

NAZARENE ESSENTIALS

S M A L L G R O U P

A 13 - W E E K S T U D Y O N W H O W E
A R E A N D W H A T W E B E L I E V E

PARTICIPANT'S HANDOUT

Writers

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PARTICIPANT'S HANDOUT

SESSION 1:

WELCOME TO NAZARENE ESSENTIALS

The Seven Characteristics of the Church of the Nazarene

1. *Meaningful Worship*
2. *Theological Coherence*
3. *Passionate Evangelism*
4. *Intentional Discipleship*
5. *Church Development*
6. *Transformational Leadership*
7. *Purposeful Compassion*

Wrap Up

In the space below, write down any questions you have about the Church of the Nazarene that you hope are answered through this study.

OUR WESLEYAN-HOLINESS HERITAGE

The Apostles' Creed

*I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Wrap Up

Matthew 22:34-40

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

How is the "Greatest Commandment" and the call to holiness impossible to separate from one another?

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SESSION 3:

OUR CORE VALUES

Everyone has core values, values on which they base their decisions and lifestyle. What are your personal core values—what expresses your life mission? List your top three in the space provided.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We Are A _____ People

Ephesians 4:3-5

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 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."

We Are A _____ People

Leviticus 11:44

"I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy."

We Are A _____ People

Matthew 28:19-20

"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."

2 Corinthians 6:1

"As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain."

Wrap Up

After discussing the three core values of the Church of the Nazarene, which core value stood out to you the most?

Why do you think the Church of the Nazarene emphasizes these three core values?

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SESSION 4:

MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

In our fast-paced lives, it is important for us to intentionally take the time for personal worship experiences.

What does your personal time with God look like?

What are ways you can carve out time to experience personal encounters with God?

Wrap Up

After discussing the different aspects of meaningful worship, which aspect could you work to improve?

Is there an area of worship you feel needs more attention in your own life?

THEOLOGICAL COHERENCE

In our pursuit of theological coherence, the Church of the Nazarene looks to four main sources.

Scripture: We believe the holy scriptures are foundational and vital in forming our identity in Christ.

Christian tradition: We celebrate the orthodox teachings of 2,000 years of history through various Christian traditions.

Reason: We believe the Spirit of God works through our intellects and gives us discerning minds.

Personal experience: We believe God works in and through the lives of individuals and communities who follow Christ.



The Church of the Nazarene believes that there are four essential aspects to the Christian life:

Christlikeness—being transformed daily into the image of Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit as we make ourselves available to God’s work in us. “Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind” (Philippians 2:1).

Lifestyle—being set apart for holy purposes to do God’s work in our world. “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:15-17).

Temptation and Power to Choose—having the ability to not surrender to addictions or suggestions of the flesh or the evil one but power from God to live the holy life. “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 1:18-20).

Fruit of the Spirit—the perfect love of God that manifests itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).

Wrap Up

Use the space below to write a prayer to God, articulating the ways that you would like to see God work in and through you.

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SESSION 6:

PASSIONATE EVANGELISM

Matthew 9:36-38

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"

Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

Wrap Up

Passionate evangelism propels us to knowing Christ more completely: It conveys who we are, our lifestyle. Our passion for life is no greater than our passion for evangelism. **By choosing to live we choose to evangelize.**

—Excerpt from *Nazarene Essentials*

Have you ever thought of evangelism so closely intertwined with your every day life before?

How does this change the way you think and act?

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SESSION 7:

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

What is discipleship?

There are many ways you can grow spiritually. Below are a few examples of ways to carve out time from your busy life and create space with God.

- Read the Bible with study helps; listen to the Bible on audio files.
- Pray daily.
- Listen to Christian music.
- Read Christian literature.
- Find an accountability partner who will pray every day that you will be Christlike.
- Find an accountability partner who loves you so much they will ask you hard questions.
- Develop the discipline of regularly telling others what God is doing in your life.

What do you do to spend time with God?

Wrap Up

“Prayer, the Word of God, and intentionally helping each other to be more like Jesus characterize dynamic discipleship in the church.”

Do you agree with this statement? Do you think these are the three main elements needed in intentional discipleship?

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SESSION 8:

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

What two or three attributes do you believe are absolutely essential for a local church to possess?

"In the Church of the Nazarene, our definition of a church reads: Any group that meets regularly for spiritual nurture, worship, or instruction at an announced time and place with an identified leader, and aligned with the message and mission of the Church of the Nazarene may be recognized as a church and reported as such for district and general church statistics. In other words, a church is a cluster of believers, not a building or a property."—Excerpt from *Nazarene Essentials*

Wrap Up

How could God use you and your church to be an extension of His hands, feet, and voice in the world?

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SESSION 9:

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Who is someone you would consider an effective leader?

What qualities make him/her an effective leader?

