

# **Small Group Facilitation in the ChristLife Series**

*By Les Kayanan*

## **Introduction**

In our mission to help others discover Christ, follow Christ and share Christ, it is critically important that the small group experience for all participants achieves the stated purposes with respect to discover, follow or serving Christ series. For example, the stated purposes for Discovering Christ which are achieved through the small group format are: to attain a personal encounter with God's love; to come to know Jesus in the context of community; and to experience enhancing one's personal relationship with God. The small group forum is intended to achieve these purposes through watching the videos and collectively discussing the content in a 6-8 person group that enables discussion input by all group members within an allotted time period.

Each of the ChristLife series involves small group discussions as the central modality for the participants' experiential learning, and the more fulfilling the small group experience is for each participant, the greater the potential that the participant will value the specific ChristLife series.

What this infers, then, is that the small group facilitators play very significant roles towards the success of each ChristLife series. To best prepare a cadre of successful facilitators, we believe that the selection, on-boarding, initial training, development and de-briefing of our ChristLife small group facilitators be done with as much forethought (planning, scheduling, and prayer) as possible.

Conversely, our experience shows that without a successful small group experience, participants easily fall away from continuing with the ChristLife journey. Certainly there are many other reasons a person may decide to not continue with ChristLife, but the majority of participants who depart are those whose small group experience was less than ideal: where trust was not generated or maintained; where the small group session was not a safe place to be; or where the participants shared that the facilitator was not role modeling a teachable spirit!

This Guide, for the benefit of all those involved in ChristLife both new and experienced, is offered so that the ChristLife experience for all participants is enhanced. Here we will offer the core competencies (skills and abilities) that each small group facilitator can achieve and improve upon as each ChristLife series is offered. Each core competency is explained, and the different levels of skills are explained with examples whenever possible. These core competencies might also be used for other team roles that support the ChristLife series. This Guide links core competency to the ChristLife planning process and then presents a suggested process through which the ChristLife leadership can identify and maximize the use of these core competencies across the entire ChristLife team.

## **What is a competency?**

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines a competency as a skill or ability, and in our ChristLife setting there are many skills and abilities that our team members possess either by vocation, self-development or experience. Another definition of a competency describes it as a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of a person's role or responsibility that correlates with job or role performance, that is measureable, and that can be improved through training and development (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Hence, a competency is bigger than a skill; it includes knowledge, it connects to performance, and each person can learn and improve on a competency through training and development.

As a forethought, the requirement for each small group facilitator to be an expert at each of the competencies is furthest from the truth or desire in ChristLife! It will be rare that any one person is an expert with all five competencies presented below. Selection of a small group facilitator recognizes that the facilitator will also be learning throughout the entirety of each series. More importantly, we ask that each small group facilitator understand, learn, apply and then evaluate these core competencies in order to help us validate and improve our small group experiences within the context of ChristLife.

The selection and training of each small group facilitator presupposes that the learning of the skills comes through application of the skills during the training sessions as well as during the ChristLife series sessions. Each facilitator's learning requires thoughtful self-assessment as well as feedback from others who observe the facilitator in a small group setting.

Lastly, the core competencies for the small group facilitator ensures a standardized approach to the implementation of facilitating a small group across all parishes where ChristLife is experienced. We pray that these core competencies provide our ChristLife small group facilitators the confidence to share their love for Jesus with their small group members, other small group facilitators, and the ChristLife team members.

## **Core Competencies**

There are five core competencies that each small group facilitator will be introduced to and be trained on so that a self-assessment and an external assessment of the facilitator will enable each facilitator to grow and develop intentionally. Each of these five competencies can be more thoroughly understood through external reading, and there is a list of resources provided at the end of this article for these competencies.

Each of these core competencies is described as generally as possible because there is much that can be added to the description based on the implementing parish's resources. Examples given are merely that - an example; not a requirement! Also, there are different levels of proficiency on which each facilitator-in-training can initially self-assess and then re-assess after implementing facilitation skills during any of the ChristLife series. Observations and feedback from the Small Group Facilitator lead as well as from the small group itself (during and at the conclusion of a ChristLife series) can also help a

facilitator understand and apply modifications to any of the five core competencies.

The five core competencies on which each small group facilitator will be initially trained and can receive continued development are *Building Rapport*, *Critical Learning*, *Teachable Spirit*, *Series Expertise*, and *Group Prayer Leadership*.

### **a. Building Rapport (Developing Trust)**

*Building Rapport* starts when the small group facilitator welcomes each assigned member of the small group. Whether the welcome is a telephone call, an email, or a personal greeting, a relationship is being created that will set the tone for the small group's discussions. The end result in *Building Rapport* between you and the small group participants and among all your small group participants is a trusting environment wherein all participants can speak their mind without fear of reprisal or disclosure of what they share to others outside the small group. Creating a trusting environment is key to a successful small group experience, and *Building Rapport* is the foundation of this success. To achieve the trusting environment, the small group facilitator must be observant of each of the assigned small group's participants, *Building Rapport* along the way throughout the ChristLife series at the sessions and, if appropriate, between sessions.

