

RETOURNER À L'AUTEL

Retourner à l'Autel (Back to the Altar) • GROUP GUIDE (leader)

This track has one purpose: to bring someone to know Jesus and to live with him.

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« Un seul autel. Beaucoup de chemins pour y revenir. »

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12 interconnected studies, drawn from the 7 principles of Don MacLafferty's booklet. This document is **for the leader of a small group**. The individual track has its own **separate workbook**.

The compass

This track has one purpose: to bring someone to know Jesus and to live with him.

It wakes the one who is asleep, and it leads the one who has never met him. Two different people, but **the same need**. Every time you hesitate over a leadership decision, ask yourself this question, and it will settle it: *does this bring this person closer to Jesus, or closer to my program?*

This track measures neither attendance, nor baptisms, nor raised hands. It measures one thing: **people who are beginning to know him**.

The two entry sessions (the bridge)

Before the twelve studies. No commitment, no sign-up, no homework, no Bible required.

These two sessions exist because there is a gap between a sixty-second video and a twelve-week track. Nobody crosses that gap in one jump. You do **not** present the track. You present **Jesus**.

Three absolute prohibitions in these two sessions: no sign-up sheet, no challenge to take home, no prayer that anyone would be embarrassed not to pray. Someone must be able to come, listen, leave, and **still be welcome**.

Entry session 1 · "Who is this man?"

Welcome. Nothing spiritual. You eat, you drink, you talk about the week. Twenty minutes, really.

The core. Read **one single scene**, out loud, slowly. **Mark 1:40-45**: a leper, the man nobody touches, comes near. Jesus **touches him**. Then one question, and you say nothing more: **"What do you see about this man?"** You do not teach. You do not correct. You do not conclude. You let the silence work. If someone says something theologically shaky, **you do not correct them**.

Ending. "Thank you for coming. We'll see you next week if you want, on another scene. There is nothing to prepare."

Entry session 2 · "What if you mattered to him?"

Welcome. Same as the first.

The core. **Luke 19:1-10**: Zacchaeus, the man the town despises. Jesus looks up, **calls him by name**, and invites himself to his house. The restitution comes **after** the meal, not before. The question: **"What strikes you about the way he goes about it?"** Then, once only, gently: "He did not wait for Zacchaeus to be respectable before going into his house."

The ending, and it is the only moment you talk about the track. One sentence, not two: "If you want to know him more, there is a twelve-week path. You can come. You can also not come, and you will still be welcome here." **Then you stop talking. You do not follow up. You do not pass around a sheet.**

What you do not do in the bridge

You do not talk about the Sabbath, or tithe, or the end times, or the Church. **You talk about Jesus.** The rest will come, and it will come better.

The Bible of the track

Reference version: the English Standard Version (ESV). It is an essentially literal translation, which is what makes real **inductive discovery** possible: the student finds the meaning in the words, because the translator has not chewed it for him.

Three rules: 1. **References are given, never the text.** You open your ESV and you read. Do not quote verses from memory, and do not print ESV text in a booklet you hand out without permission from Crossway: it is under copyright. 2. **Variant B: read twice.** First the ESV (precision). Then, on the verse that has to land, **a plain-English version (e.g. NIrV)** — short sentences, small vocabulary. MacLafferty does exactly this: his booklet works from a literal version by default, but reaches for a plainer one when he wants the verse to hit. 3. **Do not mix four versions in one session.** Two is enough. Beyond that you manufacture confusion, not richness.

Expect vocabulary surprises with the ESV: it renders some names and terms differently from the KJV or the NIV your members grew up with. Do not apologize — explain. It is a chance to learn, not a problem.

The template (his)

Each day... · Show interest · Connect · Discover · [your testimony, 2 to 3 min] · Practice · Challenge of the week

His golden rule: experience before doctrine, discovery before teaching, an action before a conclusion. And the accountability question is always "**How did God help you?**", never "did you succeed?".

The leader's 10 reflexes

(taken from STEPS SHIFT FR, your own conference's youth material)

1. **I only facilitate what I have personally been through.**
2. I prepare a **2-to-3-minute personal testimony** for every session.
3. **I message every participant midweek.**
4. **I leave the silences. Two minutes of silence is not a failure.**
5. I never skip the foundations to get to the doctrines.
6. I know the 7 steps to assurance of salvation by heart.
7. I do not forget the consolidation pauses.
8. I name, myself, the person I want to walk with.

9. I keep a simple follow-up sheet, not a dashboard.

10. **I am myself a disciple in training, not an expert who teaches.**

The 3-day rule

You study the study three days before the session. Not the night before.

And the question that settles it

"I did not ask for the Holy Spirit myself this week. Can I still lead study 5?" NO. Go back to it alone first. What you have not been through, you cannot facilitate.

Your testimony, every session

Two to three minutes, prepared, placed **between "Discover" and "Practice"**. It does not replace the content — **it anchors it in the real**. The question to prepare it: *"When did I actually live this, not as doctrine, but concretely?"*

The 4 universal follow-up questions

They work with **any** of the 12 studies. Learn them.

"Which truth touches you most, and why that one?" "If all of this is true, what changes concretely tomorrow morning?" "Does this sound like anything you hear around you?" "Who is the person you could say this to again this week?"

The 7 profiles in front of you, and the strategy for each

Profile	What you do
The silent doubter	Never put him in a position to speak in front of everyone. Pairs. A message after the session.
The skeptical intellectual	Take his questions seriously. Say "I don't know, I'm looking into it" if that's true. Never bluff.
The nominal believer	He knows the answers and is not touched. Application questions, never knowledge questions.
The seeker from outside the church	Always start with the foundation. Skip nothing. Let him answer without correcting him.
The one wounded by the Church	Do not talk about church membership before the end of the track. He comes for Jesus, not for us.
The one fighting an addiction	Variant B, always. No public confession. Promise no immediate deliverance. Point him to real help.
The person in danger at home	Never ask her to announce her faith at home. Her safety comes before any mission. See the procedure of the yes.

The midweek contact

Between each session, **a message to each person.** And the golden rule:

The message does NOT ask "did you do your challenge?". It takes up **one truth** from the study and asks **one personal question.**

Example, after study 6: *"Did you take two minutes to ask for the Holy Spirit this week? What happened?"*

The two junctions

These are **not extra studies.** They are **consolidation pauses**, with no new doctrine: you take stock of what has been received, and you get ready inwardly for what comes next. Twenty minutes.

J1, after week 5 (water baptism), before the Spirit. Review of the first five. Check on **assurance of salvation** (the 7 steps). *If several say "I don't know whether I am saved", plan individual follow-up before going on.*

J2, after week 8 (the family altar), before discipleship. Review of family and reconciliation. *This is the heaviest moment of the track: stay available after the session.*

Do not move on without running the junction. That is where you catch the ones who are slipping, instead of losing them in silence.

The durations, depending on the setting

20 min: "Each day" + "Discover" only. Personal study, or a rushed pair. **30 min:** + "Connect" and the challenge. Small group. **45 min:** the full session. **The normal format. 60 to 90 min:** with the long testimony, the 7 steps, or the compass. Advanced group.

The two variants

- **A:** the **believer who has drifted away**. He believes he must *earn* the right to come back.
- **B:** the one who **has never believed**, or who lives with an **addiction, a vice, a shame**. He believes he has *no right to enter*.

If your group is mixed, take **B**. It carries both. A does not carry the second.

THE RULE OF RETURN

The track is not a line. It is a wheel, and the altar is at the center.

The moment someone tires, stalls, doubts, falls back, or goes quiet: you bring him back to **STUDY 1**.

Not to week 12. Not "later". **Right now, whatever week you are in.**

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

This verse is not the entrance door. It is the door you can walk back through as many times as you need to.

What that changes concretely: - The one who has missed three sessions **catches up on nothing**. He comes back to study 1, then he picks up again. - The one who has relapsed does not restart the track. **He redoes study 1, and he continues where he was.** - The one who cannot do it anymore has not failed. **He is exactly where the track meant to bring him: at the foot of the altar, empty-handed.**

Going back to study 1 is never a sanction, never a step backward, never an admission of failure. It is the **normal movement of a disciple**. A man who comes back to study 1 ten times in twelve weeks has understood something that the one who finished all twelve in a row may never have understood.