Eight Characteristics of Transformational Leadership

- humble and submissive
- servants
- visionary
- strategic thinkers
- team builders
- compassionately assertive
- clear communicators
- empowering the next generation to lead & build the kingdom

Mark 10:45

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 10:16

"...be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

Wrap Up

What are one or two attributes and characteristics that were mentioned in this session that you believe you could work on?

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SESSION 10:

PURPOSEFUL COMPASSION

Jesus' life, ministry, death, is our model for compassion. ***How did Jesus' time here on earth show us how to live compassionately?***

Jesus' Life

Jesus' Ministry

Jesus' Death

Wrap Up

How can both the church and we, as individuals, respond to those in need in our community? In the columns below, write down ways you can show compassion to the examples listed.

Church

Individual

Someone who is unemployed

A single mother

Someone asking for guidance

Someone in the hospital

Someone recently released from jail

A homeless person

Someone who has gossiped about you or hurt your feelings

OUR WESLEYAN THEOLOGY

Imagine you have met someone who is completely unfamiliar with the Christian faith and they ask you, "What are the one or two most important and foundational teachings in all of Christianity?" **How would you respond to their question?**

2 Corinthians 5:17-18a

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone the new has come! All this is from God..."

The Church of the Nazarene has 16 Articles of Faith that express what we believe about God, the Scriptures, salvation, the Church, and the end times. These articles help define the theological framework that the Church of the Nazarene affirms.

The 16 Articles of Faith:

- 1 *The Triune God*
- 2 *Jesus Christ*
- 3 *The Holy Spirit*
- 4 *The Holy Scriptures*
- 5 *Sin, Original and Personal*
- 6 *Atonement*
- 7 *Prevenient Grace*
- 8 *Repentance*
- 9 *Justification, Regeneration, Adoption*
- 10 *Christian Holiness & Entire Sanctification*
- 11 *The Church*
- 12 *Baptism*
- 13 *The Lord's Supper*
- 14 *Divine Healing*
- 15 *Second Coming of Christ*
- 16 *Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny*

Wrap Up

In today's world, there are many distractions and barriers when it comes to being a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ. **What do you believe are some of these distractions and barriers? How can Christians ensure that they don't get caught up in them?**

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SESSION 12:

OUR CHURCH

The Local Church

Our primary mission is “to make Christlike disciples in the nations,” to incorporate believers into fellowship and membership (congregations), and to equip all who respond in faith.

It is in the local church that the saving, perfecting, teaching, and commissioning of believers takes place. The local church, the Body of Christ, is the representation of our faith and mission.

The District Church

Local churches are grouped administratively into districts and regions. A district is an entity made up of interdependent local churches organized to facilitate the mission of each local church through mutual support, the sharing of resources, and collaboration. The district church is organized for missional purposes and meets annually as the district assembly.

The district assembly elects the district superintendent, whose responsibility is to nurture the churches and pastors, plant new churches, and nourish the health of the district.

The General Church

The bases of unity in the Church of the Nazarene are those beliefs, polity, definitions, and procedures as articulated in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene.

The core of this unity is declared in the Articles of Faith of the *Manual*. We encourage the church in all regions and languages to translate—widely distribute—and teach these beliefs to our constituency. This is the golden strand that is woven into the fabric of all we are and do as Nazarenes.

A visible reflection of this unity is represented by the General Assembly, which is the “supreme doctrine-formulating, lawmaking, and elective authority of the Church of the Nazarene” (Manual 300). Meeting every four years, General assembly decisions are binding on the whole church and all of its parts.

A second reflection is the international General Board, which represents the entire church. The General board is composed of equal numbers of laity and clergy. It meets annually and elects the church’s general officers and departmental directors. It also reviews the policies, budgets, and operations of the church’s general ministries.

A third reflection is the Board of General Superintendents, who may interpret the *Manual*, approve cultural adaptations, and ordain to the ministry. The General Assembly elects general superintendents. They serve from one General Assembly to the next and must be re-elected at each assembly. Every General Superintendent is assigned a list of districts and is responsible for conducting the annual district assemblies and ordaining new ministers within his/her area of district responsibility.

Wrap Up

The church is more than connected. It is interconnected. The ties that bind us are stronger than a single cord that can be cut at any given time.

What is the source of our common bond? It is Jesus Christ.

What does the word interconnected mean to you?

Why is it so crucial for our common bond to be Jesus Christ?

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SESSION 13:

OUR GLOBAL FAMILY

In one sentence, what do you believe ought to be the central mission of the Christian Church throughout the world?'

What one or two things must the Church do to help fulfill its mission of "making Christlike disciples in the nations"?

How might the actual work of fulfilling the mission look different depending on the location or country that the ministry is taking place?

Wrap Up

How might God want to specifically use your local church to help fulfill the mission of "making Christlike disciples in the nations"?

