



THE CORNERSTONE

study. connect. transform.

THE CORNERSTONE
SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR
ORIENTATION

Summer Meeting



Ministry Team Prayer

We praise you, Lord, for you are good and gracious, and it is fitting to praise you. Father, you desire the hearts of all your people. Empower us to be your instruments to reach out to others through The Cornerstone.

Bring those people who don't know you and those who are seeking you. Draw those back who have left the Church. Expand our hearts to accept with love all whom you send. Help us to be a community working together to spread the Gospel.

Jesus, our model, help us to know how to serve and be served. Help us become servants of one another. Give us wholeness and holiness in our days. And bless us with the awareness of the good we can accomplish through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Remove all taint of self-centeredness from our hearts. Give us joy when we serve – humility when we are served. Let us feel your love through one another. Let those who serve and those who are served bestow on one another a deeper sense of the Spirit's peace.

Good and gracious God, may your hand be upon us and your Holy Spirit guide us. Grant that all we do be according to your will and for your glory. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



The Cornerstone is **Community**

Welcoming

Friendly

Fellowship

Sense of Belonging

Sharing

How has God touched you?

Shared Prayer

Sense of Serving Others

Safe

Vulnerable

Trusted/Confidential

Sense of Being 'Known'

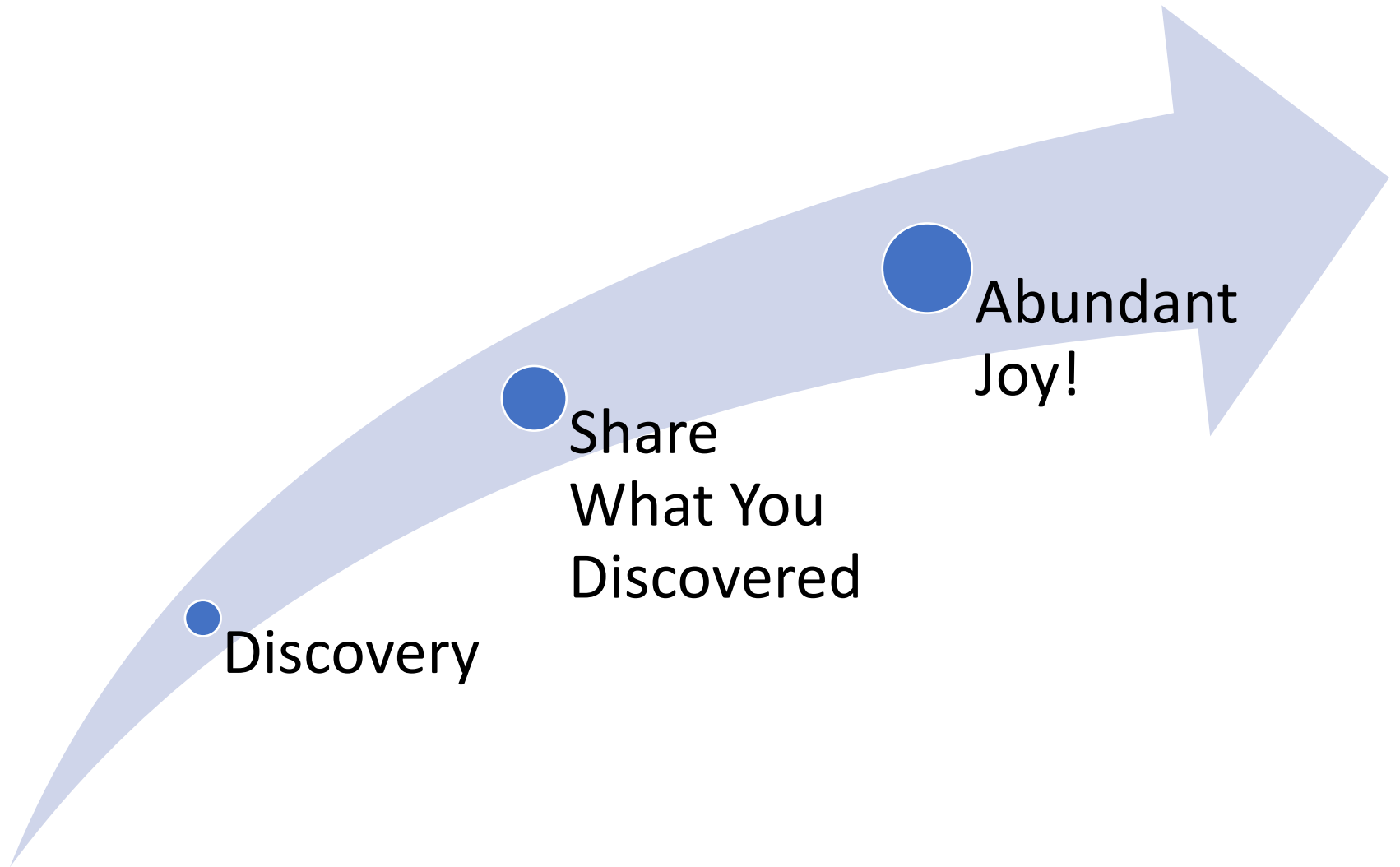


The Cornerstone Allows For Discovery





Discovery leads to Joy!



Discovery

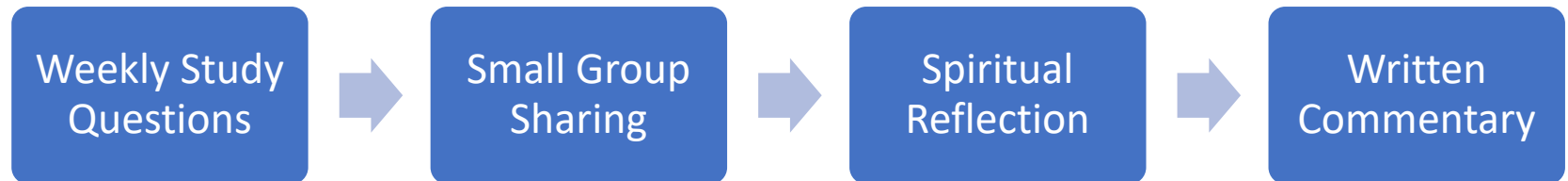
Share
What You
Discovered

Abundant
Joy!



The Cornerstone 4-Part Method

Proven to add richness that other scriptures studies lack.



Small Group is the Core of the 4-Part Method



Member quotes:

This is where you feel the Holy Spirit at work. It's amazing how many times the connection question lands on the person who needs to share.

Each year I fall in love with the group and learning everyone's story

I love listening to how people have changed.

Members want more time for sharing in small group



Benefits of The Small Group

- Where we connect with others
- Where the Holy Spirit is most present.
- A well-run small group provides lasting benefits to members.
- It is the part of The Cornerstone that members treasure most



Role of the Small Group Facilitator

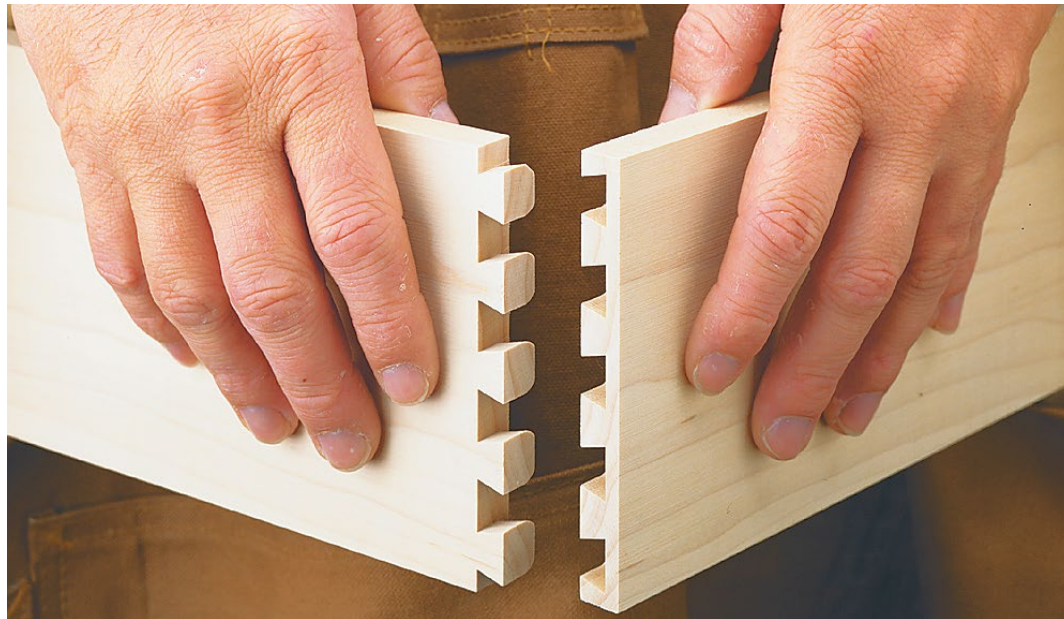
- Create a positive experience for members by:
 - Establishing a culture of trust, loving acceptance, and joy
 - Confidential, non-judgmental, no gossip
 - Facilitating rich sharing
 - Managing group dynamics
 - Modeling prayer
 - Managing time by staying true to the proven process