THE SPIRIT IS NOT STEP 6. HE IS THE AGENT OF ALL TWELVE.

Never let anyone believe that the Holy Spirit shows up in week 6.

He works **from day one**, and he is the one who does all the rest: - **He convicts** of sin (John 16:8). It is not you who convicts. It is not shame either. - **He teaches and guides into all the truth** (John 16:13). It is not you who explains. - **He leads into prayer** when you no longer know what to say (Romans 8:26). - **He leads to the Word**, and he opens it (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

Say it from study 1:

"You are not going to pull this off by willpower. Nobody does. **Someone is walking with you: the Spirit. He is the one who will convict you, teach you, lead you into prayer and into the Word.** Study 6 does not make the Spirit arrive. It teaches you to ask for him every day. But he is already here."

Why this is critical. If a man believes the Spirit arrives in week 6, he will try to hold on alone for five weeks, he will fail, and he will conclude that he is not cut out for this.

The "nothing this week" rule

To be said out loud, at every session, before the pair-share moment. Every time. No exceptions.

"This week, if you have nothing to say, you say: **nothing this week.** That is a complete answer. Nobody will ask you why. Nobody will look at you differently."

Why this rule exists. "How did God help you this week?" is a good question. Repeated twelve times in front of the same faces, it turns into an evaluation. The one who has lived nothing, the one who has relapsed, the one who did not keep his challenge **will stop coming rather than say so.** Your device of grace will then flip into a courtroom, and you will lose exactly the people you meant to keep.

The leader's four obligations: 1. **You say it out loud every time.** A rule you do not repeat stops existing. 2. **You never push** the one who says "nothing". No "are you sure?", no lingering look, no insistent silence. 3. **If someone says "I fell",** you answer one thing only: **"Thank you for saying it."** Then you move to the next person. **No advice in the group.** You see him afterwards, alone, if he wants. 4. **You say it yourself when it is true.** If you had nothing this week, say "nothing this week". A leader who always has a good story manufactures liars.

And the one who has missed three sessions? You do not ask him to justify himself. You tell him: **"You pick up where we are. What's past is past."** The track is not an exam to be retaken.

Study 1 • Coming to Jesus just as you are

Each day... I come to Jesus without fixing anything first.

Show interest. An ordinary, non-spiritual question: "Tell us one ordinary thing from your week." Nobody gets tested at the door.

Connect. A: a stone covered in mud. "Clean it before you hand it back to me." They rub it, with no water. Then: "Hand it back just as it is." **B:** a clear bottle of muddy water. "Clean it, **without emptying it.**" They shake it, wipe

the outside: nothing. Then, in silence, pour clean water into it, for a long time, until it overflows and runs clear. One sentence only: **"You cannot clean yourself. He is not asking you to. He is asking you to let yourself be filled."**

Discover. Opening prayer, then research in subgroups. **A** — *What does Jesus require of me before I come to him?* John 6:37 · Matthew 11:28-30 · Mark 2:17 · Romans 5:8 · Ephesians 2:8-9 · Revelation 3:20. **B** — *Did Jesus ever ask anyone to fix himself before coming to him?* - **Jeremiah 13:23:** can a man change his own skin? No. And God knows it before you do. That is the starting point, not the condemnation. - **Luke 19:1-10** (Zacchaeus): Jesus invites himself in **before** any restitution. It comes after the meal. - **Luke 15:20:** the father runs while the son still smells of pigs, and **before** the end of his sentence. - **John 8:1-11:** he does not condemn first. The "sin no more" comes **after**. The order never reverses. - **1 Corinthians 6:9-11:** Paul names the vices, then says that is what some of them **were**. The past is named, not hidden. - Mark 2:17 · Romans 5:8 · 1 Timothy 1:15 · Isaiah 1:18 · John 6:37.

THE HEART OF THE STUDY · The parable of the father who runs (Luke 15:11-32)

Read the parable out loud, all of it, slowly. Do not explain it yet. Then ask one question, and be quiet: **"At exactly what moment does the father forgive?"**

Let them look. The answer is in **Luke 15:20**, and it demolishes everything: *"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him."*

The father runs BEFORE the son has said a single word. Not after the confession. **Before.** The prepared speech (vv. 18-19) is only delivered afterwards, and by then he is already in his father's arms. **That is why you can come as you are: grace does not answer your confession, it precedes it.**

The broken pot · what the community expected

Connect (strong variant). Bring a **clay pot**. Explain the rite, then **smash it on the floor in front of them**. Silence. Then: **"That is what the son believed was waiting for him. And that is what the elder brother was demanding."** Then read Luke 15:20.

The **kezazah** ("the cutting off") is a rite of rupture: the elders break a vessel in the public square and declare the tie severed, like the jar. The message: **irreversible**.

WARNING · What you can assert, and what you cannot

The rite exists. It is described in the **Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 28b**, with parallels in the **Jerusalem Talmud** (Ketubot 2:10; Qiddushin 1:5) and in **Ruth Rabbah 7:11**. A barrel is broken, and the family declares the rupture.

BUT its documented object is an unworthy marriage, not a squandered inheritance. No rabbinic source applies it to the prodigal son. **That application comes from Kenneth Bailey**, it is widespread in preaching, and **it is contested:** the texts are late and are talking about something else.

So: present the kezazah as an IMAGE of what a definitive rupture was in that world. Never say "the custom was to break a pot in front of the prodigal son." That is not documented, and your skeptic will check.

And you do not need it. Your proof is in the text: **the father runs** (v. 20). No custom ever made an elderly Middle Eastern man run out to meet the one who had dishonored him. **The scandal is in Luke, not in the Talmud.**

The four gifts, and why this order

The father does not merely forgive. **He restores, and he celebrates the one who should have been excluded.** Three gifts are **worn**. The fourth is **eaten**.

The gift	What it restores	The text
1 The best robe	Identity. He comes home a son, not a servant. A righteousness that is <i>given</i> to him, not earned.	Luke 15:22 · Isaiah 61:10
2 The ring	Covenant and authority. The father's seal, his signature. He is an heir again.	Luke 15:22 · Genesis 41:42
3 The sandals	Freedom. The slave walks barefoot. The son is shod.	Luke 15:22 · Galatians 4:7
4 The fattened calf	The feast. The only gift that is not worn: it is shared . The whole house enters his joy.	Luke 15:23

The order is not decorative. Identity first, then covenant, then freedom, **and only then** the feast. **You do not celebrate a man you have not first restored.** That is the order of salvation, and it is also the order of your twelve studies: coming (1), covenant and lordship (2), then the walk (3-4), then the table.

And the fattened calf leads to the Lord's Supper. It is no longer an animal: it is **the Lamb** (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8). The meal that seals the reconciliation (Exodus 24:11) becomes the bread and the cup (Luke 22:20). *Note for the leader: do not develop the Lord's Supper here. Name it, and keep it for study 2, where the Lamb goes up on the altar.*

The two questions that close the study

"Are you the elder son, sure of his own righteousness, unable to celebrate the other one's return?" "Or the younger son, crushed by his unworthiness, who prefers the servant's place to the son's?"

Do not answer for them. Let the question sleep in them for a week.

Practice. A: each person writes down what he thought he had to settle before coming back, and tears up the paper. **B: no public confession, ever.** Each person writes **alone, on a paper nobody will read**, what is keeping him from coming. He keeps it or burns it. Then one sentence said together, without anyone having to name anything: **"I come as I am."**

Challenge. Every morning: "Jesus, I come as I am, again today." **B:** especially on the days you relapse.

The tool for the doubter: the 7 steps to assurance of salvation

(from MacLafferty. To be known by heart. To be used one-on-one, never in front of the group.)

The rhythm is always the same: READ a verse · ASK a question. You do not preach. You get them reading, and you get them talking.

The diagnosis

	You can be sure that...	READ	ASK
1	nothing will separate you from the love of God.	Romans 5:8; Romans 8:38-39	"How do you know God loves you? Can anything separate you from it?"
2	as a sinner, you need a Savior.	Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23a	"What problem do we all have? What does sin produce?"

The gift

	You can be sure that...	READ	ASK
3	salvation is God's free gift, for you.	Romans 6:23b; Ephesians 2:8-9	"What free gift is God offering you?"
4	Jesus is your Savior the moment you believe in him.	John 3:16	"How does this gift become yours?"

The assurance

	You can be sure that...	READ	ASK
5	Jesus wants to live in your heart by faith.	Revelation 3:20	"What is your answer to his request?"
6	Jesus cleanses your heart when you confess.	1 John 1:9	"What does Jesus do for you when you confess?"
7	Jesus gives you eternal life, and you can KNOW it.	1 John 5:13	"What does this verse say you can know for certain?"

Two breaths to slip into the track (*they are not decorative: they name what a person receives*)

Peace, after "the gift": **John 14:27**. **Joy**, in the middle of "the assurance": **1 Peter 1:8-9**. And to finish: **Revelation 7:9** — *a great multitude that no one could number*. **God has planned for you to be in it.**

CORRECTION TO MAKE ON YOUR BOOKMARK. On the current print run, **the headings are off by one against the verses**: step 1 announces "nothing will separate you from the love of God" but gives Romans 3:23 and 6:23a, which are about sin. The table above is **realigned**. And **1 John 1:9 is used twice** (steps 5 and 6): keep it for confession (6), and give **Revelation 3:20** to step 5. **Fix the file before you reprint it.**

And when someone says "I can't say whether I'm saved":

Do not reassure him straight away. Ask him the question: **"What is stopping you from believing that 1 John 5:13 is speaking to you?"** Then go back through the 7 steps with him, one to one.

Guardrails (B)

Never promise immediate deliverance. "Come to Jesus and your addiction will disappear" is a lie that kills: at the first relapse, the person concludes that God has rejected him, and he never comes back. Tell the truth: he receives you today, whole, and he walks with you. Freedom is real, but it is often a road, not an instant. **Do not set faith**

against help. An addiction often requires, on top of prayer, real support, sometimes medical. Refer; do not improvise. **Do not tip over into permissiveness.** Received as you are, you will not stay as you are. Both halves, never just one.

Study 2 · Jesus S.M.S.: Savior, Master, Sovereign — and the Lamb on the altar

Each day... I give him back the wheel, including my attitude and my devices.

S · Savior: he saves me. I receive. **M · Master:** he teaches me. I learn from him, I imitate him. **S · Sovereign:** he is Lord, he commands. He has the wheel. The verse that holds all three: **John 13:13-14.**

Show interest. In pairs: "How did God help you to come just as you are?"

Connect (before the chairs) · the debt someone else pays. Have each person write **an amount** on a slip of paper: what he would owe, if it had to be paid. Collect the papers **without reading them**, put them in an envelope, and **burn it** or tear it up in front of them. One sentence only: **"Someone has paid. It was not you."** (*Colossians 2:14: he canceled the record of debt that stood against us, nailing it to the cross.*)

Connect. Three chairs in a row: the passenger, the student, the driver. **A:** "Which one are you sitting on in your actual life?" **B:** **"Have you even gotten into the car yet?"** You do not ask for the wheel from someone who has not gotten in. The S of Savior is enough for today.

THE LAMB ON THE ALTAR · the S of Savior

This is where, and nowhere else, you say what he has done.

Take the image of the track and go all the way with it. On Mount Carmel, Elijah rebuilds the altar — twelve stones, your study 1: *coming*. But **a rebuilt, empty altar is of no use.** Elijah lays **an offering** on it, and the fire of God falls (**1 Kings 18:30-38**).

Fire does not fall on bare stones. It falls on an altar where an offering has been laid.

RIGOR · Never say "the fire does not fall on the stones". **1 Kings 18:38 says the opposite:** *"the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust."* **The stones were consumed along with the offering.** What is true, and verifiable: **fire does not fall on bare stones.** Without an offering, there is nothing.

Your altar has stones. Here is the Lamb. John 1:29 · "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

And it is the fattened calf of study 1 that becomes the Lamb. The father kills the best he has to celebrate the one who should have been excluded. **God does the same, and the best he had was his Son.**

Discover (the S) — four stations, in this order.

The question	The texts
1 What is there to be saved from? Diagnosis before remedy.	Romans 3:23 · Romans 6:23a · Isaiah 59:2
2 What exactly did he do? He took the place.	Isaiah 53:4-6 · 2 Corinthians 5:21 · 1 Peter 2:24
3 How do we know? He rose, and there are witnesses.	1 Corinthians 15:3-4 · 1 Corinthians 15:17
4 When did he do it? Before I changed anything at all.	Romans 5:8 · Ephesians 2:8-9

The line you do not cross. On **Isaiah 53**, read, and **be quiet**. Do not comment verse by verse. Ask one thing only: **"Who is this text talking about, and who is carrying what?"** Written seven centuries earlier, it describes a man who carries **our** sicknesses and **our** iniquities. Let them see it themselves. **What you explain to them is forgotten. What they find stays.**

Practice (the S). Each person writes **one sentence**, in the first person: "*He died for _____*", and fills in the blank with something true about himself. **Nobody reads out loud. B: nobody is obliged to write.**

And this is why the S comes first. A man does not hand the wheel to someone who has not first saved him. **Lordship without the cross produces a slave. The cross without lordship produces a consumer.** All three letters, in this order, or none.

Discover. A — *Is Jesus for me only Savior, or also Master and Sovereign?* One team per letter. Savior: Matthew 1:21 · John 4:42 · Acts 4:12. Master: Matthew 11:29 · John 13:13-14 · Matthew 23:8-10. Sovereign: Philippians 2:5-11 · Luke 6:46 · Matthew 28:18 · Matthew 26:39. Then: Ezekiel 36:26-27 · Colossians 1:27-28. **B** — *Do you have to believe first, or can you learn by looking?* - **John 1:46**: "come and see". He is not asked to be convinced, he is asked to come and look. - **John 7:17**: obedience opens knowledge; it does not always follow it. - **Mark 9:24**: doubt can pray.

Practice. A: name one area not surrendered, and hand it over. **B:** name, if he wants to, **one single thing** he would be willing to learn from him this week. No total surrender demanded of a man who is only discovering.

Challenge. Every morning, **text yourself an S.M.S.:** "Savior. Master. Sovereign." **A:** then "everything I am is yours, today." **B:** then "Jesus, if you are real, show me today." That is an honest prayer, and God answers it.

Guardrail (B)

Never demand lordship as the price of admission. A man who has not met the Savior cannot hand over the wheel. You would make him lie, or run.

Study 3 · Discovering Jesus in his Word

Each day... I open the Word to meet a person, not to validate an idea.

Connect. A: (*his treasure hunt*) hide something valuable, hunt for three minutes, then give everyone a spoonful of honey (Psalm 119:103). **B:** put side by side an **instruction manual** and a **handwritten letter** from someone who loves you. "Which of the two do you read twice?" Then: "The Bible is not the first one."

Discover. A — *What am I looking for in this text: information, or a face?* John 5:39 · Psalm 119:103 · Matthew 7:24 · John 14:23 · 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 · John 16:13. **B** — *What is this man like?* **No doctrine.** You read **one single scene**, out loud, and you ask: "What do you see about him? What surprises you?" Scenes: Mark 1:40-45 · Luke 7:36-50 · John 4:1-26 · John 8:1-11. Texts: John 20:31 · Luke 24:32 · John 1:46.

Practice. A: one thing seen about Jesus, one thing to apply today. **B: one single** thing that surprised him. Nothing else. **You do not correct his reading.**

Challenge. A: look for a new image of Jesus each day and live out the application received. **B:** read **one chapter of the Gospel of John** a day.

Guardrail (B)

Do not give him the whole Bible. Give him **one Gospel**. The man who starts with Leviticus never comes back. And if he gets stuck on the ESV, read him the passage in a plain-English version.

Study 4 · Discovering Jesus in prayer

Each day... I do not only talk to God, I stop in front of him.

Connect. Two volunteers: one talks for a minute without stopping, the other cannot reply. Then swap. "Which one was a conversation?" **B**, add: "To call your father, do you need to write a speech?"

Discover. A — *What is the difference between asking, thanking, and praising?* (his question) Psalm 5:3 · Psalm 100:4 · Jeremiah 29:13 · Isaiah 6:5 · 1 John 1:9. **B** — *Does God listen to the prayer of a man whose life is not in order?* - **Luke 18:9-14:** the tax collector does not dare lift his eyes and prays seven words. **He** is the one who goes home justified, not the religious man. - **Mark 9:24:** doubt can pray. - **Psalm 51:** David prays **during** his sin, not after repairing it.

THE STOREROOM · where the Father is waiting for you (Matthew 6:6)

Before the model, Jesus names a place. And the place is a scandal.

Matthew 6:6 · *"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret."*

The Greek word is not "bedroom". It is ταμείον, *tameion*: the store-room. The pantry. The back room, **with no window**, that you lock, where the provisions and the little you own are kept.

The proof is in your own ESV, in Luke 12. The **same Greek word** appears twice in that chapter: at **Luke 12:3** the ESV renders it *"private rooms"*, and at **Luke 12:24** — twenty-one verses later — it renders it *"storehouse"*: the ravens *"have neither storehouse nor barn"*. **Same word.** This is not a guest bedroom. **It is the larder.** (And Luke 12:3 says it best: *what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. It is the place where you say what you say nowhere else.*)

Note on your English page: the ESV translates *tameion* in Matthew 6:6 simply as "your room". The NASB says "inner room"; the KJV says "closet". None of them is wrong. **Do not argue the translation — teach the word.**

What that changes, and it is the whole point of study 1:

It is not the room where you look good. It is the room where you are naked. No window, no audience, no posture. **The room you hide in when you no longer want to be seen. And that is exactly where the Father is waiting for you.** *"Your Father who is in secret."* **He is already there. Before you walk in.**

THE CHAIN THAT HOLDS EVERYTHING • he is always the one who moves first

Make them discover it, verse after verse. Do not summarize it: have it read, in this order.

The text	Who moves first
1 Genesis 3:9 • <i>"Where are you?"</i>	The first question in the Bible is God looking for a man in hiding. Adam hides in his nakedness; God comes there to find him.
2 Matthew 6:6 • the storeroom	He waits for you in the room where you hide. He is not waiting for you to come out.
3 Luke 15:20 • the father runs	He runs before the first word. (<i>Study 1.</i>)
4 John 6:44 • <i>"No one can come to me unless the Father draws him"</i>	Even your desire to come does not come from you.
5 Revelation 3:20 • <i>"I stand at the door and knock"</i>	He is the one knocking. The handle is on your side, but the hand that knocks is his.

The sentence to have each person say out loud:

"I did not go to God. God came and found me where I was hiding."

TWO POINTS OF RIGOR, AND YOU MUST KNOW THEM

1. The primary sense of Matthew 6:6 is SECRECY, not vulnerability. Jesus is setting it against the hypocrites who pray "to be seen by others" (v. 5). **Vulnerability is a consequence, not the definition.** So say: "the room where nobody sees you", **and let them draw the conclusion themselves** that it is also the room where you have no mask left. **What they find on their own holds. What you impose on them collapses.**

2. Revelation 3:20 is not addressed to an unbeliever. It is addressed to a CHURCH — Laodicea, which thinks it is rich and "needs nothing" (v. 17). **Christ is outside, standing at the door of his own people. Do not deprive yourself of it: it is even stronger for you.** The evangelistic use (Jesus knocking at the sinner's heart) is a legitimate **application**, and you can keep it. **But the primary address is door A: the believer gone cold, the one who has everything and feels nothing.** The day you say that to a lukewarm elder, watch his face.

THE LORD'S PRAYER • the only model Jesus ever gave

Do not start with a theory of prayer. Start with what the disciples asked for.

Luke 11:1 · *"Lord, teach us to pray."* **They do not ask him to explain prayer. They ask him to teach it to them.** And he does not give a lecture: **he gives a sentence.**

Have it read once, out loud. Then ask one question:

"Count: how many petitions are about God, and how many are about us? And which ones come first?"

Matthew 6:9-13 (*Luke 11:2-4 gives a shorter form*)

	What Jesus puts in	What it teaches you
"OUR Father"	Who you are talking to. And "our" , not "my" .	The one addressed is the Father . And you never pray alone , even alone in your room.
"your name... your kingdom... your will"	Three petitions for HIM, before the first one for you.	The order is the teaching. A prayer that starts with "give me" has already changed gods.
"our daily bread"	What is needed. Today.	Not ten years of security. Today's bread, asked for today.
"forgive us our debts, as we also..."	The only petition Jesus goes back over and comments on right afterwards (Matthew 6:14-15).	That is your study 7. There is no forgiveness received that does not circulate.
"lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"	The fight, named.	For variant B, this is THE sentence. The man fighting an addiction discovers that Jesus himself puts this prayer in his mouth.

TWO WARNINGS, AND THEY ARE IN THE TEXT

1. Jesus gives this model RIGHT AFTER forbidding empty repetition. Matthew 6:7: *"do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words."* **Then he gives the Lord's Prayer.** The irony is cruel: the one prayer he taught in order to **spare** us recitation has become, in the churches, recitation itself. **So: do not have it recited. Have it dissected, then have them pray it in their own words, in that order.** It is a **skeleton**, not a formula.

2. Do not build on the closing doxology ("for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"). **It is absent from the earliest manuscripts;** the ESV puts it **in a footnote**, not in the text. It is beautiful, it is ancient, **but never build a teaching on it:** the first person to open his ESV will not find it there, and he will wonder what else you are hiding from him.

And here is the bridge to study 5, and Luke builds it, not me. In Luke, the Lord's Prayer is immediately followed by the friend at midnight (Luke 11:5-8), then by "ask, and it will be given to you" (11:9-10), **and all of it lands on one thing:**

Luke 11:13 · *"How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"* **In Luke, learning to pray leads to asking for the Spirit. That is exactly the order of your studies 4 and 5. Tell them: we did not invent it.**

THE THREE, IN ONE PRAYER

This is where you teach the Trinity. Not as a doctrine. As an experience.

Never say the word "Trinity" first. Have them discover it. Write **Ephesians 2:18** on the board, and ask: "**How many persons are at work in this one verse?**" Let them count.

Ephesians 2:18 · "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." **Three. In one sentence. On one single act: praying.**

The shape of all Christian prayer:

TO the Father · he is the one you address. **It is the first word of the Lord's Prayer.** Matthew 6:9 · John 16:23. **THROUGH the Son** · he is the one who opens the door, and there is no other. John 14:6 · 1 Timothy 2:5 · Hebrews 4:14-16. **IN the Spirit** · he is the one who prays in you when you have no words left. Romans 8:15-16 · **Romans 8:26-27** · Jude 20.

Then say it, once, and simply:

"When you pray, all three are at work. The Father listens, the Son opens, the Spirit carries you. One God — and you have just experienced him."

The texts where the three are named together (*to be given, not proved*): **Matthew 28:19** (the baptism) · **2 Corinthians 13:14** (the benediction) · Matthew 3:16-17 (Jesus' baptism: the Son in the water, the Spirit descending, the Father speaking).

GUARDRAIL · Do not manufacture three gods, and do not manufacture one in disguise

Error A: the hierarchy. Say "we pray **to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit**" often enough and people end up hearing: the Father is the real God, the Son is the pass, the Spirit is the assistant. **That is false.** Correct it immediately: **Deuteronomy 6:4** ("the LORD is ONE") and **John 10:30**. They do not divide up the work like three employees. **They are one.**

Error B: forbidding prayer to Jesus. Some will tell you that we pray **only** to the Father. **The text says otherwise: Stephen prays to Jesus as he dies (Acts 7:59), and the last words of the Bible are a prayer addressed to Jesus (Revelation 22:20).** So: the usual model is *to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit*. **But you may speak to Jesus, and there is nothing more to say about it.** Do not turn a habit into a law.

