

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION



North Citrus
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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The content of this packet represents a condensed version of our Foundations class. That class is offered about once a quarter to those who are interested in knowing more about us or desire to be a member of our congregation. If you would like to participate in our Foundations class, please contact Joe Schneider at 270-997-0698 or northcitruschristianchurch@gmail.com.

Mission And Vision

Our Mission:

Go. Make disciples. Baptize Teach.

Christ's Church, His body, has a purpose. It has a mission to accomplish. The purpose Jesus gave His Church is to make disciples.

A Disciple: Someone who is **following** Jesus as Lord, **being changed** by Christ, and is **committed to the mission** of Christ.

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

Leadership

NCCC has a leadership of elders, overseers, and pastors who guide the Church in the spirit of servant leadership.

The qualifications and responsibilities for people serving these roles are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

ELDERS

Floyd Daniel
Tom Haines
Harry King

MINISTERS

Jonathan Beard
Joe Schneider

What We Believe

Underlying Principles

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1 Corinthians 1:10

In essential beliefs, we have unity.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:4-6

In non-essential beliefs, we have liberty.

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters . . . Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand . . . So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God . . . So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. Romans 14:1,4,12,22

In all our beliefs, we show love.

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:2

Essential Beliefs

The following beliefs are non-negotiable; things on which we build the Church and our lives as disciples.

ABOUT GOD:

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He exists in three personalities: The Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. All three are biblical forms of God Himself. Genesis 1:1, 26-27; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

ABOUT JESUS CHRIST:

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus was born of a virgin and lived a sinless human life. He then offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after 3 days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13

ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He has gifted every believer. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily. 2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18

ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's inerrant Word to us. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any measure of error. It is the sole written authority for all believers. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 12:6, 119:105, 160; Proverbs 30:5

ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's Creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God, called "sin." This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life. Genesis 1:27; Psalm 83:6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1,2

ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is God's prepaid gift to us but we must receive it. we can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by faith in Jesus Christ as God's offering of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith that believes with the heart, confesses with the mouth, repents with a transformed life, and are baptized into Jesus Christ . . . we have assurance of our salvation. Romans 6:23; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10

ABOUT RECEIVING CHRIST

The Bible teaches the pattern to receive Christ: believe in Jesus as Lord, repent of personal sin, confess Christ publicly and be baptized through immersion. Acts 2:38-39, Romans 6:1-7, Acts 2:16.

ABOUT THE CHURCH

The Church is the body and Bride of Christ on earth; founded on the Day of Pentecost, consisting of Christians everywhere. Matthew 16:13-18; Acts 2:14-27

ABOUT CHURCH LEADERSHIP

That God has ordained that elders are to exercise spiritual, servant leadership and authority over the local congregation. Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4

ABOUT THE FUTURE & ETERNAL SECURITY

That Jesus Christ will one day return at which time He will pronounce the eternal fate of each individual, both living and dead . . . the saved to eternal life in Heaven, the unsaved to eternal separation from God in hell. John 5:28-29; Daniel 12:2; 2 Corinthians 4:14

Core Values

These statements are our essential core values. Values help us live our essential beliefs in unity. NCCC members should agree about the following core values.

1. Biblical Truth

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

2. Inspired Worship

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37

3. Real Relationships

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35

4. Selfless Service

“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave —just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:26-28

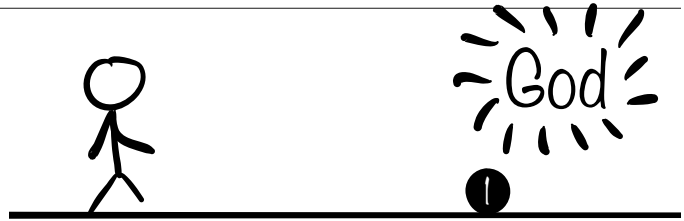
5. Spirit-Led Living

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Galatians 5:22-26

Gospel Summary

SCENE 1: GOD

God created humanity to be in relationship with him and gave them a purpose in the world.



"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" Genesis 1:27-28

- Loves us.
- Created us to be with him.
- Gave us purpose.
- Desires that we have eternal life.

God loves us and desires that we be with him forever.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

SCENE 2: OUR PROBLEM

We created a problem we can't fix on our own.

Just as Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, all of us will follow the same path.

Our choice to disobey God is called sin.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." Romans 3:23



- Chose to disobey.
- Earned the penalty of death.
- Cannot fix what we have broken.



- Loves us.
- Created us to be with him.
- Gave us purpose.
- Desires that we have eternal life.

The payment for our disobedience is physical and spiritual death.

"For the wages of sin is death..." Romans 6:23

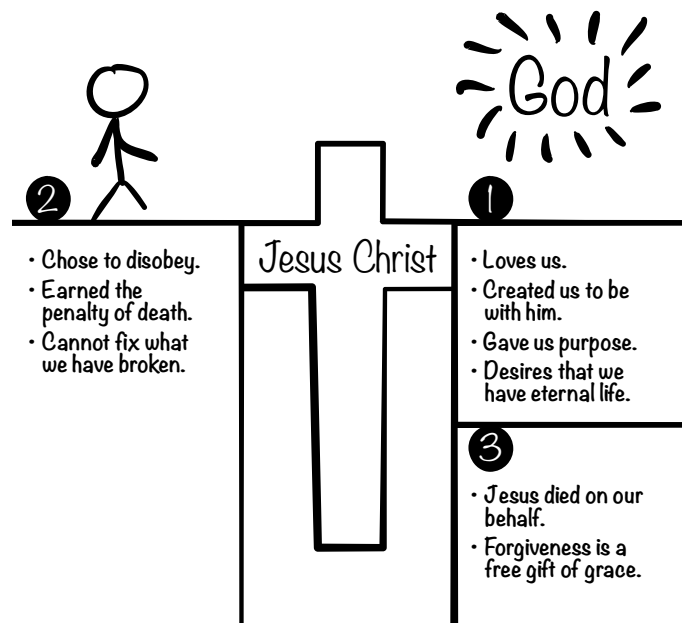
We are separated from God by a valley we cannot cross.

SCENE 3: GOD'S SOLUTION

Jesus created a bridge so that we can return to God.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

**Jesus died to take the penalty that we deserved.
Our sin was put to death as he died.**



"For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit..." 1 Peter 3:18

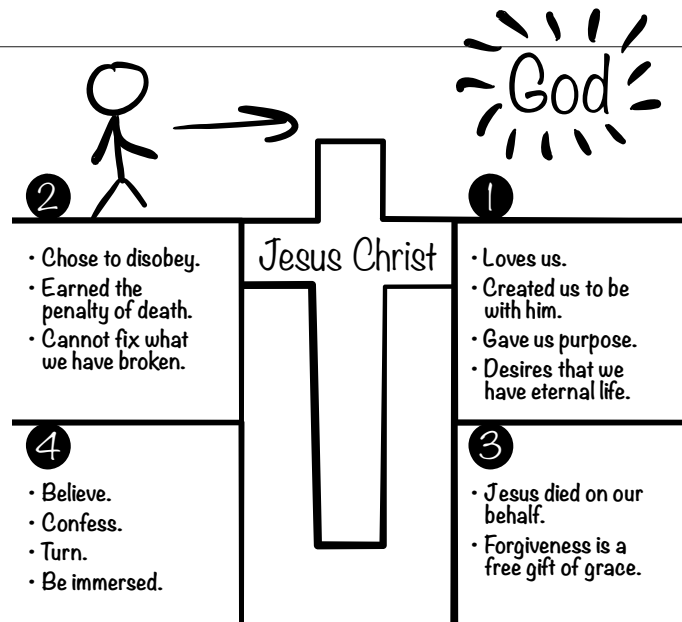
SCENE 4: OUR RESPONSE

We respond by accepting the gift that God is offering us.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 6:23

We accept the gift as an act of trust in Jesus.



"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

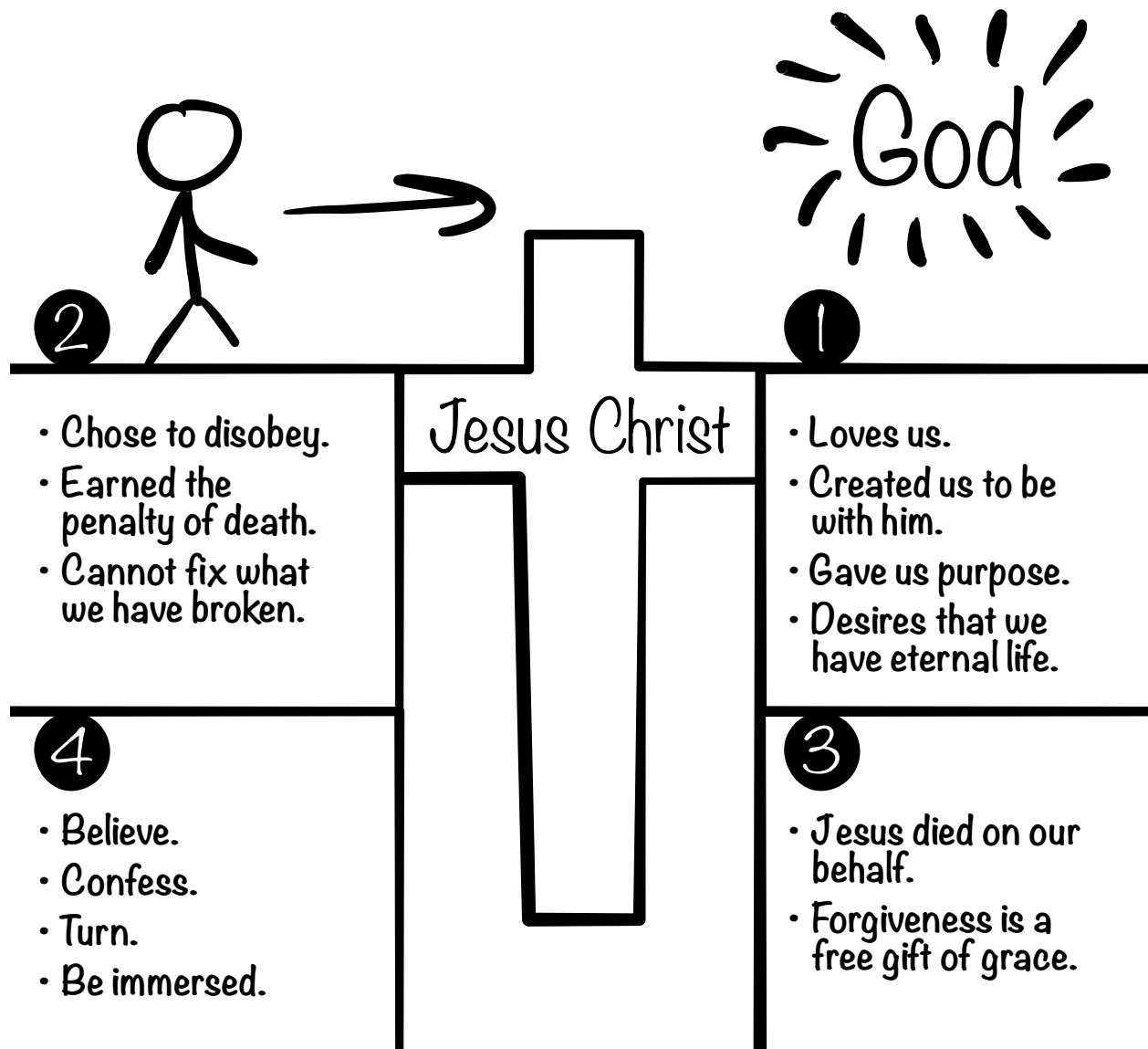
When you believe Jesus and trust him, you take steps to cross the bridge.

Believe: Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who died to rescue you from your sins. John 3:16-18

Confess: You are able to say that you believe in Jesus and express his true identity as Son of God, Savior, and Lord. Matthew 10:32; 16:16; Romans 10:9-10

Turn: Since Jesus is rescuing you from your old sinful ways, you turn from that way of life to the new life Jesus has for you. Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Peter 3:9

Be Immersed: As an act of faith, we are immersed into water and raised back up by a follower of Jesus. This joins us with Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection. As the water washes away literal dirt, the Spirit cleanses us of our sins. Our sins are gone and we become living temples of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38-39; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Romans 6:1-5; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:11-12; Acts 22:16



What Kind of Church Is This?

