if anything has changed.
6. When it is appropriate, invite your friend to join you at a church sponsored event. (Sunday morning worship, small group, outreach event, BBQ, etc.)

3:1:M Friends	Needs or Concerns
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	



Here's the overview of the Discipleship Process





Beliefs and Values

OUR BELIEFS

Jesus as Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:9)

We believe that Jesus is Lord. To live out this belief we affirm our connection to historic Christianity as revealed in the Scriptures and summarized in the three Creeds:

- The Apostles
- The Nicene
- The Athanasian

and the historic Anglican formularies

- The Book of Common Prayer
- The Ordinal (1662)
- The Catechism (1928)
- The 39 Articles.

OUR VALUES

The Seven Premises of Holy Cross

Basic Premise #1 - The Church of the Holy Cross exists for those who are not yet members.

Basic Premise #2 – We welcome and accept people wherever they are in their faith journey, and trust God to take them where He wants them to be, and on His timetable.

Basic Premise #3 - People want relationships, not religion.

- a. Authentic Christianity is a relationship, not a religion.
- b. They don't care what you know until they know that you care.
- c. Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name and they're always glad you came.



Group Growth Worksheet

How is your group doing in helping you Know Christ? Take a moment to look at the Introduction to Small Groups. How good is your group at meeting those goals? When we talk about Knowing Christ through Worship, Experience, and Sharing, is there a gap between what your group is doing and what you dream your group could do?

Using the bracket below, write down what you dream your small group could be in terms of Worship (on Sunday or in group time), Experience (of forgiveness, grace, and prayer); and Sharing (of your gifts, and your faith). ... taking notice of the goals that are stated. Write those things down on the right side. Then list where you are right now. What's going right and what's not going happening? What's on the bottom of your groups "task list" that you're hoping you won't have time for? What is challenging for your group? Where are you hitting it "out of the ballpark?" After you've written those things down, list in the middle one or two actions that would help your group get closer to where you want to be. Make those your goals for this Discipleship Journal.

Now

Goal



Individual Growth Worksheet

As you think about your individual growth as a Christian (or a seeker!) how would you rate your satisfaction? Are you doing great or is there something lacking? Often as we take time to evaluate, there is a gap between what we long for and where we are. When we talk about Knowing Christ, we define that through Worship, Experience, and Sharing.

Using the chart below, list where you are right now on the left side of the brackets, in terms of your Worship (in Spirit, Word, and Sacrament); Experience (of forgiveness, grace, and prayer); and Sharing (of your gifts, and your faith). It might be helpful to think of where you are in terms of head (what you know), heart (what you feel), and hands (what you do). On the right side of the page, write down what you'd like to see and experience in your life in terms of Worship, Experience, and Sharing. After you've written those things down, list in the middle one or two actions that would help you get closer from where you are to where you want to be. Share these action steps and goals with your group.

Now

Goal



Basic Premise #4 – Positioning: We play to our strengths. We aren't interested in trying to be another church. We learn from others, but adapt what we like to our situation. There isn't one single way that works, or one size that fits all.

Basic Premise #5 - Just because we've always done things in a certain way is not, in and of itself, a sufficient reason for continuing to do it that way. God loves us just the way we are, but He doesn't expect us to stay that way.

Basic Premise #6 – God pays for what He orders.

Basic Premise #7 – With God, nothing is impossible.

Holy Cross will strive to follow the pattern set by the original church in Acts 2:42-47, and actively expect the same miraculous blessings.

Therefore, in the years to come, Holy Cross will increase God's Kingdom with:

**More Christians
Better Christians
And Changed lives.**



INTRODUCTION TO LIFE GROUPS

Why Life Groups?

Life groups are the essential building block of Holy Cross providing the place for both Community and Mission Impact so that we can truly build a community where people can “Know Christ”.

