



STARTING POINT

CHRIST'S CHURCH OF THE VALLEY





WELCOME TO STARTING POINT

We're excited that you have chosen to discover more about Christ's Church of the Valley (CCV), and we hope that our time together will be informational and fun.

Starting Point is a basic introduction to Jesus Christ and to our church family, during which we will cover our strategy, what we believe and our structure. Since we have people join us from many different backgrounds and church persuasions, this class is designed to clearly explain the ministry of CCV and lay the foundation for you to become an active member of CCV.

WHAT MAKES CCV A FAMILY?

Three things unite us:

1. CCV Statements: What it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. CCV Strategy: Why we exist. Our purpose, mission and vision.
3. CCV Structure: Leadership structure and what it means to be a member of CCV.

TWO MAIN GOALS OF STARTING POINT:

That you will commit yourself to **Jesus Christ** and to **His Church**.

SESSION 01: CCV STATEMENTS

Understand that God has a **plan** for your life.

God wants your life to have meaning and purpose.

"I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."

John 10:10 (MSG)



WAYS WE PURSUE HAPPINESS:

- ▶ Some look for happiness by experiencing pleasure.
- ▶ Some look for happiness by acquiring possessions.
- ▶ Some look for happiness by gaining prestige and power.
- ▶ Some think they'll be happy by helping as many people as they can.

THE BAD NEWS:

We have caused a PROBLEM.

We all have a desire to be our own **boss** in our lives, even if that means ignoring God's principles for living.

Some excuses people might have:

"It's my life and I'll do what I please."

"If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it."

"Look out for #1. Do your own thing."

The Bible calls this attitude: **sin**.

The word "**sin**" in the Bible means:

- ▶ To miss the **MARK**.
- ▶ To step over the **LINE**.
- ▶ To do what you should not **DO**.
- ▶ To fail to do what you **SHOULD** do.

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."

Romans 3:23 (NLT)

"As the Scriptures say, 'No one is righteous - not even one.'"

Romans 3:10 (NLT)

"The wages of sin is death..."

Romans 6:23 (NIV)

The word "death" in the Bible means "**separation**."

"Your sins have cut you off from God."

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

The **amount** of your sin doesn't matter.

"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

James 2:10 (NIV)

God is perfect, without any sin. To spend any time with God, let alone eternity, we can't have any sin in our life.



THE GOOD NEWS

God provided a **solution** so I could be forgiven of my sin!
That SOLUTION is **Jesus**.

Why did Jesus have to die?

"Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (of sin)."

Hebrews 9:22 (NIV)

In the beginning God ordained that **BLOOD** would be His divine instrument of forgiveness.

WHY JESUS?

He is the only person to live a **perfect** life.

"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin."

Hebrews 4:15 (NLT)

"When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done."

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

Jesus is the only **way** for us to be forgiven and reconnected to God!

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

John 14:6 (ESV)

WHO IS JESUS?

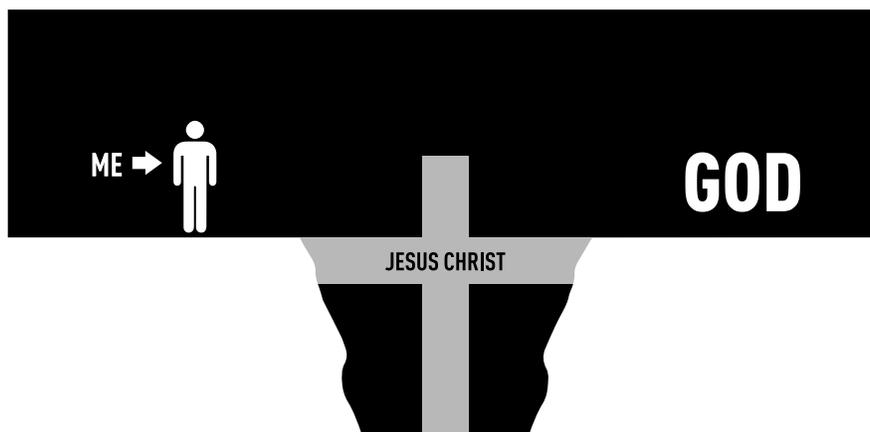
What you must DECIDE about Jesus:

▶ **Liar**

▶ **Lunatic**

▶ **Lord**

So the only thing left to do is either accept or reject what God has done for us through Jesus. God gives us a choice - He doesn't force this on us.



“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 (NIV)

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.

Now you must personally receive God’s payment for your sin.

HOW DO I RECEIVE GOD’S PAYMENT FOR MY SIN?

Even though we know we need God, many people often try wrong ways to get His gift of forgiveness:

“My mother was a Christian so . . . “

“I will give up all my bad habits.”

“I’ll work really hard and earn it.”

“I’ll be religious and go to church.”

You could never do enough to EARN salvation.

Neither could you ever be good enough to DESERVE salvation.

God’s gift of forgiveness through Jesus is an act of **grace**.

Grace = unmerited **favor**.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

HOW DO I COMMIT MY LIFE TO JESUS CHRIST AND RECEIVE FORGIVENESS?

► **Believe**

“ . . . and believe in your heart that God raised [Jesus] from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 10:9 (NIV)

“Do I hear you professing to believe in the one and only God, but then observe you complacently sitting back as if you had done something wonderful? That’s just great. Demons do that, but what good does it do them?”

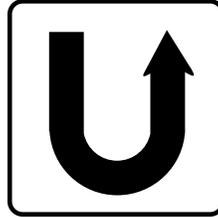
James 2:19 (MSG)

► **Repent**

“Peter replied, ‘Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Acts 2:38 (NLT)

The word means “to make a U-turn or about face”.



We need to tell God we are sorry for living life our own way (sin), not according to his plan, and we want to change!

“Now it’s time to change your ways! Turn to face God so he can wipe away your sins, pour out showers of blessing to refresh you ...”

Acts 3:19 (MSG)

► **Confess**

Confess to God that you believe in Jesus and you believe He can forgive you.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

► **Baptism**

Why should you be baptized?

Baptism is a living picture of what Jesus did for you and me. When you are baptized, you go under the water symbolizing Jesus’ death and burial and you are raised up out of the water symbolizing Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Jesus commanded us to be baptized when we decide to follow him.

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

A SIMPLE PRAYER YOU CAN PRAY AS A DECISION TO FOLLOW JESUS:

“Dear God, I realize I need You in my life and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask You to forgive me. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me. 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 grow now as a Christian.”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM:

Q: WHEN SHOULD I GET BAPTIZED?

As soon as you believe, repent and confess, you should make plans for baptism.

Q: WHAT IF I WAS BAPTIZED AT ANOTHER CHURCH?

As long as you were baptized by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ, it is not a requirement that you be re-baptized at CCV. (Your baptism was to Christ and not to a church). However, we ask that every member repent of sin, confess Jesus as Lord and Savior and be baptized by immersion as the New Testament directs.

Q: CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism and each one has believed and repented, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUNGER CHILDREN WHO HAVEN'T BEEN TO STARTING POINT?

At CCV, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the meaning of repentance and confession before we baptize them. Young children who wish to be baptized are asked to complete our "Starting Point for Kids" class. Your class host has the information on the next class or you can register at the Info Center or online.

Q: WHAT ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM?

Some churches practice infant baptism by sprinkling. The ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his or her own personal decision. At that time the child is confirmed. This custom began several hundred years after the Bible was completed. This is different than the baptism talked about in the Bible, which was only for those old enough to believe, repent, and confess Jesus personally.

At CCV, it is a membership requirement that every member be baptized by immersion even though they might have been "sprinkled" as an infant and/or "confirmed" as a child.

Q: WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

1. Because Jesus was baptized that way.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.”

Matthew 3:16 (NIV)

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

2. Because Jesus demonstrated and commanded it.

“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.”

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

Q: WHAT SHOULD I WEAR WHEN I AM BAPTIZED?

It is appropriate for most people to wear shorts and a T-shirt. Bring a change of clothes, towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. After your baptism, leaders of the church will be present to pray with you. This is a celebration! We encourage you to invite your friends and relatives to attend.

SESSION 02: CCV STRATEGY

“... I (Paul) have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel.”

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 (NIV)

Successful churches vary in methods and programs. Some attribute their growth to biblical preaching, others say they grow because of their small groups and some will point to their relevant services as the reason they are growing.

Still, all successful churches have two things in common:

A clear sense of purpose.

A strategy for accomplishing their purpose.

In other words, they have correctly answered two basic questions:

▶ **WHY** DO WE EXIST?

▶ **HOW** ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?

Our purpose and strategy become the rationale for everything we do.

WHAT KEEPS US UNITED?

We believe unity in a Church is of the utmost importance. We live by this statement: In essentials **UNITY**, in non-essentials **LIBERTY** and in all things **LOVE**.

1. IN ESSENTIALS WE PRACTICE UNITY.

WHAT ARE ESSENTIALS?

Core Beliefs that make a difference in going to heaven or not.

“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; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV)

Examples: God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible and Salvation. (Listed in Appendix)

As a member of CCV, we ask that you be united with the church on these core beliefs. They are not things to argue about or divide over.

2. IN NON-ESSENTIALS LIBERTY.

“Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don’t see things the way you do. And don’t jump all over them every time they do or say something you don’t agree with - even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.”

Romans 14:1 (MSG)

WHAT ARE THE NON-ESSENTIALS?

Things that we can disagree on and still go to heaven.

Examples: How to pray, watching R-rated movies, what version of the Bible you read, End-Times theology, music styles, what you wear to church, etc.

3. IN ALL THINGS LOVE.

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:35 (NIV)

“Don’t be proud at all. Be completely gentle. Be patient. Put up with one another in love. The Holy Spirit makes you one in every way. So try your best to remain as one. Let peace keep you together.”

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NIRV)

So many non-essentials divide the Church and Christians. Churches split over disagreements about music and non-essential theological topics all the time. This is sad because when we fight over non-essentials items, it discounts the message of Jesus. Above all else, we need to love one another, even if we disagree. Remember, things that are important to us might be considered non-essentials.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION AS A CHURCH?

1. To **win** people to Christ.

“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.”

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

“... And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors as though God were making His appeal through us...”

2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (NIV)

2. To **train** believers to become disciples.

“... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”

Matthew 28:20 (NIV)

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)

3. To **send** disciples to impact the world.

“... As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

John 20:21 (NIV)

“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.”

Acts 8:4 (NIV)

WHY CCV MUST NEVER STOP GROWING

1. Because God **loves** people.
“The Lord . . . is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but wanting everyone to come to repentance.”
2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)
2. Because God **commands** us to reach out.
“Go out into the country . . . and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.”
Luke 14:23 (NIV)
3. Because **growth** is God’s will.
“... Under Christ’s control the whole body is nourished . . . and it grows as God wants it to grow.”
Colossians 2:19 (GNT)

UNBIBLICAL EXCUSES FOR NOT GROWING:

- “God isn’t interested in numbers.”
- “Our church wants quality not quantity.”
- “Large churches are impersonal.”

We believe CCV must grow **larger** and **smaller** at the same time.

HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH THIS?

1. Neighborhood Groups
 2. Several Service Times
 3. Multiple Campus Locations
- By being **one** church in **many** locations.

WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?

1. Reach the **man** so we can reach the whole **family**.
“When a Mother comes to faith in Christ, the rest of the family follows **17%** of the time; but when the Father comes to faith, the rest of the family joins him **93%** of the time.”
David Morrow, “Why Men Hate Going to Church” (Page 47)
2. Reach the **younger** generation so we have a **future**.
3. Reach our **neighbors** so we can change our **culture**.

APPENDIX I: CORE BELIEFS OF CCV

ABOUT GOD

There is one God, eternally existing in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and each possesses all of the attributes of God. God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and everything in it.

ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is one with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is our Savior, who was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on a cross for all sin, and was raised from the grave after three days to demonstrate His defeat of sin and death. He ascended into heaven and will return again to earth to reign as our powerful King.

ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is one with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Those who accept Christ as their Savior will receive the Holy Spirit to live inside them. The Holy Spirit serves as our comforter, guide and advocate. The Holy Spirit is given to Christians and provides guidance in living, an understanding of the Bible, and prayerfully intercedes for them.

ABOUT THE BIBLE

Our foundation is based firmly upon the Bible as our final authority on Christian beliefs and as a guide to living. The Bible is divinely inspired by God, without error, given to man so that we may know and understand the truth of God and His love.

ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is not something that can be purchased or earned. It is a free gift from God provided by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and is received through faith. It is available to everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. That faith is expressed through repentance of sin and baptism by immersion.

SESSION 03: CCV STRUCTURE

“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace... But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”

1 Corinthians 14:33; 40 (NIV)

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? The church means different things to different people:

- ▶ An organized religion (corporate structure)
- ▶ A religious building (sanctuary)
- ▶ Social club (institutional)
- ▶ People with common beliefs (denominations)

The term “church” comes from a word that means “**Called Out Ones.**” It wasn’t until the fourth century that the word came to refer to a building.

THE CCV LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE:

1. **THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH – Jesus Christ**

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.”

Ephesians 1:22 (NIV)

The church is a monarchy, not a democracy.

The leadership given to elders and pastors is one of responsibility to carry out the commands of Christ.

2. **THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH – Elders**

The elders are the most commonly mentioned church leaders in the New Testament. The terms elder, bishop, overseer, shepherd and pastor are used interchangeably.

“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.”

James 5:14 (NIV)

The elder is a servant leader rather than filling a position.

3. **THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH**

The church consists of those who have committed themselves to Jesus as Lord, trusted Him as Savior and have expressed this commitment in repentance, confession and baptism.

LEADERSHIP ROLES AT CCV

PASTOR:

- ▶ Preach the Word
- ▶ Cast Vision
- ▶ Lead the Staff
- ▶ CAMPUS PASTORS and ASSOCIATE PASTORS at each campus

STAFF AND ELDERS:

- ▶ Staff led and elder protected
- ▶ Team and trust
- ▶ Elders establish policy
- ▶ Staff administers policy

VOLUNTEERS AND CHURCH MEMBERS:

- ▶ Volunteers do the ministry

So Christ himself gave the apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers to EQUIP HIS PEOPLE FOR WORKS OF SERVICE so that the body of Christ may be built up..."

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)

WHAT "KIND" OF CHURCH IS CCV?

CCV IS A NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH.

CCV is completely independent and autonomous. There is no denominational control or hierarchy as there is in denominations. We are self-governed and determine our own affairs.

FOR EXAMPLE:

CCV chooses its own staff.

CCV chooses its own facilities.

CCV determines its own programs.

CCV determines its own budget.

CCV works together with other churches and organizations who profess Jesus as Lord, to advance God's kingdom locally and globally.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER OF CCV

REASONS FOR JOINING THE LOCAL CHURCH

The difference between “attendees” and “members” can be summed up in one word: **commitment**.

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

1. A **Biblical** reason:

Christ is committed to the church.

“... Christ loved the church, and He gave His life for it.”

Ephesians 5:25 (ASV)

2. A **cultural** reason:

It is an antidote to our society. We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything: a job, a marriage, our country, etc. This attitude has even produced a generation of church shoppers and hoppers.

Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer-mindset.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

3. A **practical** reason:

It defines who can be counted on. 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.

4. A **personal** reason:

It produces growth. 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 a specific church family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

1. I will **protect** the UNITY of my church.
 - ▶ By acting in love toward other members
 - ▶ By refusing to gossip
 - ▶ By following the leaders

“... live in complete harmony with each other - each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward each other.”

Romans 15:5 (NLT)

“So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.”

Romans 15:7 (TLB)

2. I will **support** the TESTIMONY of my church.
 - ▶ By committing to live according to God’s Word.
 - ▶ By living and sharing boldly the good news of Jesus.
 - ▶ By imitating Jesus Christ in my attitude and actions.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

James 1:22 (NIV)

“... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have.”

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

3. I will **share** the RESPONSIBILITY of my church.

- ▶ By attending regularly
- ▶ By finding an area to serve
- ▶ By being involved in a Neighborhood Group
- ▶ By investing my financial resources to expand the ministry

"Each one should use whatever spiritual gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together... but let us encourage one another..."

Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. ..."

Philippians 1:27 (NIV)

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)



ANSWER KEY

Page 1: Jesus Christ, His Church

Page 2: Plan, Boss

Page 3: Sin, Separation, Amount

Page 4: Solution, Jesus, Perfect, Way, Liar, Lunatic, Lord

Page 5: Grace, Favor, Believe

Page 6: Repent, Confess, Baptism

Page 9: Purpose, Strategy

Page 10: Unity, Liberty, Love

Page 11: Win, Train, Send

Page 12: Loves, Commands, Growth, Larger, Smaller, One, Many, Man, Family, 17%, 93%, Younger, Future, Neighbors, Culture

Page 14: Called Out Ones, Jesus Christ, Elders

Page 15: Word, Vision, Staff, Led, Protected, Team, Trust, Policy, Administers, Volunteers, Do

Page 16: Commitment, Biblical, Cultural, Practical, Personal

Page 17: Protect, Support

Page 18: Share

BIBLE VERSIONS USED

NLT - New Living Translation

NIV - New International Version

GNB - Good News Bible

CEV - Contemporary English Version

MSG - Message Bible

ASV - American Standard Version

NAS - New American Standard

RSV - Revised Standard Version

TLB - The Living Bible

NIRV - New International Revised Version

ESV - English Standard Version.