Error C: the demonstration. Do not open a Trinitarian debate. **The Trinity is not proved on a whiteboard; it is met on your knees.** If a man objects, write down his question, say "I don't know everything, I'm looking into it, I'll get back to you", and **go back to prayer.**

PASTORAL WARNING · You will meet the objection

There are dissident Adventist currents that reject the Trinity, and they are active, including online. One day someone will bring you their arguments, often leaning on the nineteenth-century pioneers. **Do not debate. Do not despise them either.** The position of the Adventist Church is clear: the Trinity is its **Fundamental Belief no. 2.** Say it calmly, once, and **go back to the experience:** *"Tonight you are going to pray. Watch who carries you. We'll talk about it afterwards."* **What convinces a man on this point is never an argument. It is an answered prayer.**

Practice (the Trinitarian prayer). Each person prays **one sentence**, quietly, with all three: *"Father... in the name of Jesus... Spirit, help me to..."* **B: nobody is obliged.** He can listen to the others pray. **Listening is full participation.**

Practice. A: pray in the order of Psalm 100:4. **B:** pray **seven words**, his own, quietly or in silence. **Nobody is obliged to pray out loud.**

Challenge. A: five minutes a day asking for nothing. **B:** one honest sentence a day, even "I don't know if you exist, but I'm talking to you".

Guardrail (B)

Never correct a clumsy prayer, and never force anyone to pray out loud. A prayer that is laughed at, even kindly, is a prayer killed.

Study 5 · The baptism of the Holy Spirit: he is my C.I.T.

This study has two halves, and they are not interchangeable. First half: you learn who he is. Without that, people ask for a power, not a person. **Second half: you ask for him.** Without that, you will have taught one more doctrine, and nothing will have happened. **Never do one without the other.** A study on the Spirit with no asking produces a man who is informed and dry. An asking with no teaching produces a man waiting for an emotion.

Each day... I ask for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself received it every day.

Connect. (*His illustrations, kept as they are.*) Pour water onto a big stone: it runs off. Onto a sponge: it drinks. Then fill a cup until it overflows into the basin.

Connect (variant) · Four figures of the paraclete

Ask, before any reading: "What does someone look like who stands beside you when everyone else backs away?" Let them answer. Then give the four:

The figure	What he does	What it says about the Spirit
The companion of the wounded	He was assigned to the fallen soldier, to keep him alive.	He does not lift you up from above. He lies down beside you.
The commander who rallies the troops	He gives courage back to men who have none left.	He does not only teach you. He gets you back on your feet.
The defense counsel	"The friend of the accused", loyal when everyone else condemns.	When your conscience accuses you, he is on the side of the bar where you are sitting.
The one who exhorts and instructs	He teaches people to do good.	He does not settle for consoling you. He trains you.

WARNING TO THE LEADER · Do not bluff on these four figures

Two are documented, two are images. Say so, or say nothing.

The advocate is the attested sense. The standard lexicon of ancient Greek (**Liddell-Scott-Jones**) gives *paraklētos*: "one called to one's aid, **in a court of justice**" — legal assistant, advocate. Attested in **Demosthenes**, 4th century BC. **That one you can assert.** The broad sense, "one called in to help", is equally solid.

The wounded soldier and the commander rallying his men are not in the lexicons. They circulate in preaching. They are true in substance, but they are **not** documented uses of the word. **Present them as images, never as history.**

And "exhort, instruct" comes from the verb, not the noun. *Parakaleō* (the verb) means to exhort, encourage, console. *Paraklētos* (the noun) is a **passive** verbal adjective: "the one who **is called** alongside". Same family, different sense. **Say "the word family", not "the word means".**

Why this rigor? Because your "skeptical intellectual" profile will check. And because your own rule is: *never bluff*. A leader who gets ahead of the objection is believed. A leader who is caught out loses everything true he had said as well.

FIRST HALF · THE TEACHING: HE IS MY C.I.T.

As Jesus is my S.M.S., the Spirit is my C.I.T. He is not a force, not an atmosphere, not an energy. **He is someone**, and he holds three offices.

	He is my...	What he does	The texts
C	Comforter	He comes alongside me and he stays. He does not leave me an orphan.	John 14:16-18 · John 14:26 · 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
I	Intercessor	When I no longer know what to say to God, he is the one who prays in me.	Romans 8:26-27
T	Teacher	He opens the Word to me, he guides me into the truth, he convicts me.	John 14:26 · John 16:8 · John 16:13 · 1 Corinthians 2:12-14

THE WORD THAT CARRIES EVERYTHING: "ANOTHER"

John 14:16 · "I will ask the Father, and he will give you ANOTHER Helper."

Greek has two words for "another". *Heteros*: another **of a different kind**. *Allos*: another **of the same kind**. John writes *allos*. A second one, exactly the same kind as the first.

The consequence, and it decides the whole study:

Jesus is **Savior, Master, Sovereign** (S.M.S., study 2). The Spirit comes "like him", of the same kind. **So he is all three too. The C.I.T. is not a list of services rendered. It is a lordship that comforts, that intercedes, that teaches.**

He is God, in the same right as the Father and the Son. To lie to the Spirit is to lie to God (**Acts 5:3-4**). We baptize into the name of the three (**Matthew 28:19**). He can be **grieved** (**Ephesians 4:30**): you do not grieve an energy.

And the guarantee that nothing will drift is given by him:

John 16:13-14 · "He will not speak on his own authority... he will glorify me."

A spirit you could use for your own ends would speak about himself. **This one never speaks about himself.** He teaches what Jesus taught (**John 14:26**), he brings you back to Jesus, he refuses to be the destination. **That is why you cannot use him: he is not the one at the end of the road.**

The sentence to have them remember, word for word:

"He is my Comforter, my Intercessor, my Teacher. And I am not his master: he is the one who leads me." (*Romans 8:14: "led", not leaders.*)

PARACLETE · Never argue the translation. Teach the word.

In John, the Spirit is called *paraklētos*: **John 14:16 · 14:26 · 15:26 · 16:7**. The word is built from **pará**, "alongside", and **klētos**, "the one who is called". **Literally: "the one called to be at our side."**

Translators have decided differently, and that is exactly why arguing about it is sterile:

Version	Renders <i>paraklētos</i> as
ESV, NASB	Helper
KJV	Comforter
NIV, NRSV	Advocate
CSB	Counselor
A plain-English version (NirV)	a friend who helps you
Some older commentaries	Paraclete (<i>they do not translate; they transliterate</i>)

Take note, because it will happen in the room: your ESV does not say "Comforter". Someone who has heard the word all his life will open John 14:16 and read "**Helper**", and he will think his Bible is missing something. It is not. **The KJV said "Comforter", the ESV says "Helper", the NIV says "Advocate" — none of them is wrong.**

What the leader says, and he says it BEFORE anyone asks:

"Your Bible may say 'Helper', another says 'Comforter', another says 'Advocate'. **None of them is wrong.** The Greek word means: *the one you call to stand beside you*. Defending, comforting, helping: that is what someone does when he is **beside** you."

And that is why the C.I.T. holds. These are not three functions picked at random: they are **three ways of being beside you**. He comforts alongside. He intercedes alongside. He teaches alongside. **That is also why "He is my**

Companion" is exactly right — not because of the letters, but because of the Greek: *pará + klētos*, the One called to stand beside you. **The word and the office say the same thing.**

The three questions of the C.I.T. (*the order matters: comfort, then prayer, then truth*)

"Where do you need to be comforted, and who have you told?" **(C)** "What can you not manage to ask God for, because you have no words?" **(I)** — then read Romans 8:26: *he does not need your words*. "What can you not manage to understand in the Bible?" **(T)** — then John 16:13: *it is not an intelligence problem, it is a question you put to him*.

Discover. A — *What are the five steps to being baptized daily with the Holy Spirit?* (his exact question) John 7:37-39 (coming thirsty) · **Acts 2:38 (repent, be baptized in water)** · Acts 5:32 (obey) · Luke 11:13 (ask). (*Yes, MacLafferty puts water inside the five steps, and our track puts water afterwards. Do not hide the tension: name it. See the note on Acts 2:38 at the end of this guide. The order in Acts varies; ours is a pastoral choice.*) The two results: Galatians 5:22-23 (the fruit) · Acts 1:8 (the power of the witness). **B** — *If I cannot change myself, who will?* - **Jeremiah 13:23**, revisited from study 1: no, you cannot. - **Ezekiel 36:26-27**: the new heart, and the Spirit put in you, who **causes** you to walk. It is not you doing the walking. - **Luke 11:13** · **John 7:37**: the only condition is thirst.

SECOND HALF • THE ASKING

This is no longer a study. It is a prayer. Change your voice, change the pace, close the notebook.

Practice. Each person asks out loud, in his own words, for the baptism of the Holy Spirit for today. **Three supports, and nothing else:**

"I come thirsty." (*John 7:37*) "I ask you for your Spirit for today." (*Luke 11:13*) "Be my Comforter, my Intercessor, my Teacher."

Then be quiet. Let the silence stand. **Do not comment on what has just happened.** Do not ask anyone what he felt.

Variant B: in silence, never out loud, never in front of the group. And **he is not obliged to pray that day.** "Nothing this week" applies to this too.

Challenge. Ask for it every morning. In the evening, note **one fruit** and **one testimony** from the day. And once during the week, ask yourself: *which of the three — C, I, or T — was at work today?*

Guardrail (B)

Promise no sensation. No obligatory tears, no shivers. The man who feels nothing is not deprived of the Spirit: he received him by promise, not by emotion. Letting people think otherwise manufactures Christians who believe they have been rejected because they felt nothing.

Guardrail (leader)

You cannot lead this session if you have not asked for the Spirit for yourself this week. This is not a rule of piety, it is a rule of truth: you are about to ask a man to pray a prayer you have not prayed. **Go back to it alone first.**

Study 6 · Water baptism: the covenant sealed

Each day... I live out what my baptism signed: I have died, I have been raised.

Connect. Bury a seed in a pot, in front of everyone. Next to it, a plant already grown. "One has to die for the other to exist."

THE THREE NAMES COME BACK · a recall of study 4

Matthew 28:19 is the only place in the New Testament where the three names are joined in a formula:

"baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Make the link out loud, in one sentence:

"In study 4 you **prayed** the three. Today you see that you are **baptized** into the three. **This is not a theory: it is your name going into theirs.**"

Do not develop it. Do not prove anything. Name it, and move on. (And note: "in *THE* name", singular, not "the names". One name, three persons. Do not lecture on it: let the word do its work.)

Discover. A — *What did my baptism commit me to, and am I living it?* Acts 2:38 · Matthew 28:19 · Romans 6:3-4.
B — *Is baptism a reward for a clean life?* - **Acts 8:36-38:** the eunuch asks what prevents him from being baptized. Nothing prevents him. - **Acts 16:30-33:** the jailer is baptized **that same night**. He did not get six months to become presentable. - **Romans 6:3-4:** it is not a diploma. It is a burial, followed by a resurrection. - Acts 2:38-41.

Practice. A: "On the day of my baptism, I promised..." **B:** *nothing is asked*. Each person may ask **one question** about baptism. You answer, you do not push.

Challenge. A: every morning, "I died with Christ, I walk in newness of life", and do **one** act that proves it. **B:** look up the baptism accounts in Acts himself and note what they have in common.

The purpose of this study: to inform, and to create desire

This study asks for nothing. It gives the information and it opens the appetite. Nothing obliges a man to wait: in Acts, people are baptized the same day. The jailer at midnight, the eunuch at the roadside. If someone is ready in week 5, he is ready.

The rule of the eunuch

Look closely at Acts 8:36: it is the eunuch who asks the question. "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" **Philip did not ask it for him.** He preached Jesus, the man saw the water, and he asked.

"What prevents me?" is a magnificent question **when a man asks it of himself**. The same question, asked by the leader of the participant, in front of the group, stops being a question: it becomes a summons. **And the man who says yes under that gaze is not saying yes to Jesus: he is saying yes so as not to disappoint you.**

The day he asks the question himself, you have won. The day you ask it for him, you have started to lose him.

Guardrails (B)

No public baptismal appeal in this study. No raised hands, no "who wants to stand up". Group pressure produces baptisms that do not hold and a lasting shame in those who stay seated. **The decision is made with the pastor, in private, without haste.** A person struggling with an addiction is not disqualified: baptism asks for repentance and surrender to Christ, not for perfection. But the decision must be **free, informed, unhurried. Know what actually prevents a man, because it is almost never information.** The **cost** (the rich young man knew everything, Jesus loved him, and **Jesus let him go**). **Shame**, which is not guilt: guilt says "I did wrong" and leads to repentance; shame says "I **am** wrong" and leads to hiding, like Adam. The **fear of not holding on**, in the man who knows his own relapse record. And **God's timing** (John 6:44), which is not yours to control.

Study 7 · Loving your family: heart surgery

Each day... I ask God to operate on my heart before I try to change my family.

Connect. Each person tears a sheet of paper in two, then tapes it back together. It holds, but the scar shows. "Reconciliation does not make the mark disappear. It makes the sheet usable."

Discover. A — *Who do I have to go and see before I claim to pray for them?* Malachi 4:5-6 · Luke 1:17 · Ephesians 4:29-32 · Matthew 5:23-24 · Ephesians 6:12 · Ezekiel 36:26-27. **B** — **two cases. Know which one is in front of you.** - **The one who destroyed his family** (alcohol, absence, violence, lies). His question: *how do I face the people I hurt?* **Luke 19:8:** Zacchaeus makes restitution, concretely, without being asked. **Luke 15:18-21:** the son prepares a speech, the father cuts him off. The repair is real, but it does not buy the forgiveness: it flows from it. - **The one who was destroyed by his family.** His question: *must I forgive the person who broke me?* **Ephesians 4:32 · Romans 12:18**, which lays down two deliberate qualifications: **"if possible**, so far as it depends on you".

Practice. Each person writes **one name**. One only. And one sentence he will say, or that he chooses not to say yet.

Challenge. A: go to the person, do not argue, ask forgiveness for your own part. **B:** the same, **unless a guardrail below applies.**

Guardrails (B) — the most important in the whole track

NEVER send anyone back to reconcile with an abuser. If there has been violence, abuse, coercive control: the first step is **not** reconciliation, it is **protection**. A pastor who sends a battered woman back to "forgive and go home" is taking part in the evil. Forgiveness can be done at a distance, in the heart, without seeing the person again, and without her knowing it. **Do not confuse forgiveness and reconciliation.** Forgiveness depends on me. Reconciliation depends on two, and presupposes that the other person has changed. **A move toward repair must not become a manipulation.** A man who asks forgiveness in order to get his wife back is not asking forgiveness: he is negotiating. Know the difference. **If danger appears, you step outside the frame of the study and you refer** to the competent people and services. That is not a spiritual failure, it is responsibility.

Study 8 · Loving your family: the family altar

Each day... We stop together before God, in our own home.

Connect. Set a real table in the middle of the group. Put the open Bible in the center, nothing else. Everyone comes and sits down.

THE SHEMA · why this is where the Trinity lands

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 begins with "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is ONE." And immediately afterwards, in verse 7: "you shall teach them diligently to your children."

Look at what the text does, and do not explain it: it does it. First the oneness of God. Then the handing on, at home. That is no accident. What gets handed on in a house is not a doctrine: it is a God who is one.

The loop of the three closes here:

Study 4 · you **prayed** the three. · Study 6 · you were **baptized** into the three. · Study 8 · you **hand them on** at home. **You do not argue the Trinity at the table. You live it at the table.**

The evening benediction, to be given at home (2 Corinthians 13:14, to be said word for word, with no commentary):

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." The three, in one sentence, over the people you love. **B: the man whose household is hostile says it over them in silence, without their knowing.**

Discover. A — *When, where and how should the Word circulate in my house?* Deuteronomy 6:4-9 · Romans 13:8 · Jeremiah 32:17. **B** — *What if nobody at home wants to hear about it?* - **1 Peter 3:1-2**: won without a word, by conduct. Especially when the talking has already been discredited. - **Mark 5:19**: "Go home to your friends, and tell them." Not what they should believe. What he did for you. - **1 Corinthians 7:12-16**: you are not an intruder in your own home.

Practice. Each household sets **the time, the place and the length** of its worship. **B**: the man whose household is hostile sets **his own** altar, and the name of one person he will invite one day.

Challenge. Keep it every day. Short and successful beats long and endured.

Guardrail (B)

Never impose family worship on a household that does not want it. A man who has made his family suffer and comes home imposing evening prayer is not staging a revival, he is staging a takeover. Credibility is rebuilt by duration, not by a brandished Bible.

Study 9 · Making disciples: being with Jesus

Each day... Before doing anything for him, I stay with him.

Connect. Take one ember out of the pile and set it to one side. Watch it die while the others glow.

Discover. A — *Why did Jesus call the twelve?* **Mark 3:13-14a** gives two reasons, in an order. Luke 6:12-16 · Matthew 4:18-20 · Isaiah 50:4. **B** — **this is the most accessible study of the track. Tell him so.** - **Mark 3:14:** he appointed twelve **so that they might be with him.** They did not believe first and then follow. **They followed, and then believed.** - **John 1:38-39:** "Come and you will see." They spent the day with him. That is all. - You do not have to believe before being with him. You have to be with him, and faith comes.

Practice. Each person sets the exact time of his daily appointment with Jesus, and puts it in his phone **in front of the group.**

Challenge. Keep that appointment every morning. **B:** even without knowing who he is talking to. Being there is enough.

Study 10 · Making disciples: being sent, multiplying

Each day... I train someone who, in turn, will train another.

Connect. One lit lamp. Each person lights his own from his neighbor's. Then put out the first one: the others are still burning.

Discover. A — *Does Jesus make disciples, or makers of disciples?* **Mark 3:14b** · Luke 9:1-2 · Matthew 28:18-20 · 2 Timothy 2:2. **B** — *What do you need to know in order to speak about him?* - **John 9:25:** "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." **That is the whole qualification.** - **Mark 5:19-20:** the delivered man is sent home **the same day.** Not to preach. **To tell.** - **John 4:28-29:** the Samaritan woman speaks to her town before she has any theology at all.

Practice. Each person writes **one name:** the person he is going to walk with, and the first thing he will do with him.

Challenge. Contact him this week. Do not invite him to a program: invite him to walk.

Guardrail (B)

Do not make a freshly restored man a leader. 1 Timothy 3:6. He can **tell his story.** He must not yet **lead.** Confusing the two will break him.

Study 11 · Living the mission: discovering your gift

Each day... I serve with what God gave me, not with what I admire in someone else.

Connect: the mission compass, Nehemiah's 4 questions. (*taken from STEPS. It replaces the toolbox, and it is better.*)

Discovering your gift does not start with "what am I good at". It starts with "what breaks my heart".
Nehemiah wept before he built (Nehemiah 1:4; 2:1-8).

Hand out a sheet. **Silent, individual writing, ten minutes.**

1. **What brokenness do you see around you that brings you to tears, as it did Nehemiah?**
2. Which people would you like to help?
3. What gifts do you have that could meet that need?
4. Which trusted adult can walk with you?

Then, as a group, you share ONLY question 1. The answers to 2-4 are private. **Do not push.** If nobody wants to speak, that is fine: the question has been asked. *On your own:* write all four. Keep the sheet. Read it again in six months.

Discover. A — *What did God know about me before I was born, and what did he make me for?* Psalm 139:1-6,13-16 · Ephesians 2:10 · 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 · Romans 12:6 · Ephesians 4:11-12 · 1 Peter 4:9-11 · Exodus 31:1-5 · James 1:5-8. **B** — *And if my life is a disaster, what do I have to offer?* - **1 Timothy 1:15-16:** Paul calls himself the foremost of sinners, and says that is **precisely why** he received mercy, so as to serve as an example. His worst past became his ministry. - **2 Corinthians 1:3-4:** we comfort **with the comfort** with which we ourselves were comforted. What you went through becomes what someone else needs. - Your wound is not an obstacle to your service. It is often its location.

Practice. Each person names a gift he thinks he has. Then the group tells him **what it sees** in him. Both are written down and compared.

Challenge. Ask for wisdom every day (James 1:5), and perform one act of service with the gift identified.

Guardrail (B)

Do not turn a fresh wound into a ministry. The man who has just come out must first stand up. Serving too soon out of your wound is the shortest road back to relapse. **The scar serves. The open wound does not.**

Study 12 · Living the mission: entering the harvest

Each day... I look at the field God has given me, and I go into it.

Connect. A handful of ripe grain in a bowl, passed around. "The field is not waiting to be ready. It is ready. What is missing is hands."

Discover. A — *What does Jesus see when he looks at the crowd, and what does he command first?* Matthew 9:35-38 · Matthew 10:16 · Luke 6:12-16 · 1 John 2:6. **B** — *Where is my field?* - **Mark 5:19:** "Go home to your friends." Your field is the people who knew you **before**. The only ones who can measure the difference. - **Matthew 9:36:** he is moved with compassion because they are harassed and helpless. You know what that is. That is why you are being sent.

Practice. Each person names his field and sets **the first visit**.

Challenge. Pray every day to the Lord of the harvest, naming three people. Make the first visit before the end of the week.

Guardrail (B)

Do not send someone back too soon into the setting of his addiction. Going back to "witness" at the bar, in the old circle, is a classic trap and a major cause of relapse. The field starts at **home** (Mark 5:19), not at the place where you fell.

What holds the twelve together

Ezekiel 36:26-27 runs through studies **2, 5 and 7**. It is the hinge: lordship, the Spirit and reconciliation all rest on the same new heart. **Acts 5:32**: study **5 depends on study 2**. You do not receive the Spirit without having handed over the wheel. **Acts 2:38**: repentance, **water**, then **Spirit**. **WARNING: this text contradicts the order of this track, and you must say so yourself**. The New Testament does **not give one single sequence**, it gives at least three. **Acts 2:38**: the water, then the Spirit. **Acts 10:44-48**: the Spirit falls on Cornelius **before** the water, and that is in fact Peter's argument for baptizing him. **Acts 8:12-17**: the Samaritans are baptized, and the Spirit only comes later. **Conclusion: God is not bound by any order**. Ours — the Spirit (5), then the water (6) — is a **pastoral choice**, not a biblical law: a man who has not received the Spirit's help cannot hold what the water signs. **Present it as a choice. Never claim it is THE biblical sequence: that is false, and it will turn against you.** **Mark 3:13-14** contains studies **9 and 10** all by itself. **Luke 15:11-32** (study 1) and **John 1:29** (study 2) hold together: the father's **fattened calf** becomes the **Lamb** on the altar. The grace that runs out to meet the son is the same grace that goes up to Calvary. **John 13:13** holds the S.M.S. of study 2, and pushes on into **3, 4 and 9**. **The Trinity runs through studies 4, 6 and 8, and never as a doctrine**. **4**: you **pray** it (Ephesians 2:18 — to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit). **6**: you are **baptized** into it (Matthew 28:19, the only text that joins the three names in a formula). **8**: you **hand it on** at home (Deuteronomy 6:4-7: *the LORD is ONE*, then *you shall teach them diligently to your children*; and the benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14). **You prove it nowhere. You live it three times.** **Jeremiah 13:23** links **1 and 6**. **Mark 5:19** links **8, 10 and 12**. **The loop: 12 sends you back to 1.**

The material to prepare

Mud and stones · a clear bottle · clean water · three chairs · honey · an instruction manual and a handwritten letter · a timer · a seed, soil, a pot, a plant · a big stone, a sponge, a cup, a basin · sheets of paper and tape · a table and a tablecloth · embers or candles · several lamps or candles · a toolbox · a handful of grain.

The no-material fallbacks

I am correcting here a rule I laid down and which was wrong. I had written: "no object, no session." That was absurd. Nobody assembles mud, honey, embers and a toolbox twelve times over, and that rule would have made you cancel a third of your sessions.

The truth is simpler: "Connect" never needed objects. It needs an experience. The body, the room, memory and a good question are enough. Some of these fallbacks are even **stronger** than the object, because they cost nothing and there is no way to dodge them.

One fallback per study. Zero material.

1 • Coming as you are. Ask everyone to hold out a hand, palm open, and keep it open, still, for thirty seconds.

Then: **"That is all he is asking for. An open hand. Not a clean hand."** (*Variant B, in addition: "Think of a stain you have never managed to get out. Do not name it."*)

2 • Savior, Master, Sovereign. No chairs: "Stand up and place yourselves in the room. At the back, if you are watching from a distance. In the middle, if you want to learn. At the front, if you accept that he decides." Then: **"Where did you put yourself? Why there?"**

3 • His Word. "Quote me, from memory, one sentence someone once said to you that you have never forgotten." Listen to them. Then: **"Why has that one stayed? Because someone was saying it to you.** The Word is of that order."

4 • Prayer. One minute of complete silence, all together, with no instructions. Then: **"What came up?"** The silence is the object.

5 • The baptism of the Holy Spirit. "Clench your fist, hard." Then try to put an object into the closed hand. Impossible. **"Open it."** And place it there. "A hard heart receives nothing. This is not about deserving. It is about opening." (*Ezekiel 36:26*)

6 • Water baptism. "Hold your breath as long as you can." Wait. Then, when they gasp: **"Down. Up. Death, then life. That is your baptism."**

7 • Heart surgery. "Think of a name. Do not say it." Then: **"How many years?"** Each person answers with a **number only.** The number is enough to measure the weight, and nobody has been exposed.

8 • The family altar. "In one sentence: the last time **your whole** household stopped at the same moment, for the same thing." Many will not find one. **That silence is the object.**

9 • Being with Jesus. "Take out your phone. Say yesterday's screen time out loud." They will. Then: **"And with Jesus, yesterday, how long?"** Do not comment. Let the silence stand.

10 • Being sent. "In thirty seconds, tell us one good thing that has happened to you this year." They all do it, effortlessly. Then: **"You have just given a testimony. You took no training course."** (*John 9:25*)

11 • Discovering the gift. "Name one thing you do well and think is unremarkable." Then the group tells each person **what it sees** in him. **"What looks unremarkable to you is often your gift. That is why you cannot see it."**

12 • Entering the harvest. "Say out loud three first names of people around you. Just the names." Then: **"That is your field. You have just said it out loud."**

The rule, corrected: if you have the object, use the object. If you do not, use the fallback. **Never run a session without "Connect": that is where the heart opens. But never cancel one for lack of material.**

Notes for the author • what did not survive translation

Read this before you publish the English edition. These are the places where a French device died in English and had to be replaced by the argument that is still true.

1. C.I.E. → C.I.T., and the "Cie = compagnie" pun is gone. In French, *C.I.E.* (Consolateur, Intercesseur, Enseignant) also reads as *Cie*, "company", and you leaned on that: "the Greek word and the French word say the

same thing." **English has no such pun.** *Comforter, Intercessor, Teacher* gives **C.I.T.**, which spells nothing. I removed the wordplay and kept what is actually true: *pará + klētos* = "the One called to stand beside you", therefore "He is my Companion" is right **because of the etymology**, not because of the initials. Check the sentence in study 5 — it now says exactly that, and no more.

2. S.M.S. survives, but "Seigneur" became "Sovereign", not "Lord". "Savior, Master, Lord" would have given S.M.L. and killed the text-message gesture. I used **Sovereign**, which keeps S.M.S. and keeps the meaning (he commands, he has the wheel). The daily challenge — "text yourself an S.M.S. every morning" — still works in English. But you should know that **"Sovereign" is not the ordinary English rendering of *kyrios*; "Lord" is.** If a theologically alert reader objects, the answer is: it is a mnemonic, not a translation. I state "he is Lord" inside the gloss so nothing is lost.

3. The paraclete translation note was rebuilt from scratch. The French version turned on the NBS reading *défenseur* where the reader expected *consolateur*. That comparison means nothing in English. I rebuilt it on the English versions: **ESV and NASB say "Helper", the KJV says "Comforter", the NIV and NRSV say "Advocate", the CSB says "Counselor".** The pastoral point is preserved and is actually sharper: **the ESV reader who has heard "Comforter" all his life will open John 14:16 and not find it.** Same lesson: do not argue the translation, teach the Greek word.

4. Matthew 6:6 — the "cellier" argument had to be re-evidenced, and one factual claim in the French was wrong. Two things you need to know: - **The French text says the proof is "in the same Gospel, fourteen verses later" and cites Luke 12:24. That is not right.** Matthew 6:6 is Matthew; Luke 12:24 is Luke. And within Luke 12, the gap between v. 3 and v. 24 is twenty-one verses, not fourteen. I corrected the wording. Your skeptic profile would have caught this. - **The ESV does not say "inner room" in Matthew 6:6. It says "your room."** ("Inner room" is the NASB; "closet" is the KJV.) So in English the argument cannot be made from the Matthew page at all — it has to be made from **Luke 12:24, where the ESV renders the same Greek word *tameion* as "storehouse"** ("they have neither storehouse nor barn"). That rendering is verified and it is the strongest evidence you have in English. The section now runs on it.

5. "Parole de Vie" → "a plain-English version (e.g. NIrV)." There is no English Bible that is the exact equivalent of *Parole de Vie* (a controlled vocabulary of ~3,500 words). The NIrV is the nearest functional match. I did not invent a French-style word count for it; I described it as "short sentences, small vocabulary".

6. The rationale for the reference version changed. The French text justifies the NBS as "the most literal of the mainstream French versions". That claim does not transfer — in English the ESV is one literal version among several (NASB, LSB, NKJV are as literal or more). I wrote instead that the ESV is "essentially literal", which is Crossway's own description and is defensible. **The copyright warning was re-pointed from the Société biblique française to Crossway.**

7. MacLafferty's version practice. The French says his booklet quotes Segond/Colombe by default and the Bible en français courant when he wants it to land. In English I wrote the same behavior without naming versions ("a literal version by default... a plainer one when he wants the verse to hit"), because I could not verify which English versions his booklet actually uses. **Check his booklet and put the real version names in.**

8. Psalm 5:4 → Psalm 5:3. The French cites "Psaume 5.4" in study 4. French and English Psalm versification differ by one verse in psalms with a superscription: the French verse 4 ("in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch") is **Psalm 5:3** in English Bibles. Corrected. The same shift may affect other psalms if you add references later.

9. 2 Corinthians 13:13 → 2 Corinthians 13:14. The French Bibles number the benediction ("the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...") as 13:13. **English Bibles, including the ESV, number it 13:14.** Corrected in studies 4 and 8 and in "What holds the twelve together". If you print a French and an English edition side by side, this is a real discrepancy your leaders will hit.

10. "Retourner à l'Autel", "STEPS", "STEPS SHIFT FR". The title is kept in French with "(Back to the Altar)" given once, on first use. STEPS and STEPS SHIFT FR are kept as proper names.

11. Tone. The French *tu* is rendered as "you" throughout, and the imperative register is kept hard. **No guardrail has been softened.** "Ne renvoie JAMAIS quelqu'un se réconcilier avec un agresseur" is "NEVER send anyone back to reconcile with an abuser", in capitals, in the same place.