



www.chirstlincoln.org/basics

1 WHAT IS IT?

Mission & Vision: Connecting others to Christ, together growing in his Word, so that all may know Jesus

The Basics serves as a training ground for anyone seeking to learn more about the foundations of our Christian faith and Lutheran tradition. It's designed to be a tool aiding you as you seek to be a disciple of Jesus within the context of your own life and as a part of our local church.

Secondly, The Basics serves as a way for those who belong here at Christ Lincoln to connect more deeply with their fellow church family and to find ways to engage in our discipleship settings of Rows (places of worship) Circles (small groups, bible studies, or fellowship groups) Arrows (service opportunities) and Dots (time and space for personal devotion and solitude)

And finally, The Basics is the process we use to welcome new people into membership here at Christ Lincoln. We believe membership to a church family is a commitment that honors God, honors others, and honors you. So as many of you are seeking membership we pray this course is a blessing to you in several ways as you commit yourselves to this local church family.

2 WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

As you walk through the Basics course, you will learn about what we believe here at Christ Lincoln, what our Lutheran tradition confesses, and what the broader Christian church affirms. You will learn:



Why we believe the Bible is the true, inerrant Word of God



What we believe about God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit



How we understand God's intended purposes of the Law and the Gospel



Why we practice the sacraments the way we do without our church life



Why we value confirmation and statements of faith



Details about how our local church family operates

3 COURSE TOPICS

Jesus - This course begins with the object of our faith - the reason for our gathering together as a church at all. Jesus Christ, the Savior and King, who lives and reigns. All other “basics” of our Christian and Lutheran traditions flow from our knowledge of and belief in Jesus Christ. So He is a natural place to begin. In this section we will discuss his nature, his roles, and why he is at the center of our church and lives.

God - Many religions throughout history have constructed ideas, or idols, of “gods.” In the Christian and Lutheran faith, we believe in one God who is triune in nature, having three distinct persons; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We affirm these three persons as one God who is revealed to us as such in scripture. In this course we will discuss who God is and what we know about Him.

Theology - Christian Theology is the study of God as he reveals himself. Since God reveals himself in creation and in his Word, everyone is a theologian! The purpose of Christian Theology is to communicate the saving Gospel to all people and to nurture such faith within us. There are various divisions in theology that we won’t dive into in this particular course, but it is important to mention that Lutheran theology insists that Holy Scripture must be the source of theology and standard by which we evaluate all theology [sola scriptura].

The Bible - Lutherans believe that the primary, authoritative source of knowledge and revelation from God is his very word, the Bible. We believe that the Bible is not just about man’s search for God, but God’s desire to communicate truth to his image bearers of creation - humanity. In this Basics course, we will look at what the Bible is, why we believe it is true, and how that impacts our lives today.

Law & Gospel - God’s Word carries many themes, but few are more crucial than the themes of Law and Gospel. Both are truths revealed to us through his Word, but are entirely different in their purpose and their effect on the lives of man. The Law of God is his desired law for the lives of his image bearers. The Gospel is quite the opposite. It is the revealed truth that God has performed the actions required to fulfill the Law and thus redeeming those who are in condemnation. In this course we will define each of these themes, learn about their functions and purposes, and learn how to properly distinguish them in our lives.

Creation - In our modern world the idea of the Christian view of creation has become rather offensive or worthy of mockery. Even within the Christian church the views on the origins of our world vary. In this course we hope to cover what we mean when we affirm a divine creation, what the Bible does and does not say about creation, and even how to engage science and scripture.

Humanity & Sin - As we wrestle with the age-old question, “who am I?” we look to the primary source for such an answer; the one who created us and told us what and who we are. We are the crown jewel of God’s creation, the image bearers of the God who formed us and all that is. In this course we will consider this question of humanity and what it means for how we live our lives as disciples of Jesus. We’ll learn about original sin and the natural consequences of a fallen race (humanity). Then we’ll discover the actual sin that we see in our lives and that perpetuates throughout our world. In this course, we seek to understand our sin, its consequences, and our redemption.

Justification & Sanctification - After discussing humanity and its fallen state in sin, we look to the doctrines of Justification and Sanctification. Christ accomplished the task of justification and his Spirit goes on to sanctify those whom he calls. We will learn of our comfort and rest in the justification we’ve been given. Also, we’ll consider biblical examples of sanctification and the goal of it.

Sacraments - What are the means of grace? What are the sacraments? We will first seek to know and understand the gifts of God. This will lead us to discussion on what the sacraments of the Lutheran Church are and how they reveal to us God’s promised blessings.