The different levels to successfully achieve the *Building Rapport* competency are described below and depicted in Figure 1. *Building Rapport*. Learning who your small group participants are requires that a genuine interest be shown in how the facilitator behaves and communicates with the small group participants. One easy way to understand this core competency is from the words of President Theodore Roosevelt who said, "No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

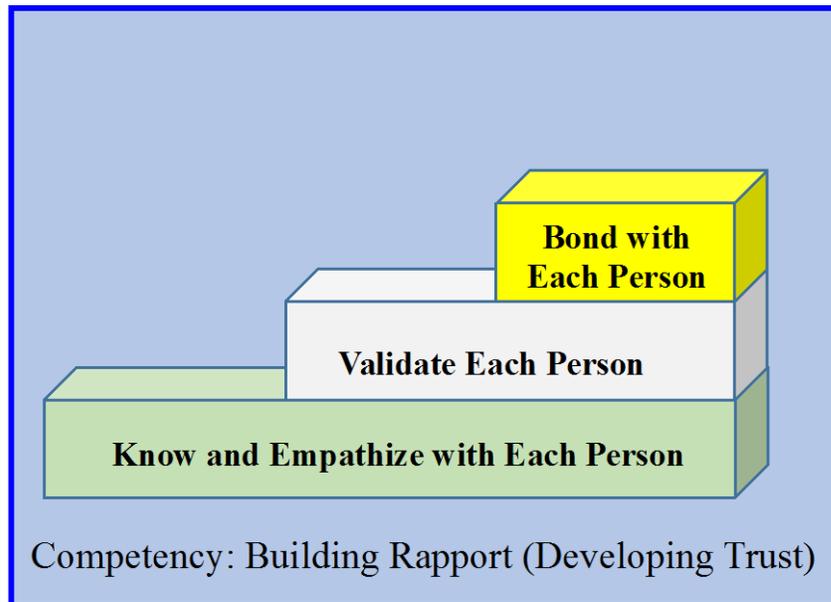


Figure 1. *Building Rapport*

**Know and Empathize.** The first step in building a trusting relationship with another is by knowing who the other person is. Genuine interest in the other person's life, background and spiritual situation contributes to this initial level of building rapport. The small group facilitator can also better understand the participants by empathizing with the situations which a participant might disclose about him/herself. One way to display empathy is to imagine yourself in the other person's situation, and given the background of the other person, express your understanding of the circumstances that the person shared. You may not know much about each person's background, and asking each about their backgrounds and then intently listening to learn what each is comfortable to share each week are excellent opportunities to exhibit genuine hearing and caring.

**Validate.** The next level in *Building Rapport* includes a more intentional interest you might show in each person's situation. Validation does not require that you agree with the actions a person takes or a decision a person makes, but rather it asks that you listen without judgment and assure the other person that you have heard what was said and the feelings that came with the content. In the example in which the participant disclosed about him/herself, validation of that person comes about when you acknowledge the feelings that the person might have experienced as appropriate in that situation. Other types of questions about the person's memories growing up, what they like about where they lived or currently live, and what they enjoy about the parish provides each person safe topics to discuss. Allow each person to reveal more personal information when and if the moment is right. Acknowledging that you heard what was shared goes a long way to creating a safe environment for each person. Always refrain from making judgment about anything that is shared. Acknowledgment with a smile is strong validation.

**Bonding.** The desired end-state for each small group participant is to feel a bond with all members of the small group. The facilitator can enable this through role modeling trustworthiness in word and behavior, and the facilitator, mindful of the diversity within his/her small group, helps create the trusting environment.

#### **b. Critical Learning (Asking the right question)**

*Critical Learning* is the art and act of understanding another's point of view, without judgment, in order to ensure that what the other has said is understood by the listener in context as well as with the desire to understand what the meaning of another's statement. Loosely connected to the academic term Critical Thinking, *Critical Learning* is a competency which focuses on asking whoever made a statement the right questions to ensure the statement is understood. Where Critical Thinking requires self-regulation or the ability for the facilitator to monitor his/her own cognitive activities (such as applying, analyzing, or evaluating) with respect to a statement made by someone else, *Critical Learning* asks the facilitator to be aware that when another's statement may be confusing to some in the small group, asking questions for clarification be initiated with a gentle and loving spirit that neither challenges or judges the statement. As small groups develop their group identity, the facilitator role models learning for each of the small group members.

**Listening to understand.** Reflecting back to what President Roosevelt said, the small

group facilitator is first and foremost a caring listener to everyone in the small group. Sometimes understanding is demonstrated by reflecting back what someone else said so that others in the group who didn't hear it at first might then hear it. Of course, asking permission of the person who made the statement if you could paraphrase it, and then asking the person if you captured the gist of the statement ensures the person's point was heard and understood. Other times, understanding is acknowledged by a simple nod of the head and a smile to confirm you heard.

**Inquisitive Nature.** Listening to understand presupposes that others in the small group are easily able to share their thoughts and ideas. This competency enables the facilitator to listen to what is being shared by the small group members, summarize the topic trend to acknowledge what is being said, and then redirecting the discussion by asking a question that ties into the table/video discussion topic. This competency is also displayed when there is very little conversation being shared in the small group, and the facilitator might invite participation by asking a questions of a general nature that is easily answered. For instance, in *Discovering Christ* the first video introduces *The Meaning of Life*, and the facilitator might ask this of the small group members: "I was surprised to hear such a variety of responses to the question about the Meaning of Life to them, and I was wondering if any of you felt surprised as I did or something different, and why do you think this question was so differently answered by each the people?" This question places the context of the video on the table where you shared your feeling, and it asks the small group members to share their feelings as well as ask themselves the same question.

There are tried and tested discussion questions provided for each weekly meeting, and the small group facilitator might use these questions. A seasoned facilitator might elect to ask the questions as written or fashion the question to suit the personality of the group.

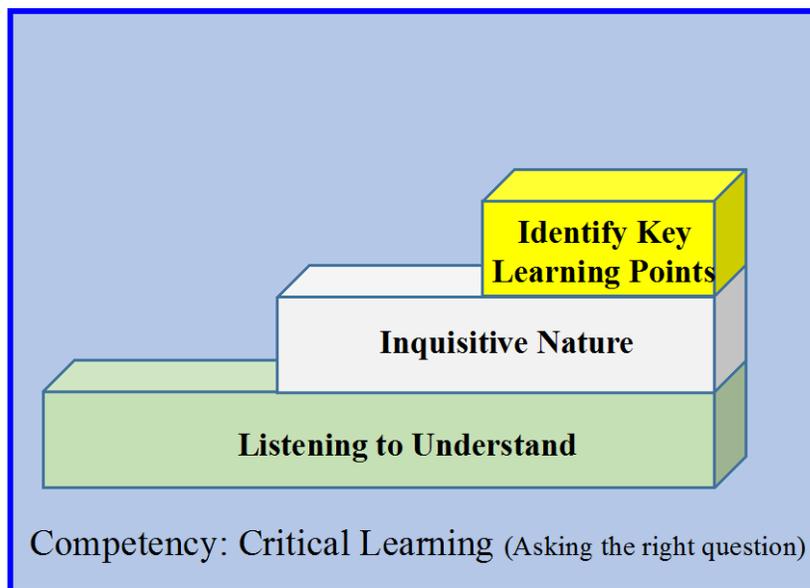


Figure 2. *Critical Learning*

Once the group starts talking, the facilitator is tasked to enable all small group members to join the discussion. This is often done by interjecting, when appropriate, by saying something like, “This is a great discussion about XYZ, and I am curious how Jim and Sally might feel about these points.” Remember to maintain rapport (first core competency) by gently shifting attention so others might participate. This is truly an art (or heart) form that can be developed by asking loving questions of inquiry rather than abruptly shifting attention to others.

**Identify Key Learning Points.** A majority of the success of a small group is in the individual learning that each member gets throughout each ChristLife series. Some group members “get it” through the video and some through the discussions after the video. Because people learn differently, there are some group members who need a few weeks to finally have the message sink in and mull in their minds and hearts for a longer time. The facilitator must understand this about the learning process: it is different for each person, and we must allow each person the space and time to learn at their own pace. However, the small group facilitator, adept at listening to understand and with an inquisitive nature, might be called upon by a small group member who just “got it,” to be able to validate the learning that the member achieved. These are the critical moments for each participant (sometimes called “Aha” moments), and the facilitator’s acknowledgment of the participant’s learning is a double blessing! This competency is achieved by validating another’s learning and by doing so with love.

**c. Teachable Spirit.** This competency is provided to enhance the role of each facilitator within his/her small group. Because we are asked not to teach or create situations where the facilitator is dominating the small group discussions, exercising the *Teachable Spirit* is demonstrated by listening and understanding to what each small group member shares.