Used with permission with slight modification. Estep, James, "Restoration Movement Distinctives," in *An Elder's Playbook* (Indianapolis: e2 Ministries, 2019).

What does it mean to be a "Christian Church?" We are a part of the Restoration Movement, a brotherhood of independent churches that are committed to restoring the church of the New Testament. A simple way to describe what it means to be a Christian Church/Church of Christ is the following formula:

Biblical Authority + Church Unity -> Global Disciple-Making

The Restoration Movement affirms Biblical authority, the Reformation principle of Sola Scriptura, tied to significant commitment to church unity, beyond the level of unity by agreement, all for the sake of making disciples around the world.

First, our movement affirms the authority of Scripture above everything else, such as creeds or councils or any human authority. Candidly, we can make use of tools to guide or aid us in our understanding of the Scriptures (councils, creeds, etc.), but they are not a substitute or rival to the Bible. As one of our guiding principles expresses, "No book but the Bible, no creed but Christ" and "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." Scripture is the common theological denominator for all denominations, and the Restoration Movement focused on it for the sake of unity.

Our second affirmation is Church Unity. We have a tendency to underestimate this feature of our Movement. "Of course we'd unite with other believers who agree with us." Anyone can say that. In fact, this idea of unity is less than ideal! If it is by agreement, then it becomes highly conditional. This affirmation is more than a contract where we agree to all the conditions and sign on the dotted line. Is that the basis for church unity? When we explore the history of our Movement, we can see that even Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone had sharp disagreements on matters of interpretation, doctrine, and even church governance; but they remained united due to their

common commitment to Christ and Scripture; recognizing that unity in Christ can and should override many points of division present in the church of their day - as it should for us today. "In essentials, unity; in opinion, liberty; but in all things, love" became one of our most challenging principles to fully embrace and embody, but it has served us well as we stayed focus on disciple-making.

Third, our ultimate aim is global disciple-making. The inevitable result of a unity in the bonds of Christian love and the embracing of Scripture as our common core authority led to our Movement embracing Jesus' final charge to us as his followers: "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" (NIV Matthew 28:18-20). When the church is divided, and its message is skewed, then its focus on the prime directive of making disciples is lost. A unified church with a simple, singular message would be far more effective at reaching nonbelievers than every denomination with varied, nuanced messages engaging in evangelism and equipping. Hence, "We are Christians only, not the only Christians" would be the result of our endeavors. Campbell and Stone both saw this as the ultimate aim of the church, one being hampered by the fragmentation within the body of Christ.

Distinctives of the Restoration Movement

The Restoration Movement elevates the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Bible over human traditions and teachings. One needs to accept Christ alone, and not the teachings of others to become a Christian.

No Creed but Christ. No book but the Bible.

Each church is governed by their own eldership. There is not an outside governing body. The Restoration Movement was founded by a group of ministers that believed the best practice and example for structuring the church is found in the Bible itself. There are several sayings within the Restoration Movement that remind us of this vision:

1) Where the Bible speaks, we speak. Where the Bible is silent, we are silent. There are many areas of Christianity that are open to each believer's good judgment. Such issues as church music or church service styles can be very controversial, and yet they are often about mere personal preference. Where the Bible specifically teaches believers how to live and believe, we affirm these teachings. Where the Bible does not specifically endorse or condemn a practice, we use general biblical principles to inform our decisions.

2) We do Bible things in Bible ways. We use Scripture to shape our church structure. This includes things like weekly communion and baptism by immersion. As we look through the pages of Scripture, We see that the early believers had communion each week in Acts 2:42 and 20:7. We also see that baptism in the New Testament was always by immersion. It is our desire to stay true to the pages of Scripture, so in these and other practices, we carry them out as they are modeled for us in the Bible.

3) In matters of Faith: Unity; In matters of Opinion: Liberty; In all things: Love. We uphold the core teachings of Scripture that lead us to faith in Jesus the Christ, and are unified that these beliefs are central to our faith. However, there are many matters that are not specifically addressed in Scripture. We allow liberty in these areas of opinion, trusting that each believer will use their sound judgment and general biblical principles to inform their choices. But in everything we do, we show love to our fellow believers (1 John 2:10, 4:20-21).