

Participant Guide



Connecting

People to God

People to People

People to Outreach



Are you ready to connect?

We're so glad you're here with us.

Over the next four weeks, we'll meet together to talk about you, us, and God! Here's an overview of the upcoming four sessions that will introduce you to your new family at Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale.

Get Connected

Your Story, Our Story, God's Story

Know Jesus

Connecting to God

Find Community

Connecting to People

Change Your World

Connecting to Outreach



Session

One

Session One

Get Connected

Your Story, Our Story, God's Story

We all love stories. Why? Because they grab our attention, capture our hearts, and move us to respond. They open our eyes to deeper understanding and greater purpose. In our time together, we want to hear your story, look closer at the story of our church, and take a look at how God's story changes our lives!

First, Let's Look at Your Story

We all have a story. And if you've experienced the love, truth, and grace of God in your life, then your story is one worth sharing because it can change someone else's life! During your first table talk session, we'll take a brief look at the story of Lydia, a business woman in the fashion industry who encountered God's true forgiveness.

Keep in mind: Most God-stories include three persons: a gracious God, a person in need of redemption, and a willing messenger.

Lydia's Story

"On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She and her household were baptized, and she asked us to be her guests. 'If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord,' she said, 'come and stay at my home.' And she urged us until we agreed."—Acts 16:13-15 (NLT)

Table Talk

Now Let's Look at Calvary's Story

Our mission:

Our mission at Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale is to make disciples, and it's our desire that you understand more of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Our mission is based on Jesus' commandment that's found in Matthew 28:19–20.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."—Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB)

We make disciples by:

Connecting people to God

The love of God changes lives. No matter who you are or where you've come from, the message of Jesus is all about God's love for you. As we connect to God through Bible teaching, prayer, and worship, we will experience the transforming power of Christ's love in our lives.

Connecting people to people

God never intended for us to go through life alone. We were created for relationship. When we experience life surrounded by others who share our love for God, we'll not only build lasting friendships, but we'll come to realize that we belong to a family . . . we're home.

Connecting people to outreach

Every day God pursues us with His unrelenting love. And it's because of His love that we seek opportunities to reach out and serve others. By reflecting God's heart and living like Jesus, we give others the chance to want to get to know Him for themselves.

Table Talk

Finally, Let's Talk About God's Story

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel!"—Mark 1:15 (NKJV)

A Christian is someone who has made the decision to follow Jesus, who has repented (asked for forgiveness for their sins), and believed in the good news that God sent His Son to save us. Can you recall the time in your life when you repented and believed?

Here's how we can have this life and relationship with God.

Jesus said, "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24 NIV).

How do we put our faith in Jesus and begin to believe? It all starts with a simple prayer to God. In that prayer, tell God what's on your heart. Someone once described this prayer as the simple ABCs of knowing God.

- Admit you're a sinner
- Believe in Jesus
- Confess your sins and repent

To repent means to "change your mind" about sin. In essence, it means to turn away from sin and choose to obey God.

Table Talk

If you can't recall a time in your life when you made this decision or prayed a prayer like this, and you'd like to, please talk with your table host or one of the volunteers or leaders after class. We'd love to help you begin a relationship with God.

Conclusion: Going Further in Your Journey

Read more of the Book of Acts

There you will discover story after story of changed lives. Look at each example and do your own investigation as to how the grace of God transformed each person.

Review our Statement of Faith

Our doctrine is defined clearly in the Calvary Chapel Statement of Faith. You can access this document at CalvaryFTL.org.

Need help with God’s mission and vision for your life?

Feel free to connect with one of our pastors or biblical counselors to discuss God’s purposes and plans for your life. We’d love to help you discover all God has for you and all He created you to be. Ask your table leader for details.

Get ahead

Take the spiritual gifts survey online:

SpiritualGiftsTest.com/Test/Adult

We’ll discuss the results in session four.

Preparing for Next Week

In session two, we’ll discuss the importance of connecting to God. Be on the lookout this week for our e-mail follow up. Remember to write down the names of the people at your table and pray for each other this week!

Homework

In the space below, write out your story. Identify the graciousness of God and, if applicable, the messenger He placed in your life to bring you to faith.

Write out my story: The grace of God and the willing messenger

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Session

Two

Session Two

Know Jesus

Connecting to God

Notes

Have you ever heard the expression, “A relationship is a two-way street”? Essentially, it means that for a relationship to thrive, it requires effort and commitment from both parties. Our relationship with God is no different. The Lord Jesus gave everything in order to have a relationship with us, and He wants to speak to us, work in us, and shine through us. He wants to have a deep relationship with us, but we must do our part, too! Below you’ll find a few ways we can experience a healthy and growing relationship with God.

A Few Key Spiritual Habits

1. Worship—Meeting with God (Psalm 95:6)

Most of us have connected with God through a worship service at church. There, the presence of God is known and felt as we have the opportunity to pray, sing, and hear from God through His Word. Regular public worship with other family members in the faith is a great way to grow and connect with God. But we can also worship the Lord privately during the week to stay strong.