Life groups provide robust Community by providing a place to practice the Christian life together. In Life groups you can be known and loved for who you are currently while being challenged to grow into the person God designed you to be. You can practice the Christian Life, learning to understand the Scriptures, care for others, pray effectively, and use your gifts.

Life groups also provide a vehicle for impacting neighborhoods for Jesus. No single person has all the gifts for the Church, it is a Body after all! You see the needs around your homes. You see the way Jesus could change the people you interact with. You have better ideas, goals and dreams for the people in your neighborhood than any bureaucratic system could. So, why not empower you and your Life group of Jesus Followers to help people Know Christ... neighborhood by neighborhood.

Goals of Life Groups:

1. Build Community

- Make group a priority time!
(Meals and Babysitting help facilitate this.)
- Prepare for a “half way decent” lesson every week.
(leaders and participants)
- Pray for and serve your members through the week!
- Volunteer and lead with a team of three.
(Bible Study / Hospitality / Outreach)

2. Outreach

- Pray weekly for friends who don't Know Christ!
- Reach your neighbors with practical service to show Christ's love,
- Host one fellowship a month with your group.
- Multiply your group every year!



Small Group Questions

Accountability—D N A

Divine Living - Are you building an interactive relationship with God? In your private prayer and devotional time, what are you learning or experiencing? How are you Knowing Christ in worship? Are you reaching your group and individual goals in this area?

1. What is your picture of the ideal Christian? What one step can you take to grow towards that picture? (Use the “Individual Growth Sheet” on the next page as a guide)

2. What one thing can your small group do to become even better? What can you contribute to the group's growth? (Use the “Group Growth Sheet” on the next page as a guide)

3. Who are your five (at least!) 3:1:M friends? What can this group do to support you in your longing to see them Know Christ? What is one seed that you or the group can plant into their life? (Fill out the 3:1:M Sheet)

Leader's Note: Record all this information as a way to pray for your group! Report back to small group coach or pastor what you're excited about your group growing in over the next few weeks...



Week 1 Guide – Getting Started

- Read through the “**Discipleship Overview**” and “**Beliefs and Values**” pages for background on our strategies for Knowing Jesus.
- Organize your Life group. Read through the “**Introduction to Life Groups**” page and assign roles as a group.
- **Choose a curriculum** with your pastor’s help. Pray through what your group needs and what your congregation needs and try to build on synergies.
- Work through the “**Week 1 Questions**” individually and then as a group
- Consider forming “**Life Transformation Groups**” or smaller sub groups of the Life Group to help each other grow more.
- **Report Back!** Let your pastor know what’s happening so that he can celebrate, coach, and encourage your group! (A weekly email is a great help!)

Devotional Readings

Sunday	Acts 2:44-47
Monday	Psalm 66:16-20
Tuesday	Romans 12:4-5
Wednesday	Matthew 28:19-20
Thursday	John 16:13
Friday	Hebrews 4:12; 1 Corinthians 10:16
Saturday	Mark 10:13-16



Life Group Job Descriptions

Group Leader

- Prepare a Bible Study in coordination with Greg
- Recruit and train other leaders including an apprentice/assistant
- Guide group into prayer and worship
- Follow up with those who are missing (Send postcards!)
- Call or email weekly reports to Greg

Apprentice

- Assist the Leader with Bible Studies
- Help the group with prayer and pastoral care.
- Dream, plan, and prepare to multiply the group

Hospitality Coordinator

- Plan weekly meal
- Arrange babysitting
- Organize a monthly fellowship time

Outreach Coordinator

- Creatively plan outreach to the neighborhood (servantevangelism.com)
- Help group pray weekly for friends who don’t know Christ (3:1:M)
- Plan and encourage invitations for monthly fellowship time

Time-Keeper – Any one of above... or another

Keep the total time for Life group, including gathering time to 1:45.

- 15 min gathering
- 30 min food
- 15 min worship/prayer
- 30 min Bible study
- 15 min outreach planning