



## Gathering Guide Materials

# C.H.R.I.S.T Discipleship Path Tour

### WEEK 1 – September 21-27

***The Discipleship Path is a roadmap for deepening your relationship with Christ.***

**Begin your group meeting with an Opening Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father – Thank you for the small group that You have brought into my life. As we meet today, open our hearts and minds to truly see your Word and hear your Voice in the weekend's readings. As we reflect together, may we listen with compassion and grace to the thoughts and feelings that are shared by our friends. Fill us with the Holy Spirit, and guide us on this Discipleship Path as we live Your word each day. Amen.*

**VIEW THIS WEEK'S VIDEOS ON YOUR PARISH TOUR HOME PAGE**

**ST. JOHN VIANNEY**

**ST. MARY CHURCH**

**CLICK HERE TO VIEW THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS**

## **C is for COMMUNITY**

**Community is such an important place to start** when we embark on a Spiritual Journey, a journey of faith. This is because, so often, we are inspired to take this journey by another person: in many cases it is a parent, in other cases, our faith may be inspired or rekindled by another person. And once we are on that journey, being in community gives us a place to belong, to love and be loved, to test our thoughts and feelings, to grow closer to God by exploring His love and His Word together ... becoming a true, responsible family in which we celebrate our joys and share our burdens.

This week's readings emphasize the importance of community by highlighting our responsibilities to care for the poor and to act justly, with honesty and integrity in our relationships. They remind us that our actions should reflect God's love and mercy, fostering a supportive and just community for all.

In the **first reading, psalm and alleluia**, the importance of caring for those among us who are poor or suffering is emphasized, even reminding us that Jesus' poverty enables us to become "rich". This, too, is an element of being part of community: we must care for each other, sometimes sacrificing something of our own in order to aid others in need.

In the **second reading**, we are instructed to pray for each other. This is such an important element of being part of a community: we pray for each other ... and we feel the prayers of others, especially when we are suffering. And, as we learned at our retreat, we never pray alone, even when we are by ourselves: as a part of a community, we are part of a **Symphony of Prayers**.

Finally, in our **Gospel**, we see that not only must we be trustworthy with our own blessings, we must be trustworthy with other's blessings. Being in community makes us look beyond ourselves to others!

# A Disciple Knows Jesus...Through Community

*We are all disciples, followers of Jesus, always learning from Him. And a disciple knows Jesus through Community.*

We know Jesus through community by engaging with others who share our faith, helping us to grow in our love and understanding of God and each other. This communal experience allows us to reflect Christ's teachings and support one another in our spiritual journeys.

Jesus lived in community during His entire life on earth. He created community with His apostles and disciples. They ate, drank, talked, learned, laughed and fished together. They accompanied each other in their joys and their sorrows. In fact, Galatians 6:2 tells us, ***“Bear one another’s burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*** Jesus showed us that the Christian Way is a life of community in which we glorify God and grow closer to Him together. As Psalm 133:1 tells us, ***“How good and how pleasant it is, when God’s children dwell together as one!”***

In community, we are pleasing to God by loving each other; we help each other grow spiritually; we lighten each other’s burdens; we heighten each other’s joys; and, together, we discern our purpose in life as children of God. We belong to each other through and in Jesus.

## Questions for Consideration and Dialog

- How would you describe “community”?
- How do the lessons on community from this week’s readings surprise you? Challenge you?
- What joys do you *experience* from community?
- What joys do you *give* to others in community?
- How authentic are you in community? Can you be your true self without any pretense or false fronts?
  - If not, how can you evolve into being your true self, especially in your small group?
  - What can you do to help others feel confident in being their true selves?

## Action You Can Take

Hebrews 10:24-25 instructs us: ***“We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another...”***

Clearly, being in community means we have responsibilities to each other. There’s something powerful about coming together with other, helping each other become their best selves, making each other accountable, witnessing one another’s lives and accompanying each other through the highs and lows. We need people checking in on us, asking the hard questions, and continually reminding us to live our faith. Proverbs 27:17 inspires us that, just as ***“iron is sharpened by iron, one person sharpens another.”***

Being in a small group gives us confidence to live as Jesus did, reaching out to others and inviting them into a relationship with Him and each other.

Acts 2:42 describes for us how the early Christians lived in community ... and how we, too, can live: ***“They devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.”***

## **Here are ideas for you as you seek to find Jesus in Community:**

### **PRAY**

- Thank God for the church community of which you are a part.
- Pray for the priests and leaders in your community.

### **ACT**

- Bring non-perishable food items to Mass to help support our local communities. Look for the collection basket in the church to benefit St. Vincent de Paul at St. Mary and Loaves and Fishes at St. John Vianney.
- Attend Sunday Hospitality & introduce yourself to someone new.

### **INSPIRE**

- Smile at someone and ask how you can pray for them.
- Find a way to be part of your parish community. Ask a minister about their experience.

#### **Close your group meeting with:**

- **Intersessions for the Group:** Take some time to pray together for the group members.
- And a **Closing Prayer** of your choosing.