2. Prayer—Us Talking to God (John 11:42)

Prayer is how we talk with God. God is so amazing! He never gets tired of listening to our prayers. In fact, the Bible actually asks us to “pray continuously,” which basically means that you remain in a mindset of prayer, connected to God, as you go about your entire day. We can have confidence that God will hear our prayers because He always heard the prayers of Jesus.

Model for Prayer

Jesus gave us a model on how to communicate with the Father:

“Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”—Matthew 6:9–13 (NLT)

Now, while many simply repeat “The Lord’s Prayer” word for word over and over again, that wasn’t what Jesus was trying to teach His disciples when He spoke these words. He was simply giving them an outline of sorts on how we should pray as we pour our heart out to God.

Table Talk

3. The Bible—God Talking to Us

If you will develop a daily self-feeding program from the Bible and allow yourself to be daily, hourly mentored by God's Holy Spirit, your life will undergo an unprecedented change for the better.—Wayne Cordeiro, The Divine Mentor

If prayer is our way of communicating with God, then Bible study is the clearest way God communicates with us. This is the mechanism that God has set up for us to hear back from Him! If we don't spend time reading through the words of Scripture, we'll miss out on hearing from God. This is a key part in the spiritual growth of a Christian.

There are many ways to study the Bible; many different study methods and guides to help you get the most out of God's Word. One popular and easy way of personally studying the Bible is by using a tool called **S.O.A.P.**

Scripture: Choose a passage from the Bible to study.

Observation: Write down what this text says to you. What do you notice about what you're reading? What is of personal interest to you?

Application: Now that God has spoken to you, write down how He wants you to apply what He said to your life? How can you take this passage to heart and make it real in your everyday life?

Prayer: Finally, end with writing out a prayer to God based on what you've read—something to ask for, something to confess, and something to praise Jesus for.

S.O.A.P. Sample

Scripture: "Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." —James 1:19 (NLT)

Observation: I feel this passage is encouraging me to control my anger, to be slow to anger, to think before I speak, and to make sure I'm always listening to others.

Application: I realize that, often, I get the two speeds out of order. I'm quick to speak and get angry and slow to listen. I think God wants me to work on this.

Prayer: Lord, thanks for giving me the perfect example of how to approach the people I come in contact with. Help me today with the people I encounter, that I may display these godly qualities to them. Amen.

Table Talk | S.O.A.P. Practice

Scripture

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."—John 3:16 (NIV)

Observation

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Application

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Prayer

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4. Giving—Joy in Sharing

“Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. ‘For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’”—2 Corinthians 9:6–7 (NLT)

5. Baptism—Joined to Jesus

As we read the Bible, when someone gives their heart to Jesus, the very next thing God asks them to do is to make their relationship public by being baptized. In 1 Peter 3:21 (NIV), the apostle Peter calls baptism “the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.”

“For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.”—Romans 6:4 (NLT)

See **Popular FAQs** about baptism on page 15.

Table Talk

Conclusion: Going Further in Your Journey

Are you aware of the church service times at your campus? If not, visit CalvaryFTL.org/Campuses and find the service times that best fit your schedule.

Look closer at some other prayers in Scripture

As you encounter those in the Bible who prayed, you can learn from their conversations with God. Look at the following prayers and determine from them what you can learn about God, yourself, and how we should pray.

- [John 17](#)
- [Psalm 51](#)
- [Jonah 2](#)
- [Daniel 2:20–23](#)
- [1 Kings 8:23–61](#)

Learn more about prayer

Devote a time each day to talk with God. Spend some time telling God how great He truly is! Offer your worship, confession, thanksgiving, and requests to

your heavenly Father. Create a list of those you will pray for, asking God for His blessings in their lives.

Participate in baptism!

Go to CalvaryFTL.org/Baptism and find out when our next beach baptism is! If you've never been baptized, commit to taking this step. If you have been baptized, you can volunteer that day at the beach, welcoming those who will make this important decision.

Get ahead

If you haven't done so already, take the spiritual gifts survey online: SpiritualGiftsTest.com/Test/Adult

We'll discuss the results in session four of our class.

Popular FAQs about baptism

Do I need to get baptized?

Baptism is not merely a suggestion. It is a commandment from Jesus (Matthew 28:19). The Bible is very clear about God's heart for believers in Jesus to take this first public step in their faith.

I've been baptized as an adult before, but have wandered away from God. Now that I'm back, do I need to be baptized again?

This is a question of your heart. Baptism is the pledge of a clean conscience towards God. If you've publicly proclaimed your faith in Christ before, you do not need to be baptized again. If, however, when you were baptized your heart wasn't really in a place of proclaiming a clean conscience toward God, and now you are beginning a genuine relationship with Him, then it would be a wonderful thing for you to be baptized again, as your conscience is now truly clean before God.

I was baptized as a baby. Now that I am beginning a relationship with Jesus, do I need to be baptized again?

