THE ESSENTIALS

A Next Steps class at Lazarus Church

FALL 2026
SUNDAYS
11:15am-12:15pm

October 4 | Session 1
Who is Jesus & Following Him

October 11 | Session 2
Sacraments: God's Gifts for Us

October 18 | Session 3
Rest & Read

October 25 | Session 4
Worship & Study

November 1 | Session 5
Celebrate & Serve

November 8 | Session 6
Prayer & Conclusion

QUESTIONS + REGISTER FOR CLASS ACCESS

Pastor Mark Pulliam
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Mark@LazarusChurch.com

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO GET STARTED

- Bible
- Lazarus Church YouTube ("The Essentials Class" playlist)
- Weekly assignment handout
- Luther's Small Catechism

When you register for class access, let Pastor Mark know if you would like a print version of the Bible or Catechism.

Why should I take this class?

The Essentials is the *first* in our lineup of classes for people looking to take "next steps" in their walk with Jesus.

In this series, we'll tackle questions like, *Who is Jesus? What has he done for me? What's up with the Lord's Supper? How does walking with Jesus impact my day-to-day life?*

Whether you're just hearing about Jesus for the first time or you've been a church-goer your whole life, this class is your very first Next Step with the community of believers at Lazarus.

How will we answer these big questions in just six weeks?

We won't. But we *will* get started. The Essentials is just one pit stop on a lifelong walk with Jesus. The objective of this class is to equip you with the right gear for your journey.

What's the time commitment & delivery method?

Because the goal of this course is to give you tools, we'll use a "flipped classroom" method. You'll watch 3-5 short videos and read a few pages from the Bible and/or catechism before each session. Yes, there's prep work. But by covering the content ahead of time, we'll have the majority of each 60-minute class period free for talking about the topics that interest you most. We'll gather weekly with the other members of the cohort to discuss the material from that session.

Before class, watch the videos and try the activities / consider the questions at the end of the videos (also found in the comments of the videos on YouTube). Want to dig deeper right away? Try clicking "Explanation of..." in the catechism tool (at the bottom of each section/article of the creed) or visit www.BlueLetterBible.org for a host of Bible study tools. Prefer an app? Check out YouVersion!

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BEFORE CLASS

Read: Bible
John chapter 1

Read: Catechism
The Creed (reading expanded explanations optional)
Introduction

Watch
1. The Essentials | What to Expect (1.5m)
2. Rhythms of Discipleship | Introduction Part 1 (1.5m)
3. Rhythms of Discipleship | Introduction Part 2 [Leadership Square] (4m)
4. The Essentials | Following Jesus (8m)
5. The Essentials | Apostles' Creed (5m)

All videos are available at YouTube.com/LazarusChurchTX in "The Essentials Class" playlist.

Session 1: Who is Jesus & Following Him

Lesson Overview
In this first session, we'll use the Apostles' Creed as our framework for introducing who God is and what He has done (and continues to do) for us. The Latin word *credo* means simply "I believe." While not written by the apostles (Jesus' original followers) themselves, the Apostles' Creed is based on the first-century teachings of the apostles which are now recorded for us in the Bible. At Lazarus Church, we use this creed because it is a simple (and easy to memorize!) way to summarize our beliefs about God and our relationship with Him.

Scripture Memory (Optional) - Genesis 1:1-3 (CSB)
"1 In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the *Spirit* of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God *said*, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Questions, Reflections, Notes

1. Take a moment to ask God if there's anyone He'd like you to invite on this journey.
2. Using the space below use the leadership square to imagine how you might teach someone to do something you are familiar with. As you progress in your walk with Jesus you'll find opportunities to put this tool into practice as you invite others into that walk with Jesus too.
3. Use the Venn diagram on the next page to categorize the rhythms of discipleship into the following categories: receive, rest/reflect, respond. Those rhythms again are: rest, read, worship, study, celebrate, serve, and prayerfully repeating that process. Which rhythms could fit into multiple categories?
4. Name some common misconceptions about Christianity. How does the Apostles' Creed correct some of those misconceptions?

