INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

WHY JOINING A CHURCH IS ACTUALLY CRITICAL TO A GOD-HONORING LIFE.

>>> GRACISM & WHY IT’S TAKING OVER.

>> HOT RUMOR! Shhhh! A church doing big things!

ALSO INSIDE:
FREE SPIRITUAL GIFTS SURVEY
HOW TO PULL THE GRACE CARD ON UNSUSPECTING PEOPLE
A GREAT VISION & MISSION

A Publication of Grace International Church - www.unthinkchurch.org
Discover Grace
A Movement to reCover Faith

“No man is an island.”
We were built for relationships. We were designed for community. We were created to accomplish incredible exploits for God and to make the name of Jesus Christ famous in the Earth. We can’t do that alone. It involves partnership, love, connection, accountability, prayer, and standing shoulder to shoulder with other members of God’s great family of believers.

You were designed for more than living life as the Lone Ranger. This world needs you. This world needs us. We need each other. Through this concept we pool the resources and gifts God has given us into a movement that takes this nation by storm for God.

Commitment brings blessings & security. Ask the woman in a long-term relationship wondering when he’ll pop the question. She deserves the best from her desired partner. God deserves the best from us.

Surely church membership has lost its luster. In a new age of spirituality and not “religion”, we’ve determined we can live the full life of God without being committed to His church. The problem is that God still loves His church and it’s flaws and still chooses the local church body to accomplish His purposes. The church is the bride of Christ! Try telling a married man you are cool with him but not his wife. If He’s a real man, He’ll remind you that they are a package deal. So how do we solve this dilemma?

{We try again.}
Let’s {un}think our current tailspin and recommit to God’s plan. Let’s renew our passion for His church and start a movement that recovers Grace. Let’s build something together. For His glory. Welcome to Grace.

- Pastor Ken Patterson
MEMBERSHIP CLASS SCHEDULE & SYLLABUS

Session One - The Movement - Page 9

In our first session, we’ll cover the introduction to the entire Grace|101 program as well as the Course Outline.

Major Topics:
- Biblical Foundation of the Church
- Biblical Purpose of the Church
- History of Grace International Church
- Why Church Membership is vital to your faith.
- Introduction to “I Am A Church Member”

Session Two - The Mission - Page 14

In our second session, we’ll cover critical matters of church beliefs & your spiritual growth as a member.

Major Topics:
- Basic Beliefs & Doctrines of Grace
- Developing Your Spiritual Disciplines
- Getting The Most Out Of Life & Contributing The Most to God's Kingdom
- Being Both a Unifying & Functioning Member of Grace

Session Three - The Model - Page 18

In our third session, we’ll cover developing your gifts, community, & the importance of boldness in your faith.

Major Topics:
- Spiritual Gifts Introduction
- Evangelism with G.R.A.C.E.
- The Critical Nature of Small Groups & How They’ll Change The World
- Church Membership - Consumer vs. Producer
- Praying for Church Leaders

Session Four - The Mandate - Page 29

In our fourth session, we’ll cover the basics to serving & supporting the vision and efforts of your church.

Major Topics:
- Supporting through Time, Talent, and Treasure
- Service Opportunities & Outreach Structure at Grace
- Revisiting the Vision & Mission of Grace International Church
- Assignment of Class Project & Planning Group Celebration Activity
- Treasure Church Membership as a Gift
- Signing of Membership Covenant
- Our First Communion as a Family
- Pictures, Certificates, & Closing
One. Amazing. Church.
By Donnie Reynolds

Having a church family is an absolutely amazing blessing. Every church has its different qualities, strengths and weaknesses, and most of which are a reflection of the Pastor. In fact a study by Thom Rainer showed that 90% of the reason someone chooses a church is because of the Pastor.

Pastor Ken has shown his faithfulness through loving God and loving people. The history of Grace proves that. In a pastor, I’d want faithfulness, an ability to be led by the Holy Spirit in obedience to God’s call, and a desire to help me become everything God has called me to be.

I don’t know of too many other Pastors who are as sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and to obeying the vision that God gives than Pastor Ken. Pastor Ken serves Grace International by helping empower others to serve the Lord using the gifts God has given them. I truly believe that churches are God’s gifts to communities and pastors are God’s gifts to churches. You couldn’t be more blessed by God to have Pastor Ken and Grace International Church as your church family. -Pastor Donnie
Meet The Patterson Family
The Crew Serving You

Ken Patterson serves as the Lead Pastor of Grace International Church. As an Air Force brat, Pastor Ken has traveled the world for his entire childhood experiencing many countries and cultures starting his Christian experience as a drummer wherever his Dad was called to lead in ministry. In these unique experiences is where a vision for multicultural, multiethnic ministry began!

Pastor Ken holds a Bachelor of Arts from Morgan State University, as well as a Master’s in Educational Administration from the University of Phoenix. Pastor Ken also plans to begin the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program in the fall of 2013. Pastor Ken serves bivocationally as he also teaches 4th grade in Maryland’s Public School System.

Jo-Ann is originally from Baltimore, and has served in the field of Human Resources for well over 15 years. She has also served through music ministry her entire life as the daughter of Pastor James Eldridge. She serves her family as an incredible example of a Godly wife to Pastor Ken, and an amazing mother to her children. Jo-Ann currently serves at Grace through various ministries and projects, and still maintains fresh energy to serve on the worship team!

Pastor Ken & Jo-Ann married in July of 2005 after meeting through a local music ministry and have been blessed ever since! They live in Baltimore with their two beautiful children, Corey, and Kyle.

“A man ought to live so that everybody knows he is a Christian... and most of all, his family ought to know.”
-D. L. Moody
GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Today’s Date: ______________________________

Name: ________________________________________________________________________________

Birth Date: _______/_______/_______

Address: _____________________________________________________________________________

Phone #: (Primary) ______________________________ (Secondary)____________________________

Family Information:

Spouse’s Name: _______________________________________________________________________

Birth Date: _______/_______/_______

Child Name(s): _______________________________________________________________________

Birth Date: _______/_______/_______

Child Name(s): _______________________________________________________________________

Birth Date: _______/_______/_______

I. Salvation, Baptism, and Membership (please check all that apply).

❑ I have placed my faith in Jesus Christ, becoming a Christian at the age of _______.
❑ I am still considering a relationship with Jesus Christ. I have not fully placed my faith in Jesus Christ.
❑ I have been baptized by immersion (fully “dunked” in water) since becoming a Christian.
❑ I have not been baptized but would like the church to contact me to schedule a baptism.
❑ I am a licensed/ordained Elder, Minister or Deacon
❑ I am moving my membership from the following church (please list name, city, and state):
__________________________________________________________________________________

II. Growing and Serving (please check all that apply).

❑ I am already in a small group led by _____________________________________________________.
❑ I am not in a small group but would like more information about being in one.
❑ I am already serving at Grace International Church in the following areas:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

❑ I would rather be serving at Grace International Church in the following areas:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
GETTING TO KNOW YOU - CONTINUED

III. Your Church Interest and Background
1. Are you currently a member of another church? Yes________ No________
2. If yes, which church? _________________________________________
3. What brought you to Grace International Church?
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
4. How long have you been attending Grace International Church? ________________
5. Please list any organizations outside of Grace International Church that you care deeply about and are involved in:
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
6. Why are you potentially considering membership at Grace International Church?
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
7. What do you hope to learn, by the conclusion of Grace|101 about Grace International Church?
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

IV. Your Spiritual Journey
1. Do you believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God? Yes_______ No_______
2. Have you come to the place in your life where you know for certain that if you were to die today, you would spend eternity in Heaven with Jesus Christ? Yes_______ No_______
3. Suppose you were to die today and stand before God and he were to say to you “Why should I let you into my heaven?” what would you say?
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
4. If a friend asked you: “I’m interested in spiritual things. How can I become a Christian?” how would you answer him/her?

5. Please share your personal testimony: (As an example, you may share what your life was like before you became a Christian, how you became a Christian, and what your life is like now that you’re a Christian.)
Every generation has them. The young pioneers that have figured out that the church prior to their generation has it all wrong and they are going to set the church straight. This is an incredible feat as the church is 2000 years old. We’re going to throw away 2000 years of church for a fad?! 50 years ago it was “The Jesus People Movement”. They said let’s do away with institutional church and instead meet in small groups in our homes and such. While they tried hard, they failed. 2000 years doesn’t go away just like that. Fast Forward to just the past decade. The Emergent Church. These were the conversationalists, the beer drinkers, and the ones bent on sofas and church at the local barista instead of the “Institutional Church”. While they tried hard, they failed. 2000 years doesn’t go away just like that.

One thing that’s consistent about each of these groups is that they rejected the church and wanted something new. We say “unthink church”, but trust us...we’re not that crazy. We don’t intend to throw away 2,000 years of God’s glorious church just to be known for living on the edge. Of course you know by now that ‘unthink church’ is simply a rally cry for those who have given up on church to release their hurts, frustrations, and issues toward church and allow us to, with pure hearts, return to God’s model. His model is not flawed, we are. So with broken hearts, we want to try again.

Think back to the church in the book of Acts if you can. An incredible group of people that devoted their whole lives to each other. They ate, prayed, and studied the Bible together more than just on Sunday morning. It was a movement for Christ. That’s what we’re after here at Grace International Church. We are continuing a movement that began over 2,000 years ago. Journey with us.
The Purpose of the Church
The Biblical Mission

According to Scripture, the local church’s mission is to proclaim, preserve, and display the gospel.

1. __________________________ : Jesus charged the apostles with proclaiming the gospel to all nations (Matt. 28:18-20), and he established the church to carry out that task. Preaching the gospel is central to the church’s mission (2 Tim. 2:15, 4:2)

2. __________________________ : Paul calls the church a pillar and supporter of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is charged with the task of preserving the true gospel throughout the ages (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 1:13; Tit. 1:9). It does this through faithfully preaching the gospel, refuting false teaching, and maintaining doctrinal and moral purity among its members.

3. __________________________ : Paul says that through the church God makes known his wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Eph. 3:10). Through the holy lives of its members and its unity-in-diversity (1 Cor. 12:12-26), the church is called to be a vivid, living color display of the gospel it preaches.

Is Church Membership Biblical?
The New Testament Biblical Precedent

1. Matthew 18:15-17: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault...if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you...If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” The ability to exclude someone from “the church” presupposes that it’s known who belongs to “the church” as a member in the first place.

2. Acts 5:12-13: “Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem.” So, people faced the decision of whether or not they would join the church in Jerusalem. This joining is more public and definite than an informal association.

3. In 1 Timothy 5:9-12, Paul gives Timothy instructions for enrolling widows on the list of those receiving support from the church. He writes, “Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works...” While this isn’t conclusive evidence for formal church membership, it’s tough to imagine that the church in Ephesus would have kept a list of widows but not have any formal means of identifying everyone who belonged to the church.

4. 1 Corinthians 5:12-13: “For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside.” Paul called upon the Corinthian church to judge those who were inside the church, not those who were outside. They were responsible for the testimony of those who belonged to the church, not those who didn’t. This passage makes no sense if the Corinthian church didn’t have some public, formal means by which people identified themselves with the church.

5. 2 Corinthians 2:6: Paul writes concerning a man the Corinthian church had excommunicated, “For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.” This man’s exclusion from the church was a punishment by the majority. You can’t have a majority unless you have a definite set of people from which a majority is constituted.
Why Should You Join a Church?
Can’t I be “spiritual” all by myself?

One of the greatest threats to the advancement of God’s Kingdom here in America is our commitment to non-commitment. Our advertisers are touting that they are no longer requiring contracts for phones, cable, etc... as a response to the current trends. Even marriage, the most committed institution, is falling prey to “no-fault divorces” and other views designed to lessen the impact and risk of commitment. We believe firmly that through covenant commitment, we experience greater blessings from God through a community of believers---even if it isn’t our church.

Corporations see the benefit of community, even though individuals may not. The idea is that when our efforts, energy, and resources are combined the effect is not addition, but rather multiplication. In God’s Kingdom, if the effect is multiplication, so is the impact for His Kingdom, and the blessings for His followers.

In addition to the New Testament’s teaching that every Christian should submit to a local church and its leaders (see Matt. 18:15-20, Heb. 13:17), there are many other good reasons to join a church:

1. **Assure yourself.** Membership is the church’s way of affirming the validity of someone’s profession of faith (Matt. 16:19, 18:18). The church looks at a person’s life, hears their explanation of the gospel and how they came to believe it, and says, “You look like a Christian to us. So join us. Watch over our lives and we’ll watch over yours.” So, while membership in a church doesn’t guarantee that someone is a Christian, it should assure believers of the genuineness of their faith.

2. **Evangelize the world.** We can preach the gospel to our community and the world much better together than we can apart. Not only that, but as we covenant with other Christians to love, encourage and admonish one another, we display a living, breathing image of the gospel to the world.

3. **Live & Share the Truth of God’s Word.** As the members of a church support and submit to its teaching, they collectively say, “This is the truth! World, pay attention!” and their unity in doing so works to expose confusion and imitators of the true gospel.

4. **Edify the church.** When we join a local church we let the pastors and other members of that church know that we intend to attend regularly, give faithfully, pray for the church, and serve the church as we have opportunity. We allow fellow believers to have greater expectations of us in these areas, and we hold them responsible in these ways as well. So join a church in order to build it up (Eph. 4:11-16). You can do far more to build up the church as a committed member than as a detached, autonomous attender. And it will do good to your own soul as well.

5. **Glorify God.** Jesus told his disciples, “A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35, NIV). We testify to the world about what God is like by how we love one another—and a committed, persevering, accountable love is a far greater picture of God’s love than a picky-and-choosy, I’ll-only-be-involved-with-the-people-I-want kind of “love.” By committing to one another as members of the same church we display the glory of God’s love—a committed, persevering, transforming love—as we image it in our lives together, and so bring him glory.

(Much of this material has been adapted from Nine Marks of a Healthy Church by Mark Dever, pages 151-159)
A Brief History of Grace
Relentless Display of Passion

In the summer of 2004 through much prayer, Pastor Ken received a tremendous vision from the Lord of a multicultural & multiethnic ministry based on solid teaching & worship that would transform this region. The hope was that in some way we’d connect the gospel to a generation of believers who hadn’t given up on God, but were challenged by their life experiences and experiences with church. In 2005 we launched, originally called “Grace Evangel Church”, but due to the confusion behind the word “Evangel”, we later changed our name to Grace International Church in 2008...launching a new era. We often refer to this as the official beginning of our church.

Since our inception, we’ve seen many lives changed through the Gospel message as well as through our service to the Greater Baltimore Metro Area. We have partnered with organizations such as SOWEBO, Habitat for Humanity, Moveable Feast, Hollins-Roundhouse Association, The University of Maryland Medical Center, Christmas Wish, The Maryland VA Hospital, and others in bringing real change to our community through serving and building channels for ministry. We are currently continuing to raise our level of outreach and look forward to all God has in store for us!

Our Staff & Leadership
The Dream Team.

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Sunday Experience: 11a

Denomination: None
Affiliation: Willow Creek Community Association of Churches (WCA)
Reflection Assignment
Looking Ahead

Homework Questions: (use separate paper, if needed).

1. Explain how country club membership and church membership are so different? Give scriptural references to support the differences in church membership.

2. Explain why church membership is a biblical concept, using 1 Corinthians 12 as your biblical foundation.

3. How is the “love chapter,” in 1 Corinthians 13, related to church membership?

4. How are the different parts of the body (ear, nose, mouth, hand, foot, eyes, etc.) related to church membership? How do these parts seem to play out from your observation of Grace International Church?

5. What did Paul mean when he said in Colossians 3:14 that love is “the perfect bond of unity”? What does that mean for our church today?

6. Continuing with this unity thread, how do we respond when someone brings gossip to you in your church? What does the Bible say about gossip?

7. Knowing that many in our current culture are dealing with church issues, commitment issues, etc...how can we present a picture of a great church that encourages those far from church to see the value in being connected to a family of believers through being a part of our church?
Session Two: The Mission
Beliefs & