Starting Point

Student Workbook
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Introduction

Introduction to the Material

Thank you for joining us for this seminar. Before we get going, let’s go over the basics of what this class is all about and what we intend to accomplish by it.

1. First of all, we want to introduce you to the “Elements” concept of the spiritual life and equip you with the basic building blocks of living the life God designed for you to live.

2. Secondly, we want to whet your appetite for the more advanced concepts encompassed by the elements metaphors and the Biblical teaching undergirding each.

3. Thirdly, we want to introduce you to Lafayette Community Church, our beliefs, distinctives, leadership, and specifically, how this church plans to help you discover the life God designed for you.

4. Finally, we want to give you an opportunity to make a clear membership commitment to this church and help launch you into your initial growth commitments.

This curriculum book is written to do a few different things:

○ **Provide a clear way for you to follow along during the class time.**
  
  You will notice that there are quite a few blanks in this book. The blanks are there to help keep you active in thinking as you write in the missing words. Try to get them all!

○ **Provide space for you to take notes.**
  
  You will notice there are large spaces for writing notes. That’s for a reason! We want you to jot down notes and other ideas that come to you during the class. If you have any questions, be sure to jot them down too, so you won’t forget to ask them when the time for questions comes!

○ **Provide a tool for future growth.**
  
  You will also notice that this is far more extensive than a simple workbook. There are lots of words on each page explaining each important concept. Don't worry about all those words right now. Your teacher will help you understand what's important, but a week from now, you may find that you've forgotten something. Just open up this book and read it!
Part 1 :: The Elements

Setting the Stage

The apostle John, the one closest to Jesus, quotes him as saying these words:

Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."  

John 10:7-10

In this passage, Jesus teaches us three lessons:

○ Jesus is the __________________________ to salvation.

○ Salvation is about ___________________ and ____________________.

○ Jesus’ primary desire for his “sheep” is that they would have ________ to the ______________.

The Mission of LCC

The mission of Lafayette Community Church is to help people discover life in Christ.

The Reality for You

If I want to __________ the life Jesus ____________,

I need to ________ the life he ________________.

Four Core Commands

The Greatest Two

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:35-40

This passage gives us the most important commands—commands Jesus says form the core of everything the Old Testament stands for:

○ Of first importance, __________ ________ with everything you are.

○ Secondly, love ______________ ______________ as yourself.
The Final Two

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

This passage tells us Jesus’ final words to his disciples (followers). Clearly, as his final words on earth, these should be considered to be of key importance. Though the other two commands summarize the teaching of the Old Testament, these two commands encompass all the teaching of Jesus.

○ Disciples must _____________ in ________________ and _________________.

○ Disciples must _____________ ___________ _________________ (pass it on).

A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Luke 6:40

Summary

The four core commands of Jesus are these:
Love God, Love Others, Follow Jesus, Make More Disciples.

Four Core Metaphors

For many years, I summarized these commands with the words WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, GROWTH, and MINISTRY, but recently, I realized that people need better ways to remember them and better ways to talk about them. In early 2010, during a time of prayer, I received insight into a metaphor system that would help lock these commands into our hearts in a way that is emotive, memorable, and understandable to our postmodern culture. Then, the more I studied, the more I realized that these metaphors had been used throughout the Bible!

Air and Earth

the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7

...for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Psalm 103:14

○ Life for us begins with God’s ________________.

○ My life is ultimately ________________ ________________ ________________ ____________.
Fire and Water

[John the Baptist said,]“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

Matthew 3:11

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:3-4

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4:13-14

A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

Proverbs 11:25

○ The Spirit of God empowers us like a ________ in the context of __________________________.

○ Jesus offers his followers ___________ that refreshes both ___________ and ____________.

The Cross Diagram

The Gospel Foundation

The elements concept is good and all, but there is a lesson in the Bible that is even more foundational than the great commandment and the great commission. This lesson is more foundational because without it, we are incapable of living according to God’s commands. This lesson tells us how bad off humanity is and how much God has done for us. It’s a lesson the Bible calls the gospel, and it’s the most important lesson you will ever learn or share with others.

It’s a lesson about what God made you to be, how his plan took a detour, and what he has done to bring us back.
GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU:

You were made to represent God and to live in freedom.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.  
**Genesis 1:1**

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.  
**Genesis 1:27**

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”  
**Genesis 2:16-17**

THE PROBLEM:

Sin has separated us from God, our source of life.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.  
**Genesis 3:6**

When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.  
**Romans 5:12 NLT**

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.  
**Isaiah 59:2**

ANSWER: Jesus’ death pays for sin. His resurrection proves it.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
**Romans 6:23**

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen---by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”  
**Acts 10:39-43**

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.  
**2 Corinthians 5:21**

RESPONSE: So we surrender to God’s grace.