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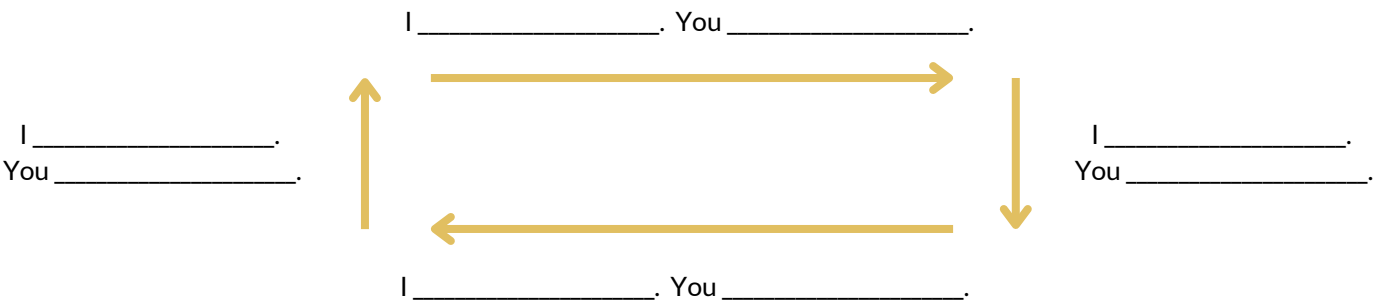
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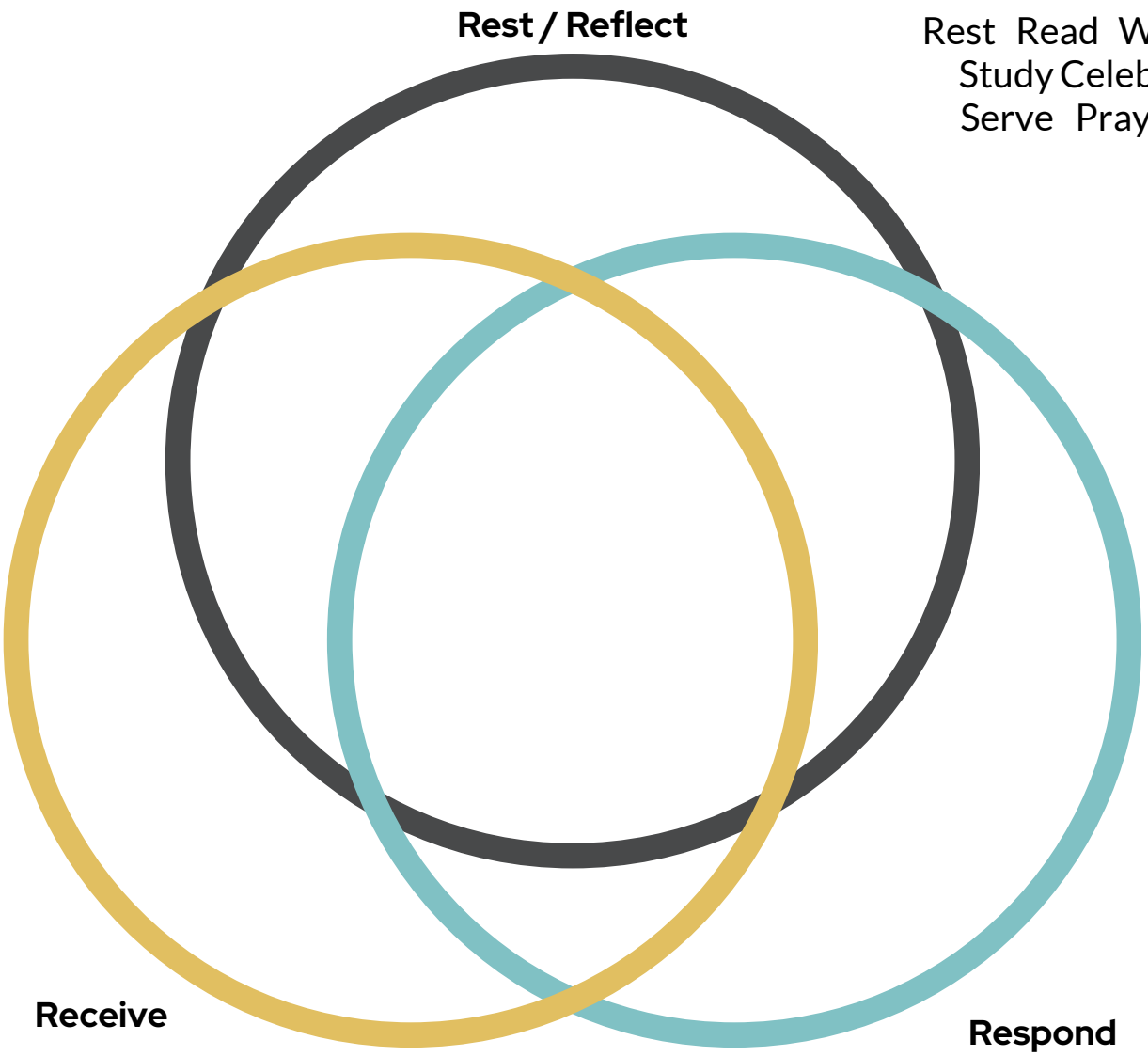
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I _____. You _____.
I _____.
You _____.
I _____.
You _____.
I _____. You _____.