Group Dynamics is Joint Responsibility



- Members must do their part to be good citizens of the small group.
 - Follow the Rules of the Road
 - Expectations for Member Behavior



Rules of the Road

How will you cover them?

- Confidentiality
 - What is said at The Cornerstone stays at The Cornerstone. No exceptions, unless given permission by the one sharing
- Prayer
 - Pray for each other
- Time Management
 - Participate but give everyone a chance
- Mindfulness
 - Avoid politics, controversy and debate
- Logistics
 - Attendance is a priority, but let SGF know if you need to miss
- Socials
 - Same *code-of-silence* applies
- Evangelization
 - Invite others to join
- Culture – confidential, no judgement, no gossip
 - *Practice The Fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*



See hand out on next page



Rules of the Road

Confidentiality

Respect each member's privacy – Confidentiality is a must! What is said in the Small Group stays in the Small Group. This includes shared prayer intentions.
 Listen when others are sharing. Be an attentive participant in your group.

Prayer

Pray for members of your Small Group and their intentions as well as for The Cornerstone Ministry.

Time Management

Be conscious of time limitations in the Small Group and limit responses accordingly. We love to hear what you have to say, but give everyone a chance to share.
 Limit responses to what is written on your lesson. These are the words that God has given you during your prayer/study time.

Mindfulness

Omit political issues when sharing. The Cornerstone is not a forum for contentious discussions about politics.
 Acknowledge differing opinions respectfully. The Small Group is not a place for argument and debate.
 Avoid endorsing or advertising groups, projects or activities outside The Cornerstone.
 Omit conversations that exclude members in the group (i.e. school preferences, school functions, church or social gatherings).
 Let your Small Group Facilitator know if something makes you uncomfortable in the Small Group, it may be bothering someone else in the group as well.

Logistics

Let your Small Group Facilitator know when you will be gone.
 Make attendance to The Cornerstone a priority. Individual attendance affects the entire group. You will be missed if you miss!
 Try to complete lessons on a daily basis - It will be more rewarding in your walk with the Lord.
 Come to The Cornerstone session even if you haven't completed your lesson. Hearing the answers shared by others will be rewarding and your presence is important.
 Move to and from the large group gathering area quietly and prayerfully.

Socials

Practice these guidelines at all of The Cornerstone and Small Group functions (i.e. luncheons/suppers, socials, retreats).

Evangelization

Spread the News- Tell friends and family about The Cornerstone and how it has affected your relationship with the Lord.

Culture

Enjoy friendship and laughter. God has a great sense of humor! Your faith journey should be fun. Strive to create The Cornerstone Culture where warmth and love nurture all.

Use the fruit of the Spirit as your guide. Galatians 5:22-23 "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."



Members Want More Time For Sharing

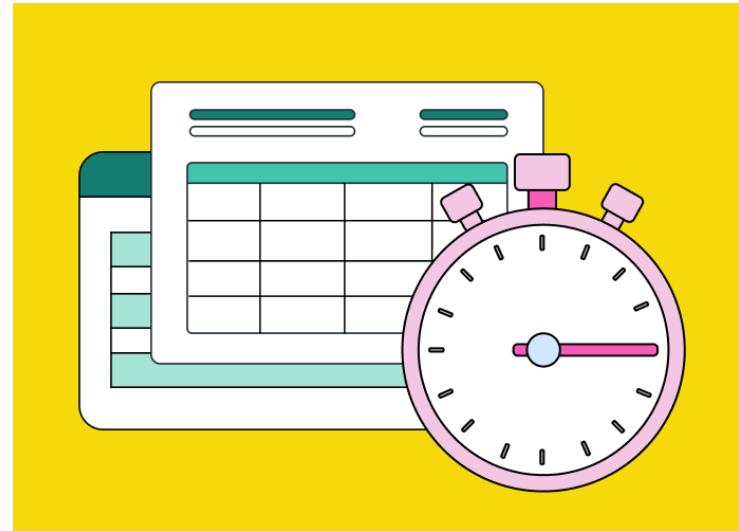
- Small group sharing is critical to a successful small group
- Starting with Matthew, lesson formats will change
 - Fewer days (5)
 - Fewer questions per day (5)
- Time allotted for small group will NOT change
 - More time for sharing
- SGF's must adjust
 - **Slow down**
 - *** questions that will generate rich sharing.**
 - **Solicit more 'sharing-type' answers from members**