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.  
**Acts 2:38**
What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:1-4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:1-3

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed---not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence---continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Philippians 2:12-13

Surrender Behavior #1: ________________

Surrender Behavior #2: __________

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 1:4

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

Matthew 3:13-15

Surrender Behavior #3: ________________

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

Reflect:

Would Jesus have considered someone a disciple or follower if he or she hadn't repented, hadn't been baptized, or hadn't developed obedience?

Have you surrendered your life in repentance?

Have you publicly declared your faith through believer’s baptism?

Are you walking in obedience to God?

Do you have any questions about any of this?

To learn more about the elements and how they apply to daily life, we encourage you to enter into a coaching relationship, take our 6 weeks “Elements” Course, and pursue greater growth through our occasional Advanced Training classes.
Part 2: Why Church Membership?

What do you think of when you hear the word “membership”?

Nearly every church encourages people to make a membership commitment of some kind. Some churches call that commitment by different names, but the basic principle is the same, and it all comes directly from the teaching of the New Testament that God through Jesus brings people together into one family, one body, and one organization.

Like the process of adoption, the legal action of marriage, or the signing of a contract between two businesses, membership is the way God’s people recognize their commitment to each other.

What Membership Means

All Christ-followers are members of God’s household.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22

All Christ-followers are members of Christ’s body.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:4-5

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Christ’s followers are called to be organized as the church.

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Matthew 16:18

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you... But if he will not listen, take one or two others along... If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Matthew 18:15-17

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...

Ephesians 4:11-12

Why join a church in membership?

Membership in a church carries with it key benefits spiritually and practically for you, for the church, and for the world.
In membership, I __________________________ with Christ.

*Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.*

Matthew 10:32

In membership, I willfully ______________________ myself to godly ____________.

...to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:12-13

In membership, I ______________________ for my ____________ ____________.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

**Conclusion**

In membership, I __________________________ __________________________ God has for me.

**Bonus Group Study**

Take 15 minutes to work through this study.

5 minutes: Read Ephesians 4 silently to yourself.

5 minutes: Reflect on these questions.

What does it mean to live a life worthy of our calling?

Describe the relationship Christ-followers should have with each other.

Describe the relationship between Christ-followers and their leaders.

5 minutes: Discuss your answers with the people around you.
Part 3: LCC Distinctives

Our Story

Lafayette Community Church is a story that is still being written, but it really began as a seed in the heart of Jeff Mikels way back in the summer of 1994 when his dad started a new church in Apple Valley, California.

On the night of their first meeting, as Jeff was preparing the overhead projector and his guitar to lead some songs of worship, he looked out and saw 40 people in his family’s living room with hope in their eyes. At that moment, he began to realize the power of starting new churches to help people personally connect with the life-changing message of Jesus.

Fast forward about 11 years

In January 2005, after four years of pastoral ministry leading a church on the northside of Chicago, God made it clear to Jeff and his wife Jennifer that it was time for them to begin the adventure of church planting themselves. After a year of preparation, prayer, fundraising, (and even some professional counseling!), they moved to Lafayette.

Jeff, Jen, and a small band of committed people took a year to dream and develop the identity of “Southside Church” to reach the people of Lafayette’s Southside with the simple message that God loved them and sent his son Jesus so they could have a personal relationship with him.

Phase One

On March 25 of 2007, the church launched public worship gatherings at Wea Ridge Elementary School under the name of Southside Church.

The rest of that first year saw the church relocate to Tecumseh Jr. High for the summer, then to the Holiday Inn for the school year, and finally to the Long Center for the Performing Arts during the summer of 2008.

However, with the location of the church significantly far from the “southside” of Lafayette, it was time for the name to change, so on August 31, 2008, “phase two” of the church was officially launched as the new name was announced.

From then on, we have been known as Lafayette Community Church.

Phase Two

During 2009, God brought a number of blessings and challenges to this still young church. We celebrated 13 people getting baptized, a Sunday of 150 in attendance, and a strong upswing in financial support. At the same time, however, we experienced significant leadership turnover and a stalled attempt to lease and remodel office space next to the Long Center downtown.

Nevertheless, we finished 2009 strong and began 2010 as a fully self-supporting church with our own governing board of Elders! On top of that, by the summer of 2010, finances were strong enough that the church was able to lease its first 24/7 rental space, ironically enough, within one mile of our original location at Wea Ridge Elementary School on the southside!

Today

We have returned to our roots and the original vision of helping people on the southside of Lafayette come to know Jesus in a life-changing way, but we have matured by our wanderings, and we are eager to help you mature as well.

Our Faith

Our Statement of Faith is found in the church Bylaws.
Our Purpose

Our mission is to help people discover life in Christ.