The Church - The Church was created by God and is persevered by him. We hope to learn about the nature of the Church and some of its attributes. God gathers his people around Word and Sacrament and we seek to carry that gift out here in our local community. We will learn of the LCMS’s beliefs about the local and global church, as well as dig into our local church here at Christ Lincoln.

Christ Lincoln - To elaborate on our understanding of the Body of Christ, the church, we want to dig into some additional details of our own family here at Christ Lincoln. We will review some of the church’s history, its structure, staff, mission, vision, etc. We love our family and we love the church so we believe it is important for our members and attendees who belong here to understand these elements of our church.

Statement of Faith - Finally we will review what we’ve learned and encourage the class to craft a statement of faith. A profession of what you believe about these ultimate questions.

Christ Lincoln - To elaborate on our understanding of the Body of Christ, the church, we want to dig into some additional details of our own family here at Christ Lincoln. We will review some of the church's history, its structure, staff, mission, vision, etc. We love our family and we love the church so we believe it is important for our members and attendees who belong here to understand these elements of our church.

Acknowledging God's Gifts - Scripture teaches us that God has blessed us with certain gifts and talents. It also teaches us that God's very Spirit blesses us with gifts to build up his church. As a spiritual family we desire to recognize these and use them to build up our local body, the church.

Discipleship Settings - At Christ, we believe it is important that we, as a family, establish our family norms. What is it that we as a church family actually do? Well, we are the recipients of God's amazing grace, love, and forgiveness and his ambassadors to share that grace, love, and forgiveness with the world around us. So we desire to put ourselves in the places where God promises to bless us with more of himself. In Rows, Circles, Arrows, and Dots.

Big Church / Small Church - We are a large church. Many of us have grown up in or been a part of much smaller churches. When a church grows to the size ours has, operations must change for a smoother life together. It's important we understand how our church must operate at its current size.

Ten Commandments Creed - We subscribe to the ethics of living outlines in scripture. The clearest and most famous collection of christian ethics is given to us in Exodus 2 - the 10 commandments. So we've collected them into a creed that we state together often. Let's learn why we believe it's important to state such a creed.

Finance and Generosity - You're becoming a part of our family and you'll likely contribute to how this place operates with finances. Therefore, we believe it's important that you understand how we handle the money we've been entrusted with.

Spiritual Family Reconciliation - As a spiritual family and as followers of Jesus, grace and forgiveness are vital tenants of our worldview and daily living. We, as a family, desire to handle the conflicts that will arise with the grace and forgiveness we've received from our God. Let's learn a bit about how and why we desire to manage conflict and seek reconciliation as a family.

The Godly Life Statement - Again, the way we live is how the world sees the love of Jesus. He pours it on us so we can overflow it into the world around us. Our staff and key volunteers all subscribe to a statement that outlines our commitment to showing the love of Jesus with our lives.

4 VIDEO CONTENT

The Basics Content				
WEEKS		Main Track Videos	Speaker	LINK
1	1	Introduction	Aaron Hedlund	https://youtu.be/iziS00PnTrA
	2	Who is Jesus?	Paul Kasaty	https://youtu.be/Dzu3cI3IKAI
	3	Who is God the Father?	Jeff Scheich	https://youtu.be/Rx9Pi-ftNg
	4	Who is God the Spirit?	Jeff Scheich	https://youtu.be/bw9ROuU8ROo
	5	What is Theology?	Mark L'Heureux	https://youtu.be/FXKqNGfKkJK
2	6	What is the Bible?	Amy Schmidt	https://youtu.be/S8Xiyk5kHng
	7	What is Prayer?	Aaron Hedlund	https://youtu.be/xwZeErG-To
	8	What is Law?	Maria Castens	https://youtu.be/szrIrhkiXnI
3	9	What is the Gospel?	Maria Castens	https://youtu.be/Q3y_G-mUceY
	10	What do we believe about Creation?	Aaron Hedlund	https://youtu.be/YdW6U2SomFI
	11	What do we believe about Humanity?	Aaron Hedlund	https://youtu.be/cB5CWpMpZAY
	12	What is Sin?	Aaron Hedlund	https://youtu.be/Kc6_NEm0fe0
	13	What is Justification and Sanctification?	Bill Steinbauer	https://youtu.be/8DcctQ4BFBw
4	14	What are the Sacraments?	Joel Marquardt	https://youtu.be/XWzcYm6CID0
	15	What about Baptism?	Joel Marquardt	https://youtu.be/rEx383YEipl
	16	What about Communion?	Joel Marquardt	https://youtu.be/iKdpZE04Pps
	17	What is "the Church"?	Michael Eckelkamp	https://youtu.be/dISqw3biUyc
	18	What is a Statement of Faith?	Aaron Hutton	https://youtu.be/8XK9_3KOvtg
5	19	Who is Christ Lincoln?	Michael Eckelkamp	https://youtu.be/zGqYR772-Pk
	20	Acknowledging God's Gifts	Wendy Herrold	https://youtu.be/yrbOnVCIF0E
	21	Discipleship Settings	Aaron Hedlund	https://youtu.be/sZmHMhMXId0
	22	Big Church Small Church	Daniel Potts	https://youtu.be/CiYXGupeYrA
	23	Public Confession	Aaron Hutton	https://youtu.be/_IITSP0eYSA
6	24	The Ten Commandments Creed	Jeff Schiech	https://youtu.be/5E_cCq4O39Q
	25	Finance and Generosity	James Moseman	https://youtu.be/2rxFzifhuwA
	26	Tithing	Maria Castens	https://youtu.be/wODPICsRdyk
	27	Spiritual Family Reconciliation	Bill Steinbauer	https://youtu.be/hID042qu27I
	28	The Godly Life Statement	Michael Eckelkamp	https://youtu.be/KT6i-ijDFlg
Link to Entire Playlist:			https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLW4_NrIT40sYE00UOqDQUougOn9p8ZWeg	