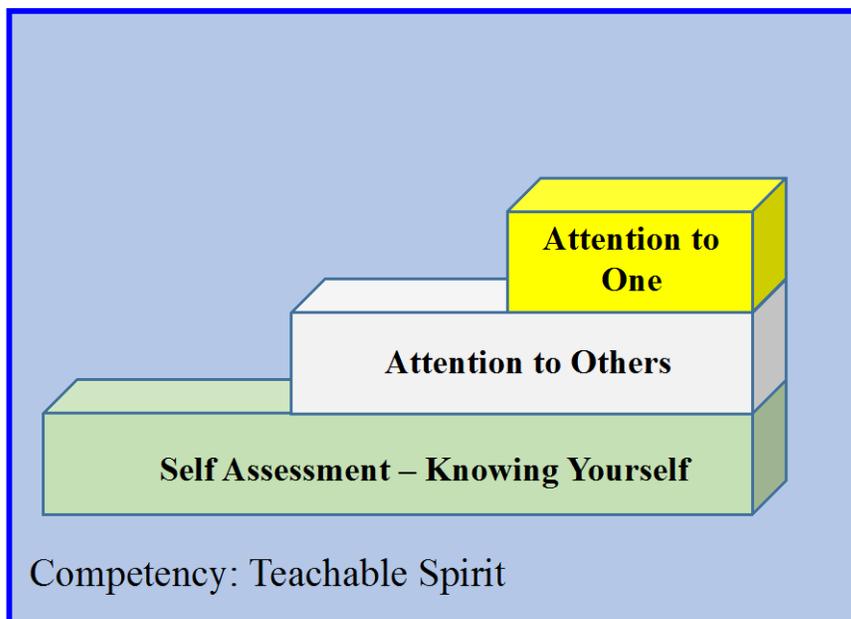


Figure 3. *Teachable Spirit*

As facilitators, we are in the most critical learning position to be in as we learn through the words and actions each small group member brings to the discussion. We are asked to neither judge or to correct the members of our small group for their beliefs or statements.

Even if a member raises his/her voice or makes a statement that is disconcerting, the facilitator is asked to maintain a calm approach to continuing the discussion. Other than reminding the small group about the rules of respect and confidentiality, the facilitator role models an acceptance of different viewpoints and beliefs at all times. It is critically important for each of us to have a heart that is willing to be taught and receive instruction. Proverbs 9:9 states, “*Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.*”

**Self-Assessment.** Having a *Teachable Spirit* starts with a Self-Assessment by which we each determine if we are individually open to learning from others as a facilitator of a small group. Our role as a facilitator requires us to know what the topic is for each week and to help encourage discussions in the small groups that link to the topic. As we are willing to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, having a heart that is also open to learn from each viewing of a ChristLife video enables us, as facilitators, to be open to a new message each time we view a weekly video. Our self-assessment is a reflection of who we each are in terms of being able to be taught, or teachability. Here are some questions you might ask of yourself.

1. Am I aware of the limitations of my own knowledge and abilities?
2. Do I admit limitation, inability, and ignorance to others who can teach and help me?
3. Do I regularly ask for help, instruction, guidance, and advice (before the event, not after disaster strikes)?
4. Do I learn from anyone and everyone you can?
5. Do I listen to others carefully and patiently with a desire to learn from each person?
6. Am I prepared to move out of my comfort zone, try something different, make mistakes, look stupid, answer wrongly, etc.?
7. Do I give up when I fail at something, or do I seek help, and try again and again until I get it right?
8. Am I willing to change my views and practices when convincing evidence is presented to me, even if it means admitting I was wrong?

Answering each of these seven questions with a “Yes” or “No” does not mean you do not or you do have a *Teachable Spirit*, but rather it provides you a starting point by acknowledging your strengths and your limitations. As a facilitator, we ask that you are aware of any items that you think you might need help from others, and this provides you the opportunity to seek support from fellow facilitator(s) or a member of the ChristLife parish team so you can also follow Jesus’s example as stated in Luke 2:40 - *And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.* Asking every facilitator to be open to learning truly begins with our own assessment.

**Attention to Others.** Approaching each ChristLife week with a *Teachable Spirit* enables each facilitator to be a conduit for the small group participants to also be open to the Holy Spirit's blessings in the messages in the videos, the worship praise and music, to their own small groups, and, most importantly, to what their own heart is telling them through the scriptures. The facilitator role models the *Teachable Spirit* by paying attention to what and how others in the small group respond to the discussion questions. The genuine care and trustworthiness displayed by the facilitator helps create an environment where authenticity and compassion best reflects and represents what evangelization is truly about. In our role as facilitator, the small group provides a fabulous opportunity to show how we might truly be aware of others by sharing Christ's love.

**Attention to One.** Learning how to facilitate a small group with a *Teachable Spirit* is often thought of as having the ability to listen to and manage the conversation with the small group. As a facilitator, we may be challenged by the group to move the process along when one specific person is dominating the conversation or even when another is sharing information that might be "out in left field" or inappropriate. There may be times when someone who you may not agree with wants to chat with you one-on-one. These examples depict when opening your heart to listen to this one person and inviting the Holy Spirit to provide guidance is what this level of the *Teachable Spirit* calls each facilitator to achieve. Each of us, as a facilitator, may be challenged to break down our own walls of prejudice or bias and be taught by someone who we may not even like. Recalling Jesus's statement, "*Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me*" (Matthew 25:40) helps us to remember to be open to each person in the small group with a willing and loving heart that enhances our *Teachable Spirit*.