To answer this question, ask yourself this: "When I was baptized as a child, did I understand what I was doing? Was I pledging a clean conscience toward God?" If the answers to those questions are no, then we believe you should prayerfully consider getting baptized, as you now understand what baptism truly means (1 Peter 3:21).

What if I want to get baptized but I'm not willing to give up sinful behaviors?

If this is where your heart is, then we suggest not being baptized. In Luke 3:8 (NLT), John the Baptist tells the crowd, "Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God." Your baptism is not simply a religious ritual. God cares more about your heart behind your baptism than He does about the action itself. Your baptism is an event that publicly shows others that you're pledging a clean conscience toward God and are dedicating yourself to following the ways of Jesus. Ask yourself this question: "What is the point of getting baptized if I'm not willing to change?" Again, baptism doesn't save you; it's not a free pass to heaven. It is a symbol of what Jesus has done in your heart.

Preparing for Next Week

In session three, we'll talk about connecting with people. Be on the lookout this week for our e-mail follow up. Keep praying for the people at your table and the specific needs that were shared at your table today. And don't forget, if you haven't done so already, to complete the spiritual gifts survey (see page nine).

Homework

Experiment with S.O.A.P. Use the Connect journal you were given at the beginning of this session to get into the habit of doing the S.O.A.P. method. Complete 10 verses (Matthew 5:3–12) over the next 21 days.

Prayer for your personal needs and the needs of others

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.

Session

Three

Session Three

Find Community

Connecting People to People

Opening Thoughts

Why do you feel it is important to belong to someone or something? What difference does it make in your life when you feel like you belong? What does it mean to belong? The Bible makes it clear that in the family of God, we belong to one another. In a world where isolation and individualism have become increasingly widespread, this is a difficult concept for many to grasp.

But the Bible says that, as believers, as the Church, we are like the human body. We are many members—like different body parts—but we all make up one body! Let's look together at 1 Corinthians 12:

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, 'I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,' that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,' would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' The head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you.'

In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."
— 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 (NLT)

Table Talk

A Few Marks of Authentic Community (Acts 2:42-47)

_____ and _____

"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'"—1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV)

_____ and _____

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."—Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

_____ and _____

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."—James 5:16 (NLT)

_____ and _____

"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."—Hebrews 10:25 (NLT)

Table Talk

Conclusion: Going Further in Your Journey

Check out JoinAGroup.org or HostAGroup.org

Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale offers a variety of community groups throughout Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Check out all the different types of groups that are open and available to you in your area. Find the group that best fits your needs and contact the leader for further information.

Learn more about community

Devote a time this week to be with other Christ-followers. Find the encouragement, love, support, and friendship you need to live out your Christian faith.

Preparing for Next Week

In session four, we'll talk about connecting with outreach. Be on the lookout this week for our e-mail follow up. Keep praying for the people at your table and the specific needs that were shared at your table today.

Homework

If you haven't done so already, complete the spiritual gifts survey. We'll discuss the results next week. The survey is 105 questions and takes about 15 minutes to complete. You can complete the survey at SpiritualGiftsTest.com/Test/Adult.

Note: If you don't have access to a computer, stay after and we'll help you with the online survey.

Answers for Page 19

Love
Acceptance
Care
Restoration
Confession
Forgiveness
Encouragement
Accountability

Session

Four

Session Four

Change Your World

Connecting People to Outreach

As we clearly see throughout Scripture, God loves us with an everlasting, indescribable love. He is a God of compassion, mercy, generosity, and justice. He defends the poor, the fatherless, and all those who can't defend themselves. As His followers, we are called to do the same. We're called to live with the same compassion and grace that we've been gifted by Jesus. We're called to help, serve, and stand up for those in need. Today, we'll discover why this is such an important part of the Christian life, and how it benefits and blesses you!

Four Personal Benefits of Serving

1. Find purpose for your life (*Ephesians 2:10*)
2. Experience joy as you help others (*Philippians 2:17*)
3. Impact others as you build up and reach out (*Hebrews 10:24–25*)
4. Discover and develop your spiritual gifts as you serve (*Romans 12:4–8*)

Unpacking the Spiritual Gifts Survey

Table Talk

Practicing What We Preach: Let's Connect to Outreach

As a group, you're about to perform an outreach. Don't worry, it's quick and easy, and you'll have lots of fun! Before you get started, remember to pray as a group.

Opportunities to serve others at Calvary

As we close our time together, we'll share with you various opportunities to serve here at your campus. Thanks for investing your time in these last four weeks. You've made us a better church, and we're hoping to make you a stronger disciple!

Conclusion: Going Further in Your Journey

Check out monthly outreaches

Each month, we seek to serve and share the love of Jesus by meeting needs in our local community. More information about upcoming outreach opportunities are available online or at your campus info booth.

Learn more about outreach

Devote some time this week to be with the other Christ-followers to discuss outreach.

We are so glad you joined us for this four-week journey. We are here to serve you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any further questions about getting connected here at Calvary Chapel.



CalvaryFTL.org

We want to connect with you!



@CalvaryFTL