

**DISCOVERING
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
AT
CURWENSVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

SESSION 3

**Curwensville Christian Church
700 State Street
Curwensville, PA 16833**

WELCOME TO DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about Curwensville Christian Church! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have individuals from many different church backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain who and what our church is.

THE BASICS FOR THIS CLASS

"...You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Eph. 2:19 (LB)

Key Truths:

1. The church is _____.
2. God expects you to be _____ of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is _____.

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS

...That I will commit myself to _____ and to _____

WHAT MAKES CCC A FAMILY?

Four things unite us:

- _____ (What Jesus Christ has done for us)
- _____ (Why we exist as a church)
- _____ (How we fulfill our purpose)
- _____ (When and where we fulfill our purpose)

Our Salvation

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26-28 (NKJV)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing “WHY?” They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God’s purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, “What is the meaning of life?”

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways:

...Some look for happiness by _____.

...Some look for happiness by _____.

...Some look for happiness by _____.

But real happiness comes from understanding my _____.

I. WHY AM I HERE?

1. GOD MADE ME TO _____!

God says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love!” Jer. 31:3

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,” Ephesians 1:4-5

2. WE WERE CREATED TO _____ A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND TO _____ ALL OF THE REST OF GOD’S CREATION! THIS MAKES US SPECIAL!

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on

the earth.” Genesis 1:27-28

“... but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” 1 Timothy 6:17

“...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10

3. WHEN WE _____, AND LIVE IN HARMONY WITH HIS PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES, IT PRODUCES TREMENDOUS BENEFITS IN OUR LIVES:

Clear Conscience
Rom. 8:1

Life & Peace
Rom. 8:6

Help with Weakness
Rom. 8:26

Purpose
Rom. 8:28

Confidence
Rom. 8:31

Security
Rom. 8:39

Power & Strength
Phil. 4:13

Fulfillment
Phil. 4:19

Freedom
John 8:32,36

II. WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

Man has a natural desire to BE THE BOSS and to ignore God’s principles for living.

*“Look out for #1. Do your own thing.”
“If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it.”
“It’s my life and I’ll do what I please!”*

THE BIBLE CALLS THIS ATTITUDE: _____

“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way” Isaiah 53:6

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.” Isaiah 59:2

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives — marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD.

“ There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” Proverbs 16:25

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

- “My mother was a Christian so...”
- “It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”
- “I’ll give up all my bad habits.”
- “I’ll work real hard and earn it.”
- “I’ll be religious and go to church.”

III. WHAT’S THE SOLUTION?

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a Person!

JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM!

“The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 6:23

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

“God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8

“God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.” 1 Tim. 2:5

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

IV. WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

1. _____ **THAT GOD HAS NOT BEEN FIRST PLACE IN YOUR LIFE AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS.**

*“If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9*

2. _____ **THAT JESUS DIED TO PAY FOR YOUR SINS AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN ON EASTER, AND IS ALIVE TODAY.**

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from

the dead, you will be saved". Romans 10:9

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

3. _____ GOD'S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION. DON'T TRY TO EARN IT.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

4. _____ JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE AND BE THE LORD OF YOUR LIFE.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

John 1:12-13

YOU CAN TAKE THESE STEPS BY PRAYING A SIMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD:

"Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I'm sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian."

"Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

I. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

1. TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET BY _____.

"It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan." Mark 1:9

2. BECAUSE CHRIST _____ IT.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

3. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT I REALLY AM A _____

“... And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.” Acts 18:8

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” 1 John 2:3

II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

1. IT ILLUSTRATES CHRIST'S _____

“buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead”. Colossians 2:12

2. IT ILLUSTRATES MY _____ AS A CHRISTIAN.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Baptism doesn't make you a believer — it shows that **you already believe**. Baptism does not “save” you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring — it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

III. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

BECAUSE _____ WAS BAPTIZED THAT WAY.

“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water...” Matthew 3:16

EVERY BAPTISM IN THE _____ WAS BY IMMERSION.

“... And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water...” Acts 8:38-39

THE WORD “BAPTIZE” MEANS TO _____ WATER”.

The Greek word *baptizo* means, “to immerse or dip under water”.

IT BEST SYMBOLIZES A _____!

The founders of denominations agree:

Martin Luther...“I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin...“The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

John Wesley...“Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

EVERY PERSON WHO HAS _____ IN CHRIST.

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized...” Acts 2:41

At CCC, we wait until our children are old enough to **believe** and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

Some churches practice a “*baptism of confirmation*” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. **This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible**, which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ.

At CCC, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though many of us were “confirmed” as children.

V. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized...” Acts 2:41

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect”, you’ll never feel “good enough”!

CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a *personal* statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them, and delays *your* obedience.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR WHEN I AM BAPTIZED?

Women should wear shorts and a top rather than a swimsuit. Men may wear a swimsuit and a top. Bring a change of clothes, a towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER

The difference between “*attenders*” and “*members*” can be summed up in one word: _____

At CCC we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons:

**I. A BIBLICAL REASON:
CHRIST IS _____**

“... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” Ephesians 5:25

**II. A CULTURAL REASON:
IT IS AN ANTIDOTE TO _____**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers”. Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

**III. A PRACTICAL REASON:
IT DEFINES WHO CAN _____**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

**IV. A PERSONAL REASON:
IT PRODUCES _____**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

At CCC we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.