Tips for Facilitating A Small Group Successfully



Follow A Schedule

- Branch Facilitators or Branch Coordinators, – make a detailed schedule
- **Write the time schedule in the margin of your lesson.**
 - This helps you know if you are behind or ahead of schedule.
 - If you are ahead of schedule, slow down and encourage more sharing.



See Example on Next Page

Example: Regular **Five-Day** Schedule

Set Up Chairs – anyone who can make it	8:30-8:40	# of Minutes
Ministry team meeting	8:40 - 9:15M	
Meet and Greet	9:15 - 9:25 AM	
<u>Main Meeting</u>		
Music	9:30- 9:35	
Focus	9:35-9:40	3-5
travel to small group	9:40-9:45	5
Sharing and prayer (all 5 days)	9:45-10:39	54 total
day 1	9:45-9:54	9
day2	9:54-10:03	9
day3	10:03-10:12	9
day4	10:12-10:21	9
day 5	10:21-10:30	9
shared prayer	10:30-10:39	9
travel to large group	10:39-10:44	5
proclamation	10:44- 10:47	3
reflection	10:47-11:00	13



More Tips for Facilitating a Small Group

- Ask members to star (*) any connection questions they feel were particularly meaningful, or they have an answer they really want to share
- Go around the circle taking turns answering questions
- If a connection question lands on someone who has already answered a connection, skip to the next person.
- On Connection questions or questions that could have many different answers, try to get at least 2-3 different people sharing.
- Ask members to read what is written on their paper. This is the message God gave them and that is what is to be shared.
- To make more time for sharing, read the part of the question that is most pertinent. See Example on next page.
- See 'Guidelines for Small Group Facilitators' for more tips



One way to save time in small group:

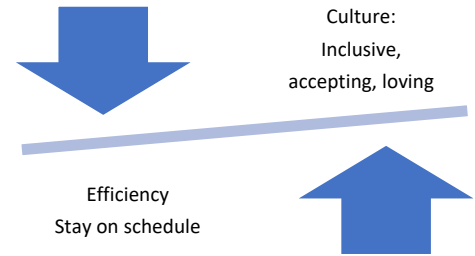
Regular Questions: Read only the question (highlighted in blue).

Connection Questions: Read the entire question

- 2. Familiarity with the geography and history of Israel enriches our understanding of the prophets. At the end of the Golden Age of Israel, a schism divided the kingdom. From the Commentary, page 20-21, read about the secession of the northern kingdom and comment on why it "took courage for Amos, a southerner, to show his face in Bethel."
- 3. Amos first addressed the nations that surrounded Judah and Israel with a bold message, "The Lord roars from Zion" (verse 2). In a repetitive, poetic style, verses 3-8 are introduced with the phrase, "Thus says the LORD" and end with, "says the LORD." Briefly summarize the transgressions and punishment of one of those nations.
- 6. CONNECTION: In this study it is important for us to understand the background and history of each prophet. There were numerous events and factors in their lives, such as prosperity followed by war, defeat and exile. Consider how culture, geography and history have helped to shape your beliefs. Describe a defining event in your life or that of an ancestor that may have affected your faith. Share some thoughts with your group.

Artfully Balance Group Dynamics

- Keep the group conversation on track
- Modeling an inclusive, loving, accepting culture.
- How can dynamics be handled?
 - The person who dominates or rambles
 - *Let's see what some of the others have on their paper*
 - *I'm sorry we are going to have to keep moving, but lets mark it down and come back to it if we have time*
 - *We might have to come back to that*
 - The person who has missed the point
 - *In the core ministry team meeting this morning they had a different answer*
 - The person whose problems need solving
 - *Give empathetic assurance that the group will pray for the individual and the situation*
 - *Stop and offer a short prayer for the person and go on with the session*
 - When the discussion becomes political
 - *My goodness we are getting off track. Whose turn is it to answer the next question?*





What to do with difficult questions?