#### **d. Series Expertise**

*Series Expertise* requires the small group facilitator to know the content of the video and the video title so, if asked, the facilitator might provide a clear understanding of the content. The explanation does not require memorization, and we encourage the facilitator to use the ChristLife material in any explanation. Furthermore, small group facilitators can innovate on how to achieve each of the levels of the *Series Expertise* competency. The potential for a variety of learning styles in the small group is great, and the facilitator can display flexibility in the explanation of each weekly topic, how the weekly topics relate to the overall series' purpose, and how the weekly topics are integrated into the fabric of ChristLife. Again, though memorization of the weekly topics may be ultimately helpful to achieve ease of explanation when ChristLife material is not available, the small group facilitator is encouraged to use ChristLife material whenever possible.

**Explain the Series' Weekly Topics.** The small group facilitator is often the first person a ChristLife participant may ask the question, "What are we going to see or talk about tonight/this week?" A ready answer might be the specific week's Topic found in each of the series' booklet, and a more pragmatic explanation of the weekly topic might include the Topic and a summary of the kind of questions that will be discussed after the video. Certainly, the facilitator does not want to share all of the key elements that will be shown in the video or discussion, such as "The Lump," so providing a more general overview might appease any questioning. However, all small group facilitators can better

understand each session's topics by either previewing the videos and/or reviewing the

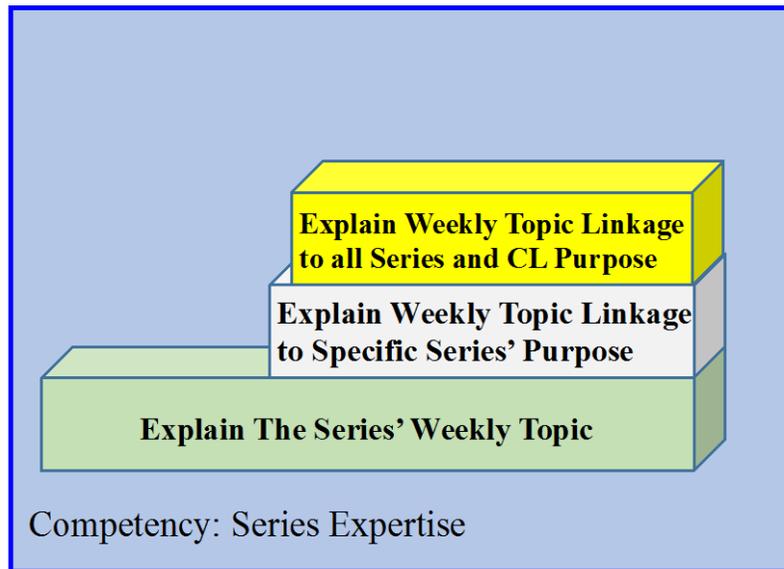


Figure 4. *Series Expertise*

facilitation Guide provided for each of the series. Ensure you understand the weekly discussion questions provided in the Guide, and practicing saying the question will ensure you ask the question in an understandable manner. Each of the three ChristLife series' weekly topics build upon the other, and the small group facilitator must know the topic of the weekly session before he/she can help steer discussions in the small group. What is most important, however, is that the small group facilitator guides the discussion by asking questions in order to facilitate the small group participants' understanding of the weekly topic with the expectation that each participant will understand the topic at his/her own pace. Remember that there is no right or wrong answer; rather, the facilitator keeps the discussion as relevant as possible to each of the participant's perspective.

**Explain Weekly Topic Linkage to Specific Series' Purpose.** Each facilitator must understand the connection of each of the weekly topics to the series' purpose. How each weekly topic supports each series' purpose is part of the critical learning each facilitator achieves at his/her own pace, and finding the linkages to the series' purpose creates a deeper understanding for the facilitator, at his/her own pace, for the ChristLife experience. The blessings derived as a small group facilitator vary from facilitator to facilitator, and sharing these blessings with other small group facilitators encourages each facilitator to continue in his/her development as a facilitator. The purposes for each of the ChristLife series is provided below, and the linkage of each week's topic helps each facilitator support his/her small group participants in their individual journey through ChristLife.

### **Discovering Christ**

We each know people in our lives, communities, and even parishes who wonder about

the meaning of life. God gives us the responsibility to open doors and provide spaces of encounter with the personal love our Lord Jesus for people who are searching for the meaning of life. **Discovering Christ creates this open door for people who are searching for the meaning of their lives where we can share the Good News and the personal love of Jesus Christ.**

### **Following Christ**

After encountering the personal love of Jesus Christ, people are hungry to dive into their new or renewed relationship with Him in the context of community. It is important to walk with our brothers and sisters in Christ as we all continue growing as disciples of our Lord. **Following Christ provides the tools to help Catholics grow in discipleship, including daily personal prayer, hearing God in Scripture, the power of the sacraments, forgiving one another, spiritual warfare, etc.**

