Discovering Christ
Team Training Guide

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Discovering Christ Team Training Guide

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January 25, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Evangelization, as Pope Paul VI taught, is “the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize” (EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 14). These words, echoed and expanded by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, have set the Church on a vibrant course to re-propose the Gospel to the world.

Our parishes are the places in which the work of the New Evangelization - a work which belongs to all the baptized – first takes place. With so much being said about the New Evangelization, I am happy to recommend the work and ministry of ChristLife, a Catholic ministry of evangelization.

ChristLife was founded in 1995 and established as an apostolate by William Cardinal Keeler. ChristLife’s mission is to help the people of our day – those who fill our pews on Sundays and those who do not – to personally encounter Jesus Christ and follow Him as disciples and members of the Church. To this end, ChristLife has developed an evangelizing process of three DVD-based courses: “Discovering Christ,” “Following Christ”, and “Sharing Christ.”

I was happy to learn that parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore and in 40 other dioceses (in the United States, Canada, Australia, Slovakia and Nigeria) are using these courses with great fruitfulness. As a result, many people are encountering the joy of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord in parishes and other ministries.

With great joy, I recommend ChristLife to parishes and dioceses looking to respond to the Church’s urgent call to a New Evangelization.

Faithfully in Christ,

+William E. Lori
Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore
**Speaker Biographies**

**Rev. Erik Arnold** was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 1999 and serves as pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ellicott City, MD. He earned a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University and is ChristLife’s liaison to Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore. He is a speaker for the Discovering Christ, Following Christ, and Sharing Christ series. As a pastor he has run the ChristLife series in his parish multiple times with great fruitfulness.

**Pete Ascosi** is Assistant Director at ChristLife. He experienced a life-changing conversion that began during his senior year at Mt. St. Mary’s University in 2003. After working for two years in public policy research in Washington DC, he felt the call to full-time ministry and joined ChristLife in 2005. He recently completed his Master’s Degree from Notre Dame University of Maryland. His wife Ally is a speaker in the Following Christ course. Together they have been married for almost eight years and have four young children.

**Dianne Davis** serves as ChristLife’s NY Regional Director. Flowing from her deep love for our Lord, Dianne has embraced a life of evangelization and bringing others to a personal relationship with Jesus. She has supported ChristLife in the coordination of Discovering Christ at her parish, St. Martin de Porres in Poughkeepsie, NY; and has facilitated the expansion of ChristLife programs in over 25 parishes region-wide, serving over 2,600 participants since January 2010. As a trainer and presenter for ChristLife, she is one of the featured speakers on the Sharing Christ DVD series.

**Dave Nodar** is the founder and Director of ChristLife. He oversees all program activities and is a speaker at conferences in dioceses, parishes and other Catholic organizations in the USA, and internationally. He is a speaker for the Discovering Christ, Following Christ, and Sharing Christ series. He is the co-author of *Discover Christ* published by Our Sunday Visitor in 2011. His passion is to help others to know the love of God the Father in Jesus Christ through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

**Lisa Timm** is the Director of Faith Formation at Holy Trinity parish in Poughkeepsie, NY and a ChristLife Board member. In 2010, she ran the first Discovering Christ course in the Archdiocese of NY at her parish. Her parish hosted the Archdiocese of NY Discovering Christ Conference in July 2011 where she was part of the conference team as both a coordinator and speaker. Her greatest passion is to bring people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to assist in the promotion of the New Evangelization.
Talk 1: What is Discovering Christ and Why Does it Work?

Dave Nodar

1. ChristLife: An Evangelization Process
   a. Discovering Christ
   b. Following Christ
   c. Sharing Christ

2. The Goal of Discovering Christ
   “Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions for a personal encounter of individuals with Jesus Christ. The faith-encounter with the person of Jesus Christ is a relationship with him...”
   - Synod on the New Evangelization, Lineamenta, 11

3. Personal Encounter with Jesus
   “Faith is above all a personal, intimate encounter with Jesus, and to experience his closeness, his friendship, his love; only in this way does one learn to know him ever more, and to love and follow him ever more. May this happen to each one of us.”
   - Pope Benedict, October 21, 2009

4. Key Elements
   a. Community/Fellowship
   b. Prayer
   c. Teaching
   d. Personal Sharing

5. Growing, not manufacturing...
   a. Takes time to see: Grace
   b. Takes time to grow in trust: Relationships
   c. Takes time to reach a decision: Personal response
6. Involves the whole person
   a. Appeal to the mind
   b. Appeal to the heart
      