- **Keep it light and positive**
 - Acknowledge that many struggle with certain questions.
 - Share what was discussed in ministry team meeting.
 - Emphasize there are no right or wrong answers.
 - It's more about what the Holy Spirit brings to your heart.
 - It's okay to skip questions if you don't have an answer.
 - Work on it as a group.

Prayer

- The cornerstone of The Cornerstone is Prayer
- Small group prayer develops a feeling of love and caring and builds a community of trust.
 - Small group prayer must be held in strictest confidence
 - Absolutely no discussion of prayer requests outside of your small group
 - This applies to both good and bad news



Modeling Prayer Beyond Petitions

- As SGF's, we are called to teach spontaneous, conversational prayer.
 - Practice having a conversation with God
 - Lord I know you know my heart....



FOUR STEPS OF CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER

STEP 1: Jesus is here. “Let’s begin our time in prayer by closing our eyes and just spend a few moments coming into the presence of the Lord.” (Pause) “Jesus said when two or three are gathered together in His name, that He was there in the midst of them, and Jesus is here.”

STEP 2: Thank you, Lord. “Now let’s thank the Lord for the many blessings that He’s given us. Ex. Lord, I thank you for _____.”

STEP 3: Help me, Lord. “Let’s now pray for ourselves, asking God to help us in our needs.” Ex. Help me, God, to _____.”

STEP 4: Help my brother/sister. “Let’s now pray for one another, for our brothers and sisters in Christ.”

WRAP-UP PRAYER: “We pray, Father, for these needs and all the longing in our hearts today. Help us to experience the presence of Your Spirit as we study Your Word during the week and guide us into Your truth. We pray this in the name of Jesus.”

End with Doxology (“Glory Be” or “Our Father”)

What to do with extra time?

- If you have extra time when reviewing lessons, circle back to an earlier question that might create good sharing.
- If you have extra time during shared prayer, be prepared with additional prayers to offer.
- Possibly offer a copy to those who may not know the prayer
- Keep a collection of prayers in your folder
 - The Memorare
 - Anima Christi
 - The Angelus
 - Prayer to St. Michael the Arch Angel
 - Prayer to our Lady Undoer of Knots
 - Prayer at the end of the Divine Mercy Chaplet (Eternal God whose Mercy is endless...)
 - Litany of Trust
 - Litany of Humility
 - A Concord Pastor Comments.com
 - Catholic Wisdom.com

Opening Day

Typically a Visitor Day with no study questions to review.



Opening Day Schedule – Daytime Example

First Day TIME BREAKDOWNS

Ministry Team Meeting

9:00- 9:10	Set Up Chairs
9:10-9:25	Biz and Shared Prayer
9:25-9:30	Meet and Greet

Main Meeting

9:30-9:35	Greet/Music
9:35-9:48	Large Group + visitors – Show video 13 min
9:48-10:00	Travel to small groups 12 min
10:00-10:36	Small Group Meet and Greet/Orientation (36 min)
10:36-10:44	Shared prayer (8 min)
10:44-10:50	Travel to large group
10:50-11:05	Reflection and concluding prayer

1st Day Check list

- Meet and Greet
- Calendar
- Logistics
 - How to get your lesson
 - Notify SGF if absent
 - Snow Day Policy
 - How do socials work?
- Rules of the Road
- Prayer
- Consider creating labels with SGF contact info
- See hand out for more details

Handouts

Review in SGF Orientation

- Calendar
- Meeting Day Schedule
- Rules of the Road
- Returning members
- Expected visitors
- Small group assignments

Leave Behind – Read on your time

- SGF -3 –Guidelines for Prayer in Small Group
- SGF -4 –Guidelines for Small Group Facilitators
- SGF -5.1 – Discussion vs Sharing
- SGE 6 -1st Day Checklist
- SGF 7 –On-going Challenges
- Contact information for returning members
- Ministry volunteers
- Survey results

Appendix

Other important information to share with SGF's

Members Notify Your SGF If You Will Be Absent

This is for branches that have heavy security at the entrance

- SGF: _____
- SGF: _____
- This is more than just a courtesy. This is important to door security.
 - Each week we will have a sign in sheet with everyone we are expecting that day.
 - As you walk in, check off your name.
 - The greeter manning the door will join the meeting when all have arrived, or at 9:30, which ever comes first.
- **SO PLEASE NOTIFY US IF YOU WILL BE ABSENT.**
 - **SO WE WON'T BE WAITING AND WONDERING**