### **Sharing Christ**

Our faith journey can't stop with encountering the life-changing love of Jesus Christ and growing as His disciples. We are called to share the Good News with others! Evangelization must become the everyday lifestyle for Christians if the Church is to become a vibrant evangelical witness in our culture once again. **Sharing Christ equips Catholics with the practical skills to proclaim the Gospel, draw others into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and invite them to become his disciples as members of the Church.**

**Explain Weekly Topic Linkage to all Series and CL Purpose.** We each experience the ChristLife series in our own individual ways, and we acknowledge that each facilitator also grows at his/her own pace in understanding of the weekly topics, each of the series' purposes, and the connection of each of the series to the purpose of ChristLife. As facilitators, we are each blessed in the Holy Spirit to be part of our parish or community's ChristLife experience, and facilitating our small groups blesses us and our parish or community's role to be disciples for Christ. Whether we are asked to facilitate one, two or three of the ChristLife series, learning how each of the weekly topics connects to the ChristLife purpose to be disciples for Christ creates exciting opportunities to share with others. From the ChristLife's website, we know that the purpose is for ChristLife to "equip Catholics for the essential work of evangelization so the world might personally encounter Jesus Christ and be transformed into His missionary disciples." Through our own journey as facilitators with ChristLife, understanding the weekly topics and creating a linkage to this ChristLife purpose enables us to better role model Christ's love to others.

**e. Group Prayer Leadership.** Small group facilitators are asked to take on the humbling role of a facilitator for many reasons, yet this competency brings all small group facilitators together for a most significant reason: to maintain an active dialogue with God with each action, word and intention exercised during ChristLife. Because we read that "evangelization is a purposeful effort to introduce people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and His transforming love" in the ChristLife literature/website, one of the most powerful actions we can exercise towards evangelization is the ability to participate in praying in groups. Small group facilitators are asked to role model this in the small group setting by leading their small groups in prayer, and we also ask our

facilitators to create or seize opportunities for group prayer at places and times outside of the ChristLife venue.

**Open/Close Small Group Prayer.** Facilitators are asked to role model the actions and words for praying as a group whenever the opportunity arises. Often a group prayer is

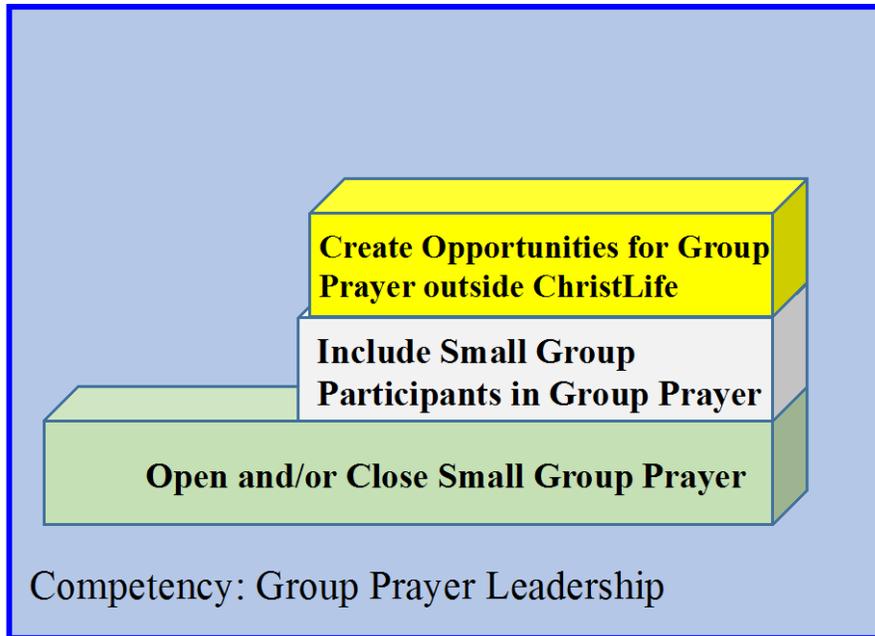


Figure 5. *Group Prayer Leadership*

used at the end of the small group discussion at the end of the weekly session, and the facilitator can either open and close the group prayer, ask someone else to either open or close the group prayer. There is not a prescribed method to open or close a small group prayer, and the facilitator, knowing the personalities of each small group member, is asked to take into account the needs of the small group as best as possible. Starting off with intercessory prayers make it easy for participants to be included. Later in the sessions, selected participants might be asked (in advance) to lead the closing prayer for the small group.

**Include Small Group Participants in Small Group Prayer.** Group prayer is powerful in creating a bond of trust for the group. As group members get to know each other and create relationships inspired by discussing God's love, the small group prayer enables the power of the Holy Spirit to touch each member's heart. Often when a group prayer is used at the end of the small group discussion the facilitator can ask each group member to add to the group prayer. Taking into account the needs of the small group as best as possible, the facilitator can ask the small group to focus the group prayer for specific intentions or to open the group prayer for personal intentions. The facilitator can also suggest that, going clockwise or counter-clockwise, group members might hold hands and squeeze the hand of the next person at the end of his/her personal prayer. Also, if any member wishes to not pray out loud, that member simply squeezes the hand of the next member of the group.