      "Evangelization must touch people's minds and hearts, stir their consciences and engage their energies."
      - Pope John Paul II, 1990

7. The Structure
   a. One session each week for seven weeks
   b. One-day retreat after session 5

8. Four parts to each session:
   c. Dinner
   d. Announcements, prayer & song
   e. DVD Teaching
   f. Small group discussion

9. Dinner

10. Song & Prayer

11. DVD Teaching
    1) What Is the Meaning of Life?
    2) Why Does Jesus Matter?
    3) What Does Jesus Want Us to Know?
    4) Why Do I Need a Savior?
    5) Why Is the Resurrection Important?
    6) Who Is the Holy Spirit? (retreat)
    7) The Holy Spirit and You! (retreat)
    8) New Life in the Spirit
    9) Our Need for the Church
12. Keep It Simple

“Within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself.”
- Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 20

13. Focus on the *kerygma*:

“Often those who are admitted to catechesis need, in fact, a true conversion. Thus the Church desires that ordinarily an initial stage in the catechetical process be devoted to ensuring conversion”

14. Small Group Discussion

15. Holy Spirit Retreat Day

16. “Making the Ask”

a. It’s not enough to present information about Christ – we need to create an environment where they desire to give their life completely to the Lord Jesus.

   “Conversion means accepting by personal decision the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciple.”

17. The Primacy of Grace

“In every activity of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God…. God has taken the first step and therefore we can boldly take the initiative to move forward, to seek the fallen away, to welcome the outcast, to share the Father’s mercy.”

18. Afterwards?

a. Following Christ
b. Sharing Christ
Talk 2: Preparing to Run a Fruitful Course

Dianne Davis

1. Begin with Prayer

   “Prayer does not prepare us for the important work; prayer is the important work.”
   - Oswald Chambers

2. Major first steps

   a. The pastor’s support

   b. Gather a core team, pray

   c. Set the dates for the course

   d. Reserve the facilities

   e. Information night

   f. Assemble a team

   g. Training day

3. Set course dates & location

   a. 7 consecutive weekly sessions

   b. Saturday retreat after session 5

   c. Info night & Training day

   d. Choosing a venue. Keep in mind:

      i. The need for a kitchen

      ii. Aesthetic appeal

      iii. Dinners and rooms for small group discussions

4. The How to Run the Course Manual

   a. Course overview

   b. Theological foundation

   c. Session Walkthrough

   d. Practicalities

   e. Assembling the team

   f. Job descriptions

   g. Resources
h. Timelines, schedules
   i. Links to online supplemental resources and handouts

5. Developing a Budget
   a. Training
      i. Leadership Conferences
      ii. Training Day
   b. Resources
      i. DVDs
      ii. Manuals
      iii. Digital license
   c. Promotion
      i. Signs
      ii. Invite cards and flyers
   d. Hospitality
      i. Signs
      ii. Name tags
      iii. Food & drink
      iv. Dinnerware, tablecloths, napkins, etc.
      v. Decorations

6. Assemble the team: key positions
   a. Main leader
   b. Overall administrator
   c. Evangelization coordinator
   d. Small group coordinator
   e. Hospitality coordinator
   f. Dinner coordinator

7. Example job description: Overall administrator
   a. Responsible for all aspects of setting up and running the course...
b. Qualifications:

   i. A spiritual mature Christian...possesses gifts of leadership...excellent
   ii. interpersonal skills
   iii. Specific responsibilities
   iv. Oversee the planning and running of the course
   v. Develop timelines

8. Example evening schedule

   5:00 Team arrives
   6:15 SGL meeting
   6:45 Dinner
   7:30 Welcome/Prayer
   7:45 DVD Teaching
   8:20 Dessert break
   8:30 Small group discussion
   9:15 End

9. Create a Welcoming Atmosphere

10. Items to order:

    a. For Session 6: The Word Among Us

       i. Order for free! As soon as you have the approximate number of guests, place your request.
       ii. Email: conferences@wau.org

    b. For the Retreat, and Sessions 6 and 7, purchase Discover Christ book

       i. Guests can purchase these during the retreat and final sessions.

