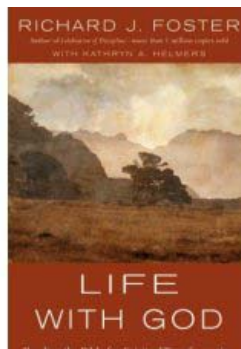


# CIRCLE OF CARE GUIDE



# Life With God Study

Week of July 5, 2009

## Growing in Grace on the Journey Inward, Together and Outward

Circles of CARE are the primary way of being church at Crossroads. This is a place where we are transformed as we intentionally present ourselves to God and one another to grow in grace and love in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and to serve our family, community, and world.

### The Journey Inward

Circle participants are growing in grace through our daily inward journey as we seek to grow in our relationship with God through listening, prayer, scripture, self-examination, and meditation. The inward journey prepares us for the journey together with our Circle of CARE. It is through the Journey Inward and Together that we live the Journey Outward in our homes, community, and world and listen for God's ever deepening Call.

### The Journey Together

#### Gathering & Centering "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

**Life With God** – Throughout this summer we will be studying from Richard Foster's book, Life With God. As a way to prepare for Circle each week during your gathering time please select one of the following options:

Option 1: Please choose a mediation found on the Centering DVD. At the conclusion of the meditation please take a few minutes of silence and close with a spoken prayer. Centering DVDs can be picked up in the church front office.

Option 2:

**Centering Leader:** Take a few deep breaths to center yourself as we journey inward during this time of meditation, silence, and reflection. Read the scripture below. Come back and read it again and see what words or phrases seem to be speaking to you. Underline those words/phrases. Come back to the scripture for a third time and read it again slowly. I will close the silence with a spoken "Amen." (*Give the Circle about three minutes to do this exercise.*)

#### John 2:1-8 (New Living Translation)

<sup>1</sup> The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, <sup>2</sup> and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. <sup>3</sup> The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." <sup>4</sup> "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." <sup>5</sup> But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." <sup>6</sup> Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, <sup>8</sup> he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

**Centering Leader:** Each of you is invited to share what words or phrases that stood out to you in this text. The rest of the Circle will receive what each person shares with no comment. This is a time to listen for what the Holy Spirit is bringing alive in the Scripture while in community.

**Please read Life With God: Chapter 3 before coming to Circle**

Life With God can be purchased via Amazon.com by clicking on the icon found on our church's homepage – [www.ecrossroadsumc.org](http://www.ecrossroadsumc.org) Next week we will be reading Chapter 4.

**Reflection:** *“All scripture is given by God and is useful to teach us what is true and help us realize what is wrong in our lives...God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”* 2 Timothy 3:16

Leader – Think through all on your own and select at least two for group discussion.

1. God has made it clear to us that we have the freedom to choose life with God. In what ways do you choose to live a with-God life? Name some of the ways you may be choosing to live against the with-God life. Are you willing to have your Circle friends pray about changing one of these against-God ways?
2. Read John 14: 1-7; Have you ever felt you simply did not have the ability to trust God?
3. Take turns reading slowly the “I AM” statements on pages 50-51. Does any one of these statements speak to you in a way that may strengthen your desire to trust Jesus with all your heart?
4. Foster lists multiple scriptures that tell us God is with us always. Chapter 3 ends with the question, “will you be with God.” Write down one or two new ways that you plan to be with-God this week.

**Accountability** - *“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”* James 5:16

Please take a moment to consider the following accountability questions and provide an opportunity for individuals to respond if they so desire.

1. Are you aware of resisting God’s presence and guidance in any relationships or decisions you are facing?
2. Is there a temptation (power, prestige, possession, other) that you are struggling with and want to bring to the Circle?
3. Is there something specific for which you desire to be held accountable by the Circle?

**The Prayer for One Another** *“Stay alert and persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.”* Ephesians 6:18

During this time, the Circle members should share their individual concerns, struggles and praises, and then ask the group to pray for them during the coming week. Designate one member to write down the prayer requests and then distribute them to the group by e-mail the next day.

1. Share a word of gratitude for an experience of God’s grace this week.
2. Share a prayer request for yourself and other concerns you may have.

## **NEW MODEL FOR PRAYER REQUESTS**

**Crossroads Church Family Prayer Requests** *“Pray in the spirit at all times and on every occasion.”* Ephesians 6:18

**Prayer Leader:** (Please pray out loud this prayer or your own spontaneous prayer)

Lord, Jesus, we remember that you call us to pray together for the needs of our local community and neighborhood. Hear our prayers as we speak them to you (Ask the Circle to share any prayer concerns they may have.)

Lord, Jesus, we remember our broken world. We pray for peace, reconciliation and hearts to turn to you and be healed. We lift these world concerns to you from our hearts. (Ask the Circle to lift up concerns around the world.)

Lord, hear us now as we join our individual voices as one and pray the prayer you taught. (Invite the Circle to pray the Lord’s Prayer together.) Amen.

## **Journey Outward**

*“Let your good deeds shine for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”* Matthew 5:16

The journey outward reflects our desire to become Jesus’ presence in our family, community and world. It is part of our sacred rhythm and important to spiritual growth as is the journey inward (loving God and ourselves) and together (loving our neighbor).

- Spanish as a Second Language is a wonderful opportunity to have an immersion experience in learning basic Spanish. It is sponsored by Crossroads Latino and begins this week on July 7 and ends on July 30. For more information email Freddy Arce at [farcep@msn.com](mailto:farcep@msn.com).
- Please remember our homeless friends at Franklin Square with food and presence during the summer. You may sign-up via email: [foodandfellowship@ecrossroadsumc.org](mailto:foodandfellowship@ecrossroadsumc.org) or on the board in the front hallway of the church.
- Grace Ministry will be collecting food and clothing on Friday, July 17th for distribution on Saturday, July 18th. Check with your neighbors who are having yard sales to see if you can pick up some summer clothes for children and store them in your home until July 17th.
- Please pray for our Uganda Team as they are at HUMBLE School with the children and building a perimeter security fence. You can follow up with them each day by going to our Uganda Mission Team blog at <http://crossroadsugandamission.blogspot.com/> (You can also get there from our home page on our website) The team will return on July 12.