**Create/Seize Opportunities for Group Prayer Outside of ChristLife.** Because evangelization introduces people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and His transforming love, praying with groups outside of ChristLife is another approach that allows us to show how to achieve that personal relationship. In our unique roles as small group facilitators, we have tremendous opportunities to learn and exercise praying out loud with our small groups. We are able to learn how powerful the presence of the Holy Spirit is when two or more are gathered in Jesus Christ's name, and it is with this learning that each of us are equipped to confidently approach opportunities to lead and participate in group prayer. We ask that you, as a ChristLife facilitator, be open to sharing the love of God with others as the need present itself.

### **Implementing Facilitator Training and Development.**

Training and developing small group facilitators is a task that the entire parish's ChristLife core team embraces because it is through these facilitators that our ChristLife participants get a glimpse of what ChristLife does for those who are in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and who are open to the Holy Spirit working through them. The core competencies are but a starting point to ensure the selected facilitators have the confidence to role model for their small groups the caring, compassion and calling to evangelize that ChristLife enhances in those who take the ChristLife journey. The process of training and developing our small group facilitators are not prescriptive, but rather the steps listed below are recommendations for each ChristLife parish or community to implement as best as their resources allow. To conduct the process, as written below, strongly suggests that training and development is scheduled throughout each year that the ChristLife series is offered.

There are many small group facilitators who have successfully facilitated a variety of the ChristLife series, and these core competencies might be used by each of these facilitators to assess their progress thus far and to enable our experienced facilitators to help train and develop others through the levels of the competencies.

#### **Initial Introduction to the core competencies.**

An announcement that the core competencies are available to all facilitators might be communicated in advance of the scheduled training workshops. Experienced facilitators might be invited to an initial introduction workshop scheduled for experienced facilitators. A week before the scheduled workshop, a copy of this small group facilitation Guide should be made available so that the facilitators might read the Guide prior to the scheduled workshop. Attach to this copy a request that each experienced facilitator bring to the workshop their insights on how to enhance the core competencies among fellow facilitators and how to train new facilitators to the ChristLife community. The experienced facilitator's workshop might include the following process (recommended time in parenthesis for a three hour workshop):

- I. Welcome, Prayer and Introduction: Plenary (20 minutes)

- II. Breakout Session (five groups): Each of five groups discuss a core competency and how to best initially train new ChristLife facilitators using this Guide (30 minutes)
- III. Brief Out: Each of the groups explain the highlights to the plenary\* (30 minutes: 5 minutes per group)
- IV. Breakout Session (five groups): Each of the five groups discuss “Potential Best Practices” how each facilitator might create an evaluation plan by which self-assessment and assessment by others might be implemented during a ChristLife series. (30 minutes)
- V. Brief Out: Each of the groups explain the highlights to the plenary\* (30 minutes: 5 minutes per group)
- VI. Wrap-up: Plenary Insights on the Core Competencies\* (20 minutes)
- VII. Closing Prayer
  - \*Capture each group’s highlights and publish these solutions within a week after the workshop.

For new facilitators, the small group facilitation Guide is best provided at the scheduled workshop. This is done, in part, so that their initial facilitation training might be discussed in context while the small group facilitation trainer takes into consideration each new facilitator’s level of confidence in achieving the core competencies. New facilitators may or may not have the contextual experience of a ChristLife series, so forethought about how to provide some context might include drawing out from the new facilitators their own experiences and explaining what might be different and the same during a ChristLife series session. Using this small group facilitation Guide with the appropriate ChristLife series pamphlet as the training resources is highly recommended. The new facilitators’ training workshop might also include experienced facilitators whose workshop to understand the core competencies will enable the experienced facilitators to help train the new facilitators.

A likely workshop structure for new facilitators (recommended time in parenthesis for a three hour workshop):

- I. Welcome, Prayer and Introduction: Large Group (30 minutes)
- II. Breakout Sessions: Groups of 3-4 discuss each core competency and how to implement each competency in a small group setting (45 minutes)
- III. Brief Out: Each of the groups explain the highlights to the Large Group\* (30 minutes)
- IV. Watch first video of the next ChristLife series: (30 minutes)
- V. Large Group discussion: How each of the core competencies might be observed during the small group discussion that ensues about the video. (30 minutes)
- VI. Wrap-up: Closing Prayer (15 minutes)
  - \*Capture each group’s highlights and publish these solutions within a week after the workshop.

## **The Competency Assessment belongs to the Facilitator (Appendix A)**

The Competency Assessment at Appendix A is one technique for each facilitator to maintain awareness about and to plan their own development for each core competency. Having each facilitator seek observation and assessment from other facilitators enables the facilitators to be committed to their own development, accountable to other facilitators, and maintain individual progression in order to improve the small group experience for ChristLife participants.