○ Jesus gives four core ________________ that when lived out produce what he called “full life.”

○ The purpose of any church is to help people __________ that life (discipleship).

Our Perspective

○ It takes great effort to __________ and to __________ the lost.

○ It takes solid ________________ and supportive ________________ to build believers.

○ The greatest asset for full life is the ________________ of the Bible.

Our Strategy

○ We simply emphasize the “______________. ”

○ Our __________ events are designed intentionally with the “________” in mind.

○ We rely on the __________ of God’s people.

○ Our resources are spent mainly on ________________ and ________________.

Our Structure

○ Leaders __________.

○ Members ________________.

What We Want for You

Our first desire is that you solidify your ________________ to ______.

Starting Point @ Lafayette Community Church
Our second desire is that you solidify your commitment to the _______ _______ God has for you.

Our third desire is that you solidify your commitment to this ________________.

The commitments you make determine the path you take.

Because we want these things for you, we want you to know what kind of commitment the leadership of the church is making toward you and what kind of commitment we want you to make to the other members of the church.

The Elder Covenant

As an Elder of Lafayette Community Church, I __________________________ make the following covenant with God and the people he has called me to serve in this church and the surrounding community:

○ Above all, I covenant to keep my walk with God wholehearted and pure through consistent prayer, Bible Study, and careful consideration to the media I consume.

○ I covenant to care for my health, knowing that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and the primary tool God has given me to serve him.

○ I covenant to prioritize my relationship with my family. My marriage is a model of Christ and his Church, my children reflect my leadership, and my home reflects my management.

○ I covenant to give faithfully at least 10% of my income to the ministry of this church and sacrificially from the rest to the cause of Christ in this world.

○ I covenant to maintain a life that is above reproach in every sphere of influence where God may place me.

○ I covenant to protect this church from gossip, false doctrine, and dissension by the model of my life and the direct confrontation of disunity.

○ I covenant to pray for the people, leaders, and ministries of this church.

○ I covenant to work for the maturity of the people in the church by providing biblical counsel and teaching, practical training in ministry, and restorative confrontation of sin.

Above all else, I want the people of LCC to know that I truly love God, his Word, my family, this church, and those still lost for whom he sent his Son.

The Associate Covenant

With a clear conviction that God’s will for me involves fellowship with the people of Lafayette Community Church, I commit to use this year to explore God’s simple commands to put him first, join his family, grow like Jesus, and serve others.
The Member Covenant

GOD IS MY AIR:

In every aspect of my life, God comes first. His Word is my only authority. His Son is my only Salvation. His glory is my greatest desire. I give him the first of my every opportunity.

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment ...


Specifically, I have given my life over to Jesus as my Savior and Lord, I have followed him in the waters of baptism. I will submit my life to the mandates of the Bible, stand up for God’s honor, and invest the first portion of my time, talent and treasures in the work of his Kingdom.

GOD’S FAMILY FUELS MY FIRE:

The Spirit dwells in me but his power is revealed in community. I intentionally prioritize Christian relationships because I have something to give and something to receive.

“...the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”


Specifically, I affirm the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life and heed the guidance he gives through the counsel of others in this church. I will view this community as my spiritual family and offer my time, talent, and treasure here before serving or giving elsewhere. I will prioritize the weekly gatherings for worship and join a Life Group. I will pray for and support my leaders, love my fellow believers, and vigorously defend the unity of this church.

I AM GOD’S EARTH:

God is creating me. I started as dust, but I’m becoming like Jesus. I rejoice in trials and hardships because Christ suffered for me, and I am a living sacrifice transformed by the truths of God.

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Rom 8:29 (Rom 12:1-2 :: Gen 1:27, 2:7 :: 2 Cor 4:7-10)

Specifically, I will pursue opportunities for spiritual growth. I will root out sin in my life through regular self-examination and confession of sin both to God and to accountability partners, and in all areas of uncertainty, I will submit first to the clear teaching of the Bible, then to the leaders God has placed over me, and finally, after prayer, to my own conscience.
THE WORLD NEEDS MY WATER:
I have the Living Water in me. Infinite refreshment is mine in Christ, and I unlock it in me when I give it to others. I eagerly risk embarrassment to offer others the Living Water of Jesus.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

Specifically, I employ everything I am and everything I have for the benefit of others, beginning in this church and extending to the world around me. To help others find full life in Christ, I will work to serve them, befriend them, share my faith with them, invite them to join me in this church, and help them know the gospel so they too can experience the life I have been given. I will rely on God to refresh me as I strive to refresh others.

THEREFORE:
In full agreement with the mission and governing documents of this church, I will live by this covenant of membership in unity with this church throughout this year.