5

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES



Respect the Safety and Confidence of Others

Sharing is optional, not required. Devote attention to each person who speaks. Be sensitive, kind, and generous to one another with your comments. Honor one another by maintaining confidentiality. Anything shared within the group should not be repeated outside the group [unless it will harm you or someone else].



Speak for Yourself

Limit your sharing to your own experiences by using “I” statements. For example, “I feel angry when he does that,” rather than, “He makes me angry.” Making “I” statements is a way to take responsibility for your thoughts and emotions rather than attributing them to someone else.



Refrain from Dominating Discussions

Be brief in your sharing so that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Some people are more open than others or quicker to speak than others - please be respectful of those that might benefit from sharing, but aren't as quick to dive in.



Turn to Wonder

If you feel judgmental or defensive when someone else is sharing, turn those feelings to wonder instead. Ask yourself, I wonder what brought her to this belief. I wonder what he is feeling right now. I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself. By turning to wonder we avoid making false or unfair assumptions about ourselves, our circumstances, or others.



Welcome Silence

Attentive listening includes silence. If that happens, refrain from rushing in with comments. Use any silence as an opportunity to continue listening - to what was just said, to your own heart, and/or to God's Spirit.



Say 'No' to Fixing, Saving, and Setting Others Straight

Respect each person's journey and trust the Holy Spirit to prompt and lead each person differently and at a different pace. Focus on providing support and acceptance rather than instruction, accountability, or correction. This applies at all times - not just in the context of the group time. If someone desires such instruction, accountability, or correction they can and should deliberately ask for it from the person they desire it from.



INFORMATION PAGE

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WEEK 1

| THE BASICS



JESUS
+
GOD
+
THEOLOGY



WEEK 1

| INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Jonathan Edwards wrote a book called “The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God” and in it he mentions that a mark of the Spirit is a growing esteem for Jesus Christ. **As you grow in faith, what about Jesus compels you to think more highly of him?**

We learned that Jesus is both God and man. He is absolutely, truly both not lacking in either nature. **When you think of Jesus as you know him, what comes to mind most? His humanity or his deity?**

When you consider your own personal relationship with Jesus, what are some ways in which you invest in that relationship? He tells us that He is with us and that He’s sent His Spirit to dwell within us. **In what ways do you experience Jesus with you on a daily basis?**

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read Colossians 1:15-19 and John 1 and see what Paul and John believed about Jesus . In our classroom time coming up, we’ll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.

Many people find themselves with an unbiblical view of God. We are told in scripture that God has revealed a knowledge of Himself in creation, in scripture, and of course in Jesus. Somewhere along the line, we often allow the world, our sin, and the devil access to our view of God and they twist it into something that He is not! **In your own words, how would you describe God?**

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read Genesis 1-3. Read the first 3 Articles of Luther's Small Catechism (Free Online) and consider what this says about God. In our small group time coming up, we'll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.

Our past clergy-centric model of church has led many of us to throw up our hands and leave theology to the professionals, but I think scripture would indicate that it is for all of us. Our hope at Christ Lincoln is that we become a place where lay people are empowered by connecting everyone to the revelation God has given us and grow together in it. **From watching this video, in your own words, what would you say is the value or purpose of studying theology?**

The topic or discipline of theology has become a massive, complex field of study, but can also be dabbled in in the simplest of ways. God's revealed Word has taught us that childlike faith is cherished by him (Mt. 18:24). He says that faith the size of a mustard seed is powerful (Mt. 17:20-21). He also says that all the knowledge in the world without love means nothing (1 Cor. 13:2).

Knowing that it is not an intellectual ascent to knowledge of theology that saves us, why might we put so much emphasis on theology?

Think back over your life experiences, where have you learned about the things of God? In school? Church? Home? Elsewhere? Share some thoughts.

Where might be a good place to continue learning about the true God as he revealed himself? What's your plan to do that?

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read John 20:31. Read Colossians 1:9. See what the Apostle John and Paul believed studying the Word of God would do. In our small group time coming up, we'll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.



WEEK 1

| SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions with your group. In Small Groups at Christ Lincoln we begin with a common understanding of guidelines. Before we begin we will read these guidelines and ask that they are respected by everyone as we engage in small group discussions.

Beginning Group Time:

1. Please read through the Small Group Guidelines before beginning

2. If you with new group mates, take it around the table and share:

- A. Your name
- B. Where you're from
- C. How you made your way to Christ Lincoln
- D. Which worship setting you frequent
- E. Something about yourself that you're proud of

3. On a 3x5 note card write any questions you had regarding the content of videos this week. We'll start here and address (or keep record of for Pastor to address) these questions first and then move to the rest of the small group question options.

Review Individual Study Questions:

Take time to share your responses to the Individual Study Questions from this week.

Read Colossians 1:15-19 and John 1.

Read the first 3 Articles of Luther's Small Catechism (Free Online).

Read John 20:31. Read Colossians 1:9.

More Small Group Questions:

1. Do you know anyone who seems to have a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus? What do you notice is different about this person? Does it affect how they live their lives or treat others around them?

2. Do you ever feel like the God we read about in the Old Testament is different from the God we read about in the New Testament?

3. **Is there an attribute of God we believe in that you struggle with?**
4. **Understanding who God is, and who you are: How does this affect how you live your life?**
5. **What do you first think of when you hear the word “theology?”**
6. Review the 5 sources of information that inform theology. If we’re honest, sometimes we lean on things other than scripture. **What other source do you tend to elevate over God’s Word?** *(Example: I have a tendency to elevate my experiences and how my brain reasons. Those aren’t bad things to help inform me, but at times I can slip into a mindset of elevating them over God’s Word.)*
7. The Lutheran Church believes that scripture alone is a way of stating that the Bible is the only absolute standard for truth and all other means of knowing things falls under the authority of scripture. In our culture this can be a hard truth to hold onto. **What do you find most difficult about what the Bible seems to teach us?**
8. **Mission and Vision:** Connecting others to Christ, together growing in his Word, so that all may know Jesus.
 - a. **When you hear our mission and vision statement, what comes to mind?**
9. **Close in Prayer**



WEEK 2

| THE BASICS



THE BIBLE
+
PRAYER
+
LAW & GOSPEL



WEEK 2

| INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Our hope at Christ Lincoln is that we would better understand what this library of literature (the Bible) is so that we might become so devoted to it that we read it, learn it, and let it draw us closer to the God who's revealing himself through it.

From watching the videos, what are some of the characteristics of the bible that stand out to you?

What has been your impression of the Bible as you've grown from childhood until today?

How do you see the Bible? What questions do you need answered to make such a decision?

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Read 2 Peter 1:12-21. See what the apostles Peter and Paul believed about the Bible. In our small group time coming up, we'll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.

After watching the video, if someone asked you what prayer is, what would be your response in your own words?

As we look at the Lord’s Prayer, we see many different “kinds” of prayer. When you think about your prayer life, or what you envision when you think of prayer, what “kind” of prayer comes to mind? (i.e. Adoration, Intercession, Confession, etc?)

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read through some of the highlighted prayers from scripture and take note of what you notice about them.

- **Jesus’s Prayer in John 17**
- **Moses and Miriam’s prayer song in Exodus 15:2-21**
- **Hannah’s prayer of praise in 1 Samuel 2:1-10**
- **David’s repentance prayer in Psalm 51**
- **Asaph’s prayer of despair in Psalm 77**
- **The Prayers of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9-14**
- **Paul’s Prayer for the church in Ephesians 1:15-23**

What kinds of behavior do you catch yourself doing because you feel you “must” do them to gain God’s favor? Or not doing because you feel you “can’t” do?

How does your life look differently after coming to faith in the Good News?

In your own words, and in 3 sentences or less, explain the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Who in your life needs to be told, or reminded, of the good news of Jesus Christ today? How could you begin that conversation with them?

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read Romans 6. In our small group time coming up, we’ll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.



WEEK 2

| SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions with your group. In Small Groups at Christ Lincoln we begin with a common understanding of guidelines. No need to go through them in detail again, but remind everyone of each of them quickly.

Beginning Group Time:

- 1. Please call to memory the Small Group Guidelines before beginning**
- 2. Take time to get to know your fellow group members.**
 - a. What is your favorite Lincoln restaurant?
 - b. Where is the farthest you have lived from Lincoln?
- 3. On a 3x5 Notecard write any questions you had regarding the content of videos this week.**

Review Individual Study Questions:

Take time to share your responses to the Individual Study Questions from this week.

- 1. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Read 2 Peter 1:12-21. See what the apostles Peter and Paul believed about the Bible.**
- 2. Read through some of the highlighted prayers referenced in the self reflection questions from the Prayer Video and take note of what you notice about them.**
- 3. Read Romans 6 and discuss what Paul says about Law and Gospel.**

More Small Group Questions:

- 1. Is there a particular issue upon which you feel a tension with the Bible?** *(Feel free to use the notecards on this one again if people are shy to share the tensions they feel out loud)*
- 2. Our culture has adopted the Post-Modern view that everyone is entitled to establish their own personal "truth," and there is no absolute truth. If God's Word in Scripture is not our standard of absolute truth, what is?**
- 3. What about prayer is difficult for you? What about prayer comes easy to you?**
- 4. Do you feel you have to think or behave a certain way when praying? Why?**
- 5. Models of Prayer**
 - a. ACTS
 - b. Joy, Junk and Jesus
 - c. Please, Sorry, Thank You

6. How do you understand our use of the law without becoming legalistic?

7. Have 2-3 volunteers share the gospel in their own words.

8. Who shared the gospel with you? How did they share it?

9. Knowing that you were bought at a price and then gifted eternity with God, how does that change your daily life?

10. Remind the Group of tasks for next week...

- a.** Do the videos and reflection sheets for week 3.
- b.** Please Complete the Next Step Form and Personal Data Sheet.
- c.** Pray for each other.

11. Closing Prayer (Consider praying the Lord's Prayer together)

- a.** Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.



WEEK 3

| THE BASICS



CREATION
+
HUMANITY & SIN
+
JUSTIFICATION & SANCTIFICATION



WEEK 3

| INDIVIDUAL STUDY

When God says “Let us make man in our image...” **What do you think that means when he uses plural pronouns?**

Why do you think it matters what we believe about Genesis 1, 2, and 3? How would what you believe about the origins of the world affect the way you live your life today?

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read Genesis 1 - 2. In our small group time coming up, we'll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.

Is it really any secret that humans are flawed? Our culture today has crafted a narrative that while humans are clearly not perfect, their imperfections are something worth celebrating. **Based on the video, what might a Christian say to someone who says that our sinfulness should be celebrated rather than repented of?**

Who you are is a massive question. So many people, both young and old, wrestle with it for lifetimes. If someone asked you, ‘who are you?’ **How would you answer that question?**

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read Genesis 3 and Romans 5. See the history of the fall into sin and the result that Christ has won for us. In our small group time coming up, we'll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.

Justification - the action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God.
Sanctification - the action or process of being freed from sin or purified.

In your own words, what would you say the difference is between Justification and Sanctification?

How does a proper understanding of these things help you avoid the trap of “Americanized Christianity” and remain rooted in Jesus Christ?

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read Romans 8:1-4. This passage helps us to understand the relationship between justification and sanctification.

Bible Verses for Session 3

What do we believe about creation?

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Genesis 1:3

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:21

Then the Lord God formed a 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

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. Hebrews 11:3

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. 1 Timothy 6:20-21

What do we believe about Humanity?

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:26-28

For we know that if the earthy tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Corinthians 5:1

What do we believe about sin?

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. Romans 5:12

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:5

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

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

What do we believe about Justification and Sanctification?

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. For God did not send his Son in the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23-24

So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:16

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve him. They will see his face and his name will be on their forehead. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. Revelations 22:1-5



WEEK 3

| SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions with your group. In Small Groups at Christ Lincoln we begin with a common understanding of guidelines. No need to go through them in detail again, but remind everyone of each of them quickly.

Beginning Group Time:

- 1. Please call to memory the Small Group Guidelines before beginning**
- 2. Take time to get to know your fellow group members.**
 - a. What is one of your favorite memories growing up?
- 3. On a 3x5 note card write any questions you had regarding the content of videos this week.**

Review Individual Study Questions:

Take time to share your responses to the Individual Study Questions from this week.

1. Read Genesis 1 - 2 and consider what is said there about "Creation."
2. Read Genesis 3 and Romans 5. See the history of the fall into sin and the result that Christ has won for us.
3. Read Romans 8:1-4 & discuss what Paul believes about Justification and Sanctification.

More Small Group Questions:

1. If you had a friend that said, "I don't believe in God because evolution has proven he doesn't exist." **How might you respond?**
2. Read John 1:1-3, 14 and Hebrews 1:1-3. **What role do these verses indicate Jesus played in the Creation accounts?**
3. Genesis says that we are "image bearers of God." Sin has, of course, tainted that reflection that we were intended to bear, but God promises to restore us back to himself through Christ. **In what ways do you think God intends to "restore" his image within you? (hint: it's not something you can do ;))**

4. When you hear in a courtroom that someone's verdict is "not guilty," they are then free to go with no consequences from the court. In the same way, our justification is a verdict that is spoken once and for all. **When you think about how sanctification was discussed in the video, what are your feelings toward being entirely justified but not yet entirely sanctified? Frustrated? Disappointed? Thrilled?**
5. **Prepare the group for next week**
 - a. Do the videos and reflection sheets for week 4.
 - b. If you haven't yet, please complete the Next Step Form and Personal Data Sheet.
 - c. Pray for each other.
6. **Closing Prayer**



WEEK 4

| THE BASICS



SACRAMENTS
+
THE CHURCH
+
STATEMENT OF FAITH



WEEK 4

| INDIVIDUAL STUDY

What was your understanding of what a sacrament was growing up?

Some churches hold a much lower view of sacraments and some hold a different view that opens them up to more. **When you remember your baptism or partake in communion, what are some thoughts that come to your mind? What do they mean to you?**

Some illustrations of what is happening in Christian Baptism are adoption, being born again, or planting a plant. **Which of these illustrations or metaphors resonates best with your understanding of baptism? Why?**

Many people will take time before and/or after communion to reflect, pray, or meditate on a passage of scripture. **If you practice this, what do you think, say, or do?**

Spend some time with your Bible this week. Read Romans 6:4. In our small group time coming up, we'll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.

How do you view church membership? What is the purpose of being a member of a church?

When you look at our church community, where do you see this mission being carried out? How are you contributing to this local church in order to carry out this mission?

Spend some time reading Acts 2:42-47 reflecting on what the early church committed to as a community of believers. In our small group time coming up, we'll spend more time on this and hopefully address the questions that have arisen in this self study time.

Sharing Your Story:

If you've never shared your story - or need some help recrafting in a concise manner - use the three sections/questions to help:

Before I Knew Jesus

What did my life look like? How did I behave and make decisions? What did my life revolve around the most? Where did I find security and happiness? How did those things let me down?

What Events or Seasons Led Me To Knowing Jesus

How did you first hear the Gospel? Or for those grown in nominally christian homes - How did the Gospel truly sink into your heart? What was your initial reaction to the Good News? When and How did your attitude change? What events or seasons did Christ use to call you into discipleship?

After Coming to Saving Faith in Jesus

What changes have taken place in your life? How are your motivations different? Where do you find security and joy now?

Helpful Hints

Write it out and practice it so that it is concise and authentic/natural

Keep it short - 5-10 minutes. At this length it's easily used in a normal conversation when opportunities arise. **Write out your testimony and be prepared to share it with a small group. Sharing it with a few people in a small, safe place will help you get comfortable telling people about what Christ has done.**



WEEK 4

| SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions with your group. In Small Groups at Christ Lincoln we begin with a common understanding of guidelines. No need to go through them in detail again, but remind everyone of each of them quickly.

Please be mindful of time this week so you can reserve at least 30 minutes for sharing your statements of faith

Beginning Group Time:

- 1. Please call to memory the Small Group Guidelines before beginning**
- 2. Take time to get to know your fellow group members.**
 - a. How would you describe yourself in 3 words?**
- 3. On a 3x5 note card write any questions you had regarding the content of videos this week.**

Review Individual Study Questions:

Take time to share your responses to the Individual Study Questions from this week.

- 1. Read Romans 6:4 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.**
- 2. Read Acts 2:42-47 and discuss what the early church committed to as a community of believers.**

More Small Group Questions:

- 1. Share the story of your baptism with your group mates. Whether you were baptized as an infant or an adult, what does your baptism remind you of?** If you haven't been baptized, there is no shame in that whatsoever. In fact, what a beautiful opportunity to learn more about becoming baptized! You're in the right place!
- 2. Even after these teachings, what are some things that still puzzle you about sacraments?**
- 3. After all the teaching in the course, what are some of your challenges with church?**
**Please remember that we desire to speak honorably and put things in the kindest way possible when speaking about others.*

- 4. Now, allow the group to decide if you'd like to share all as one group, or break up into groups of 3 to share your Testimony or make a Statement of Faith.** Please take the number of people in your group (3), and divide the remaining time by that number so you know how much time you have to share while respecting everyone else's right to share their testimony as well. (Example: 30 minutes divided by 3 people = each person has 10 minutes to share.)
 - a. If you're uncomfortable sharing your full testimony, then offer a clear, thoughtful statement of faith.** This would be what you believe about who God is, what He has done, and what that means for your life.
- 5. Prepare the Group for Next Week**
 - a. Do the video and reflection sheet for week 5.
 - b. If you haven't yet, please Complete the Next Step Form and Personal Data Sheet here tonight! We need it for next week.
 - c. Pray for each other.
- 6. Closing Prayers**

Bible Verses for Session 4

What do we believe about the Sacraments?

What is Baptism?

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*

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." *Mark 10:13-15*

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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." *Acts 2:38-39*

What is the Lord's Supper?

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." *1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat, this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, "Drink from it all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." *Matthew 26:26-28*

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. *1 Corinthians 11:26*

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. *Romans 6:8-9*

What, then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? *Romans 8:31-32*

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. *1 Peter 2:24*

Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf. *1 Corinthians 10:17*



WEEK 5

| THE BASICS



WHO IS CHRIST LINCOLN
+
ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S GIFTS
+
DISCIPLESHIP SETTINGS
+
BIG CHURCH / SMALL CHURCH
+
PUBLIC CONFESSION



WEEK 5

| INDIVIDUAL STUDY


The mission and vision of Christ Lincoln is to connect people to Christ, together growing in his Word so that we may see all know Jesus. **Write down a few things that stood out to you from Pastor Eckelkamp's video on Christ Lincoln and the kind of church we desire to be.**

As you anticipate meeting with our Connections Team, be thinking of ways you might desire to get more involved, to use your gifts, or just to engage more in the discipleship settings.


The Discipleship Settings: These are places God has promised to meet us or to give us his blessings. Sure, we've gotten cute for the sake of remembering them, but they are truly the places where God pours out his blessings to us.




ROWS // Worship



CIRCLES // Gather



ARROWS // Serve



DOTS // Abide

Take a quick self assessment (not a test or an expectation so there is no shame in the results) of when you already do and where you might want to start connecting in each of the four discipleship settings:

How have you seen people using their spiritual gifts in the church body? What kind of diversity of gifting have you already begun to notice in this group and the church around you?

How did the church you grew up in operate? What things went to Pastor and what things went to other lay leaders?

How do you most enjoy living out your faith, and how can being a part of a Big Church like Christ Lincoln help you do that more?



WEEK 5

| SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions with your group. In Small Groups at Christ Lincoln we begin with a common understanding of guidelines. No need to go through them in detail again, but remind everyone of each of them quickly.

- 1. A Connections Team Member will be with you to guide your time together this week.**
- 2. We won't be spending our group time in discussion around video content, so if you have thoughts, questions, or comments you'd like to share regarding the content from this week **please request a time to speak with your group mentors, a staff member, or your campus pastor.****



WEEK 6

| THE BASICS



10 COMMANDMENTS CREED

+

FINANCE AND GENEROSITY

+

SPIRITUAL FAMILY RECONCILIATION

+

GODLY LIFE STATEMENT

+

TITHING



WEEK 6

| INDIVIDUAL STUDY

If you've been with us in worship when we've used the Creed, what was your reaction to it, as best as you can remember? What is your reaction to it today as you hear it in this video?

When did you first hear the words "tithes" and "offerings"? What are your thoughts and feelings when you hear the words tithes and offerings?

What is your baseline response to conflict? Shut down? Run? Yell? Confront hard? Roll over and pretend it's not a big deal?

How did Pastor Bill's teaching on Reconciliation make you reconsider your learned conflict management responses?

Was the video outlining our finances and generosity practices clear? What questions do you still have? If you still have more questions please feel comfortable reaching out to our staff to learn more - it is important to us that our finances are transparent!

What do you think might happen to a church that thinks it is loving to allow their faith community to live and believe anyway they want?

What does it look like to show grace to ourselves and each other while still encouraging us to live a life that shows honor to God?



WEEK 6

| SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions with your group. In Small Groups at Christ Lincoln we begin with a common understanding of guidelines. No need to go through them in detail again, but remind everyone of each of them quickly.

1. A Connections Team Member will be with you to guide your time together this week.

2. Pastors take some time to share about yourself:

- a. Your Background
- b. Your Family
- c. Why You Became a Pastor
- d. Hobbies
- e. Etc.
- f. Allow time for groups to ask them questions about themselves, their families, their passions. The goal is for them to get to know their pastor better in whatever ways they desire.