## **Ongoing Confidence and Competence Development**

The core competencies provide a foundation upon which to help improve the small group experiences for all ChristLife participants. Again, the requirement for each small group facilitator to be an expert at each of the competencies is furthest from the truth or desire in ChristLife! Rather, the selection and training of each small group facilitator presupposes that the learning of the skills comes through application of the skills during the facilitators' training sessions as well as during any of the ChristLife series sessions.

As a method to maintain each facilitator's momentum to achieve each competency's levels, the ChristLife core team might create a recognition system for their small group facilitators. Recognition could be made during planned ChristLife reunions or workshops throughout the year, or, at a minimum, recognition should incorporate face-to-face recognition with the achieving facilitator's peer facilitator.

Appendix A. Competency Assessment

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Self Assessment (Initial/Date) Competency Assessors (Initial/Date)**

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Does NOT Understand the Competency</b>	<b>Understands the Competency</b>	Meets Initial achievement of Competency	Meets Passing achievement of Competency	Fully Achieves Competency
<b>Building Rapport</b>					
Know/ Empathize					
Validate Person					
Bond with Each					
<b>Critical Learning</b>					
Listening to Understand					
Inquisitive Nature					
Identify key Learning Points					
<b>Teachable Spirit</b>					
Self-Assessment					
Attention to Others					
<b>Series Expertise</b>					
Weekly Topics					
Topics to Series					
Topics to ChristLife					
<b>Group Prayer Leadership</b>					
Open/Close Prayer					
Inclusivity					
External Opportunities					

Competency Assessors:

(Name) (Initials)

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## References

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### Scripture Verses that support the Core Competencies

#### *Building Rapport*

**Psalm 56:3-4** When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

**1 John 4:18** There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

**Philippians 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, 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.

**Isaiah 26:3-4** You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

**Psalm 37:5** Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

**Psalm 31:14-15** But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!

**Proverbs 3:6** In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**Romans 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Romans 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

**Titus 3:5** He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

**John 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

**Psalm 37:5-6** Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

**Isaiah 40:31** But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

**Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**Psalm 55:22** Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

**Psalm 37:1-40** Of David. Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. ...

**Mark 5:36** But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.”

**Isaiah 26:3** You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

**Psalm 33:21** For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.

**Galatians 5:1** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

**Proverbs 28:25** A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.

**Proverbs 21:21** Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.

**Matthew 13:22** As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

**Matthew 13:3-9** And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

**Proverbs 3:1-5** My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

**Proverbs 3:1-2** My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

**Psalms 56:4** In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

**Psalms 37:39-40** The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

**Psalms 37:7-9** Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

**Psalms 22:4-5** In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

**Proverbs 3:3-4** Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.

**Psalms 37:8** Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

**Psalms 36:10-12** Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart! Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away. There the evildoers lie fallen; they are thrust down, unable to rise.

### *Critical Learning*

**Proverbs 1:5** Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance,

**Proverbs 18:15** An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

**Proverbs 9:9** Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

**Proverbs 10:17** Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.

**Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

**2 John 1:9** Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

**Proverbs 4:5-6** Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.

**Colossians 2:8** See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

**Proverbs 4:1-2** Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching.

**Proverbs 22:6** Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

**2 Timothy 3:15** And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

**1 Timothy 2:4** Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**Psalms 25:4-5** Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.

**1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

**Romans 1:9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you

**Daniel 1:17** As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

**1 Timothy 4:7-8** Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

**Matthew 11:29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

**John 1:1-51** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**Matthew 5:1-48** Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

**Proverbs 3:4-5** So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

**Romans 15:4** For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

**Ephesians 4:16** From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

**2 Corinthians 4:16** So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

**Acts 8:27-38** And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ...

**Proverbs 19:20** Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.

**Proverbs 14:15** The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.

**Proverbs 12:15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

**Proverbs 11:14** Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

**Proverbs 18:13** If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

**2 Peter 3:18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

**1 Thessalonians 4:11-12** And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

**Proverbs 1:1-33** The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth— Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, ...

**Psalms 32:8** I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

**1 John 2:27** But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

### *Teachable Spirit*

**1 Peter 5:5** Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

**Proverbs 13:18** Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.

**1 Corinthians 2:13-14** And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

**Proverbs 9:9** Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

**Proverbs 4:5** Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.

**2 Timothy 2:2** And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

**Romans 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

**Acts 8:31** And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

**James 1:1-27** James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ...

**Psalms 1:1-6** 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; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 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. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

**Proverbs 22:6** Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

**Daniel 4:37** Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

**Acts 17:11** Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

**Titus 2:1** But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

**John 17:17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

**John 3:1-36** Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ...

**2 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

**Luke 18:17** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

**Psalms 69:32** When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive.

**2 Kings 22:19** Because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD.

**2 Peter 3:18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

**Isaiah 53:11** Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

**Proverbs 21:11** When a scoffer is punished, the simple becomes wise; when a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge.

**Acts 10:38** How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

**Matthew 25:40** And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

*Group Prayer Expertise.*

**Mark 11:24** Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.