Rest / Reflect
Rest Read Worship
Study Celebrate
Serve Prayer
Receive
Respond

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BEFORE CLASS

Read: Bible
Titus 3:3-7

Read: Catechism
1. Baptism
2. Sacrament of the Altar (Communion)

Watch
1. "The Essentials | Sacraments" (3min)
2. "The Essentials | Baptism" (7min)
3. "The Essentials | Communion" (7:11)

All videos are available at YouTube.com/LazarusChurchTX in "The Essentials Class" playlist.

Key Terms
- **Sacrament** = sacred mystery
- **Baptize** = to wash
- **Communion\Lord's Supper** = the special meal by which we receive Jesus body & blood and bread & wine.
- **Means of Grace** = the things to which God attaches His forgiveness, namely the Bible & the Sacraments

Session 2: God's Gifts for Us

Lesson Overview
Throughout biblical history, God has always met His people right where they are. Aware of our limitations, He attaches His gift of forgiveness to ordinary things we can hear, see, touch & taste.

God also gives and strengthens our faith through these gifts by the Holy Spirit's power. The Holy Spirit is working in our lives whenever we hear God's Word (the Bible) and receive the Sacraments (Baptism & Communion). He can certainly work in other ways, but the Bible promises He is active through these things.

When God's attaches His Word of promise to an ordinary element, powerful things happen! Sins are forgiven! Faith is given & strengthened! We become part of God's family!

Our discussion will focus on how the Sacraments impact our everyday lives.

Scripture Memory (Optional) - Matthew 26:28 (CSB)
"For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Questions, Reflections, Notes

1. In answer to the question "What does such baptizing with water indicate?" the Small Catechism says, "It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." In Romans 5:12-21, the "Old Adam" represents our sinful nature and its desires. Using Galatians 2:20 and Galatians 5:24 for help, describe how baptism, Jesus' crucifixion, and drowning the "Old Adam" are related.
2. How does being baptized impact your identity?
3. What gifts does God give us through communion?
4. What does it mean to be "worthy and well prepared" to receive communion, and why would that be important?

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BEFORE CLASS

Read: Bible
Genesis 1:31-2:3

Read: Catechism
3rd Commandment (expanded explanation optional but recommended)

Watch
1. Rest Part 1
2. Rest Part 2
3. Read Part 1
4. Read Part 2

All videos are available at YouTube.com/LazarusChurchTX in "The Essentials Class" playlist.

Key Terms
- **Scripture** = God's Word, the Bible

Session 3: Rest | Read

Lesson Overview
The Bible is the story of how God came all the way to His creation to save and restore it through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus' mission was to live perfectly, die on the cross as the substitute for our sins, and rise from the dead. While on earth, Jesus invited people to follow Him--these people were called *disciples* which, simply translated, means "learner" or "follower."

He still invites people to follow him today. If you're in this class, it's because you're a learner... a disciple!

In this session, we'll begin a conversation about the *rhythm of discipleship*. Just like breathing in and out, there's a natural rhythm to following Jesus. We receive His gifts, rest/reflect, and respond. Our response looks like this: learning from His Word to follow the *great commandment* (love God & love others) and the *great commission* (make disciples by baptizing & teaching).

Scripture Memory (Optional) - 2 Timothy 3:16 (CSB)
"All Scripture is inspired by God [*God-breathed, NIV*] and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness,"

Questions, Reflections, Notes

1. Imagine you were in one of those wagon parties having a debate about whether to rest on Sundays or not. What objections might you have to resting one day out of seven? How might God respond to your objections?
2. Take a moment to plan when you will rest this week. Schedule it and make note of what the experience is like.
3. Why do you think reading the Bible has such a profound effect?
4. How you would like to begin growing the habit of Bible reading? When and how will you start?

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BEFORE CLASS

Read: Bible
2 Timothy 3:14-17

Read: Catechism
Introduction to the Small Catechism (parts 4-11)

Watch
1. Worship Part 1
2. Worship Part 2
3. Study Part 1
4. Study Part 2
5. The Bible Project | Messiah (overview of the Bible)

All videos are available at YouTube.com/LazarusChurchTX in "The Essentials Class" playlist.

Key Terms
- **Worship** = responding in prayer and praise to God's love for us
- **Study** = reading Scripture + digging deeper

Session 4: Worship | Study

Lesson Overview
John 3:16 is probably the most widely known verse in the Bible. It tells us that God's love prompted Him to send His Son, Jesus so that all who believe in Him are given eternal life. We learn about who Jesus is through the Bible. Studying the Bible with others gives us a deeper and richer understanding of what it looks like to walk with Jesus. And worship flows from a heart loved by God.

In this session, we'll explore two of the inputs that have the biggest impact on our life as we follow Jesus (along with reading the Bible). Research has shown a measurable correlation between practicing these rhythms regularly and growing as a disciple.

Scripture Memory (Optional) - John 3:16 (CSB)
"For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

Questions, Reflections, Notes

1. Who do you want to resemble? Why? Jot down two or three examples below.
2. What is your next step toward a more regular habit of worship? How can Lazarus Church help?
3. For fun, jot down a couple of things that are better when you can do them with a friend or group of people rather than solo.
4. With these study resources at your fingertips, what would you like to learn more about? (See the Study resource sheet at https://lazaruschurch.com/nextsteps
5. Which image or concept stood out to you in the BibleProject video?

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BEFORE CLASS

Read: Bible
Colossians 3:12-17

Read: Catechism
1. Introduction (parts 1-3 & 12-13)
2. Christian Questions with Their Answers

Watch
1. Celebrate Part 1
2. Celebrate Part 2
3. Serve Part 1
4. Serve Part 2

All videos are available at YouTube.com/LazarusChurchTX in "The Essentials Class" playlist.

Session 5: Celebrate | Serve

Lesson Overview
The people we encounter in the places we live, work, and play might not be willing to walk through the door of a church. But they may be willing to hang out in our front yard. By offering hospitality, we extend the warmth and generosity of Christ to our neighbor, expecting nothing in return.

We like to call these environments *Gospel frontlines*--places where disconnected people see the love of Jesus lived out in what we say and do. And they are great places to begin inviting someone to walk with us as we walk with Jesus in celebration, service, and prayer.

Our discussion will focus on overcoming the barriers in these areas, and finding the best ways to start growing in them!

Scripture Memory (Optional) - Colossians 3:17 (CSB)
"And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him"

Questions, Reflections, Notes

1. Who do you think should be on your biblical celebration invite list? What kind of party would they want to be invited to?
2. What is your first step in hosting a celebration? How can we help?
3. Observe your strengths and weaknesses. What is a need in your community/family/workplace that your strengths and gifts might be able to help fill? If you'd like to learn more about your strengths and weaknesses, we offer the Next Steps Class | Discover Your Spiritual Gifts regularly, and would love to help you discover the ways God uniquely wired you!

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BEFORE CLASS

Read: Bible
Hebrews 10:23-25

Read: Catechism
1. Lord's Prayer

Watch
1. Prayer Part 1
2. Prayer Part 2
3. Conclusion

All videos are available at YouTube.com/LazarusChurchTX in "The Essentials Class" playlist.

Session 6: Prayer | Conclusion

Lesson Overview
There are 168 hours in a week. Sunday morning worship occupies one of those hours. Being the Church is not just a Sunday morning activity. We walk with Jesus and invite others to walk with us in the 167 remaining hours, which means that *literally* 99% of being the Church happens outside of Sunday morning worship.

In The Essentials class, we have discussed who God is, who we are in Him, and the rhythms of following Him. Our hope is that you are well equipped for your next step, walking with Jesus.

With new (or perhaps rediscovered) tools in your tool belt, you are ready to start building on what we discussed. Spoon feeding is no longer required for you; you are ready to be a self-feeder!

Our discussion this week will focus on encouraging the next step each of us plans to take, sharing our progress in the rhythms of discipleship, and discovering who God is calling us to invite into the journey!

Scripture Memory (Optional) - John 1:46 (CSB)
"Can anything good come out of Nazareth? " Nathanael asked him. "Come and see," Philip answered."

Questions, Reflections, Notes

1. Why do you think you struggle with prayer? Put your reservations into words by writing them down.
2. What is your next step to developing a habit of prayer?
3. Who is on your invitation list? What is your next step in walking with Jesus and inviting others to walk with you? We at Lazarus Church are here to help.

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