3. Groups members share:

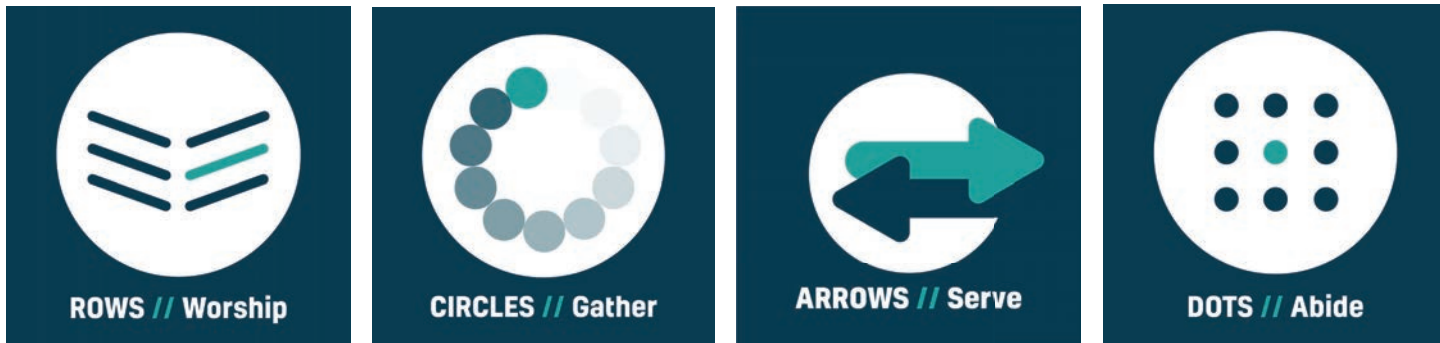
- a. Name
- b. Family Background
- c. Occupation
- d. Favorite Hobby
- e. How you got to Christ Lincoln
- f. Why your taking the Basics
- g. Allow time for the pastor to jump in and ask them questions about themselves.

4. FAQ section: Over the last several weeks it is likely people have had questions about the content of the videos. Now is the time for group members to ask questions of the pastors about doctrine, theology, about Christ Lincoln, or any other things they may want during this time.

5. Pray and Close

What Now? | The Basics

We desire to use our lives as a loving response to the infinite generosity God has poured out on us. So, we, as a church family, believe that God promises to meet us in certain places - just like he did in the Garden, Tabernacle, Temple, and now in the church! How do we do this? By engaging in what we call "Discipleship Settings:"



We would like to invite you to consider how you can join this community by plugging into each of these settings in some way shape or form.

- ✓ Where will I consistently worship here?
- ✓ What circles can I join to both benefit from the community and pour into it?
- ✓ Where can I use my gifts and passions to love and serve my neighbors both inside and outside the church?
- ✓ And when will I find time to just be alone with God so I can deepen my discipleship in him and remain healthy to go and plug into the other settings with a full cup?

Need help exploring, finding, or connecting to these different settings? Talk to your mentor or someone on our staff and we'd be excited to walk with you in this way!



Greetings Friends,

It is with joy and a smile that I celebrate your completion of “The Basics: Being Christ Lincoln!”

Whether you joined The Basics to learn more about our fundamental beliefs, as an avenue to membership, or to connect to various places in our large community, we celebrate that you are here!

We are a covenant family with one another that is actively engaged in being on mission with Jesus! “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity,” Psalm 133:1. As a partner in the Good News of Jesus, you are prioritizing growing in and sharing God’s love, God’s word, and God’s forgiveness. We are a part of the greatest rescue mission of all time!

For those who were looking for an educational experience, I pray that this course was able to help you grow in both knowledge and wisdom. It is our sincere desire for you to grow as a fully forgiven person who has been set free to live your life as a thank you to Jesus.

For those searching for ways to better connect with the others in your group, your pastor, and our other staff. Our desire is for you to celebrate how God has been generous to you with the gift of community by finding and deepening relationships here! We hope this time has been effective in connecting you to others here at Christ Lincoln.

And for those seeking membership, I want to welcome you with an invitation and a challenge, because that’s the kind of place we desire to be. A place of high invitation and high challenge is a place of true, deep discipleship. So first, I want to formally invite you into our spiritual family with joy and thanksgiving. I rejoice that you’re here! And now that you’re desiring to formalize your commitment through membership, I want to offer a healthy challenge. Membership is a covenant commitment to the other people of this community and to the God who is our head. A heartfelt desire that says, I’ll be generous with my dollars; I’ll be present to share my voice in congregational gatherings; I’ll show up regularly to worship; I’ll join a group so I can know and be known by others; and I’ll use my gifts to serve in the church and out in the community. I challenge you to partner with us in these ways, just as our existing membership is challenged to continue participating in the same manner.

Thank you for walking this path and I’m glad to be on this rescue mission with you, in Christ. Let’s, together, connect people to Christ and grow in his Word so that all may know Jesus!

With Gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Michael Eckelkamp

Pastor Michael Eckelkamp