11. How to run the course manual
Talk 3: Facilitating an Evangelizing Small Group

Lisa Timm

1. A Unique Small Group Experience
   
a. Types of People Attending:
      i. Faithful Christians
      ii. Nominal / inactive Christians
      iii. Non-religious
      iv. Other religions

2. Purpose of a DC Small Group
   
a. A personal encounter with God's love
   b. To come to know Jesus in the context of community
   c. Primarily about relationship

3. Small Groups
   
a. Consist of 8-10 people (including a facilitator and helper)

4. Roles: The Facilitator
   
a. Facilitate the discussion and create a welcoming atmosphere where guests feel comfortable exploring a personal relationship with Jesus.
   
b. Primary Responsibilities:
      i. Initiate the beginning and end of the session
      ii. Stimulate discussion about the teaching
      iii. Lead prayer

5. Roles: The Helper
   
a. Assist the facilitator through being an active and supportive participant while helping to create a welcoming atmosphere.
b. Primary Responsibilities:
   i. Personal attention to individuals
   ii. Help draw quiet people to speak
   iii. Help the discussion stay on course

6. Roles: The Small Group Coordinator
   a. To recruit, train, oversee, and encourage the small group facilitators and helpers.
   b. Primary Responsibilities:
      i. With the Overall Administrator select facilitators and helpers
      ii. Conduct weekly meeting prior to the beginning of each evening session
      iii. Being a point of contact, encourager, and intercessor for the facilitators and helpers
      iv. Assign registrants into small groups

7. Small Group Dynamics
   a. Dinner
   b. Worship
   c. Teaching
   d. Discussion

8. Dinner: A Critical element
   a. Be aware of others
   b. Show genuine interest
   c. No religious talk
   d. Families, work, hobbies
   e. Take initiative in caring for them
9. Worship
   a. Model this type of prayer for others
   b. Worship progresses over the course of time

10. Small Group Discussion
   a. Open with an icebreaker
   b. An interesting place you've traveled
   c. A unique fact about yourself
   d. Ground Rules

11. Discussion should be focused on the teaching
   a. Basic questions:
      i. “What do you think about...?”
      ii. “How do you feel about ...?”
   b. Questions that shift the focus to personal sharing
   c. Listen: people need to be heard
      i. Confidentiality
      ii. Hear their problems and concerns
      iii. Understand their point of view
   d. No fixing, counseling, preaching, or teaching
   e. End with a prayer
   f. End on time

12. Small Group Situations
   a. To start the group
   b. If someone dominates
   c. If group strays from the topic
   d. To draw out quiet members
13. Preparation

a. Attend all Weekly Prayer/Planning meetings

b. Time of sharing and encouraging one another

c. On-going Formation

d. Communal Prayer

e. Read Outline and Questions

f. Intercession!

14. The Fruit of Your Service

a. Changed Lives

b. Lasting Friendships

c. Deepening of your relationship with God

d. New-found courage to share the Good News
Sample Session: Discovering Christ Talk 1

What Is the Meaning of Life?

A. CONSIDERING THE MEANING OF LIFE
   1. Have you taken time to reflect on the meaning of your life?
   2. Life circumstances or world events can awaken us to the meaning of our existence.
      i. Subjective Warning Signs
      ii. Inevitability of Death

      “I get confused when I look around at the world and see everybody running around... Yet no one is trying to figure out what is the cause of death and what happens when you die? That to me is the only thing really of importance and the rest is all secondary.”

      GEORGE HARRISON, THE BEATLES

B. UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF LIFE
   1. We can’t fully understand what something is until we figure out why it exists.

      “There are only two ways “in which anything can come to be. Either it’s intentional or accidental: that is, either someone intended it or it merely chanced. The thing that is intentional has a purpose; accidents have no purpose. Humanity, like other things, must either be an accident and so purposeless, or else have been made with intent.”

      FRANK SHEED, A MAP OF LIFE

   2. We need a change in our worldview to understand the purpose of life.

C. GOD’S PURPOSE FOR YOU
   1. God created us for relationship with himself.

      “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

      JOHN 14:6

   2. We find our purpose in Jesus Christ.

      “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

      MATTHEW 7:7-8
Sample Session: Discovering Christ Talk 1

Discussion Questions

Getting to know one another:

Introduce one another.

*Example icebreaker: Introduce one another, share where each person is from, maybe their occupation, and an interesting/fun fact (e.g., travels, hobbies, talents, etc.).*

The purpose of discussion & ground rules

*Explain in your own words how we going to talk about the message we just heard. No pressure. Explain ground rules in your own words here.*

• Show respect for one another (no negative humor, criticism or judgment)
• Be courteous - only one person talking at a time
• No one is required to talk, but we would love to hear from everyone
• Be brief in your responses and allow time for everyone to share
• What is shared in the group, stays in the group!
• **AND** - There is no such thing as a dumb question!

Discussion Questions

1. What was a significant point from Dave's talk for you?
2. Imagine someone approached you on the street and asked, “What is the meaning of life?” How would you answer?
3. Why do you think people don't consider the purpose of their life?
4. Are there events in your life or in the world that have made you stop and consider the meaning of life? Do you know anyone who has made you think about the meaning of life?
5. What might make you change your answer to “What is the meaning of life?” How open are you to a renewed vision of the meaning of life?
6. Frank Sheed proposed there are only two ways in which anything can come to be: either it is intentional or accidental. Do you believe your life is accidental or an intentional creation? How does this impact your attitude towards life?
Talk 4: A New Pentecost for A New Evangelization

Fr. Erik Arnold

1. The Essential Role of the Holy Spirit

“How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervor, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction! Yet I realize that no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts.”
- Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, 261

2. Pentecost

a. We speak of Pentecost as the “Birthday of the Church”

i. We need to take this expression seriously.

3. The Holy Spirit was essential in the life and ministry of Jesus

“When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and behold, a voice from heaven saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”
- Matthew 3:16

“…The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who were oppressed.”
- Luke 4:18

a. His identity is affirmed: “This is my beloved Son"

b. He is loved by the Father (word and presence).

c. He is anointed for mission by the Holy Spirit. “He has anointed me to preach…”
- Luke 4:18
4. Why Would It Be Any Different for the Apostles?
   a. Even after three years living day in and day out with Jesus, his command is: Stay and wait for "the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1)

5. Why Would It Be Any Different for Us?
   "There can be no renewal in the Church without the Holy Spirit. There is no real deep renewal in our lives unless we open ourselves and let the Holy Spirit come into our lives. He wants to. He waits for us to open the door. I hope this day many of you will open the door to the Holy Spirit."
   - Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM, Preacher to the Papal Household

6. We must be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit
   "Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit."
   - Pope Paul VI

7. We need the anointing of the Holy Spirit
   a. The preparation for the Christian Mission:
      "While meeting with the apostles he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father about which you heard me speak; for John Baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
      - Acts 1:4-8

8. Jesus’ baptism helps us understand our own baptism
   "Everything that happened to Christ lets us know that, after the bath of water, the Holy Spirit swoops down upon us from high heaven and that, adopted by the Father’s voice, we become sons of God."
   - St. Hilary of Poitiers (CCC, 537)
9. Identity and Mission

a. We experience the love of God

“...And hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”
- Romans 5:5

b. Made members of His family

“But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God.”
- John 1:12

c. Sharers in the Mission

“To each individual the manifestation of the spirit is given for some benefit.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:7

10. Holy Spirit makes Jesus real for us

"The world is calling for evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves should know and be familiar with as if they could see the invisible.”
- Pope Paul VI

11. The importance of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of a Christian

a. Many baptized Christians do not know the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

b. Many lack a sense of identity and personal mission.

c. How can that be?

d. Each sacrament has an objective and a subjective part to it.

i. Objective: What God is doing...

ii. Subjective: What we are doing...

iii. This means that it is not enough for God alone to be at work – our own hearts must be disposed to what He is doing!
12. The Church knows we need moments to “choose again” the grace of the sacraments

“Is it not true that nearly all Christians prove unfaithful to the promises made to Jesus in baptism? Where does this universal failure come from, if not from man’s habitual forgetfulness of the promises and responsibilities of baptism and from the fact that scarcely anyone makes a personal ratification of the contract made with God through his sponsors?”
- St. Louis de Montfort, True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, 127

"Today I would like to extend this invitation to everyone: Let us rediscover, dear brothers and sisters, the beauty of being baptized in the Holy Spirit; let us be aware again of our baptism and of our confirmation, sources of grace that are always present.

13. Would you like to rediscover the beauty of being baptized in the Holy Spirit?

“Ask, Seek and Knock and … how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”
- Luke 11:5-13

a. Obstacles we may experience:

   i. Doubt - it won’t happen for me...
   ii. Fear - what will God do with me? I’ll lose control!
   iii. Unworthiness - I don’t deserve to receive...

14. What we are praying for:

   a. Commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord

   b. Renewal in the Holy Spirit

   c. The removal of any obstacle to our being ready to make such a commitment.
15. How we will pray:

a. Teams of two around the church or venue;

b. Preferably men pray with men, women pray with women, married couples with either

c. We pray as witnesses of their commitment and as brothers and sisters who have encountered the Lord and can support them in faith and love.

d. We ask if we can place our hands on their shoulders or arm

16. Prayer

_Lord God,_

_Please forgive me for all the things I have done wrong. I turn to You and turn away from sin._

_Jesus, please be the center of my life. I welcome You personally as the Lord and Savior of my life. I surrender everything to you._

_I ask you to fill me with the Holy Spirit, and empower me to truly live a new life._

_Praise and thank You, Lord. Amen!_
Talk 5: Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Making the Invite

Pete Ascosi

1. The Personal and Parish Invitation

2. Where Does Jesus Send Us?

“There are no borders, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.”
- Pope Francis, World Youth Day, 2013

3. Invite by The SoundTank

4. Principles

   a. Discovering Christ...
      i. Is for everyone
      ii. Takes us out of our comfort zone
      iii. Is evangelical by design
      iv. Provides a framework to shift from maintenance to mission
      v. Makes possible a paradigm shift

5. A Paradigm Shift is Needed

   a. For what percent of parishes is spreading the faith a high priority?
      i. Protestant congregations
      ii. African American congregations
      iii. Catholic congregations

6. The Personal Invitation

   a. The most effective method for evangelization
   b. Springs from the joy of a living relationship with Jesus Christ
   c. Intercessory prayer is essential
d. God asks for our cooperation

e. Did I mention it takes us out of our comfort zone?

f. Failure and faithfulness

g. Sustained by a community of evangelizers

7. The Parish Invitation

a. Assign someone to be the evangelization coordinator on your team

   i. Provide resources and reminders for the team to engage in personal invitations

   ii. Coordinate execution of parish invitation process

   iii. Develop an action plan tailored to your parish size and demographics that includes communications to:

- Entire parish community
- Ministry leaders
- Staff

8. Spreading the Word through the Parish

a. Homilies

b. Testimonies focused on life change not just promoting a program

c. Discovering Christ Invitation Video

d. Registration table

e. Flyers or postcards

f. Mailers to registered parishioners

g. and/or neighborhood

h. Web site and social media

9. Promotional Resources that are free

a. “Free resources” at christlife.org/discover
b. Logos, prayer cards, invite cards, flyers

c. Contact Pete for additional help: pete@christlife.org or 410-531-7701

10. Promotional Resources that have a cost

   a. Outreach.com

   b. Postcards, mailers

11. Websites

   a. Basic description of program

   b. Video

   c. Weekly Schedule

   d. Registration form

   e. Examples

      i. stlouisparish.org/discover

      ii. olpparish.org/dc

      iii. Google “Discovering Christ” and “Catholic”

12. Social Media

   a. Focus on using the social network(s) where your parish has an active presence

   b. Generate interest through periodic postings (text, images, videos) about the upcoming course
13. The Power of the Invitation

a. Changing lives

"The past seven weeks have been amazing. I feel so much closer to God, my prayer life has grown dramatically."

“This course helped me to open my heart to Jesus and ask him for forgiveness, strength and courage.”

b. Transforming parishes

“Our Catholic faith is more exciting, more vibrant, and more effective in inspiring and attracting others to encounter ... Christ.”

14. Invite 4 video by The SoundTank

15. Attracting People to Christ

“Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but ‘by attraction’.”
- Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, 15
About ChristLife

ChristLife equips Catholics for the essential work of evangelization so others might personally encounter Jesus Christ and be transformed into His missionary disciples. Our ministry partners with parishes, priests, religious and lay leaders who are seeking to answer the Church’s call for the New Evangelization through a proven method of parish evangelization and outreach.

ChristLife Series

The ChristLife series is a 3-step evangelization process that is changing lives and transforming parishes. The series consists of three essential elements: discover, follow, and share.

Discovering Christ

Discovering Christ is a seven-week experience that invites guests to hear the Good News and personally encounter Jesus Christ. A typical session includes a meal, video teaching, and small group discussion. A day retreat follows the fifth session. Learn more at http://christlife.org/discover

Following Christ

Following Christ is a seven-week journey that builds upon Discovering Christ and invites those who have encountered Jesus Christ to follow him as Catholic disciples. A typical session includes prayer and worship, video teaching, and small group discussion. A day retreat follows the fifth session. Learn more at http://christlife.org/follow

Sharing Christ

Sharing Christ is a seven-week mission that trains Catholics to share Jesus Christ with others and invite them to be part of the Church. A typical session includes prayer and worship, video teaching, and small group discussion. A day retreat ends the course as the seventh session. Learn more at http://christlife.org/share

Connect With Us

To learn more, visit us online at http://christlife.org

Connect with us on social media at: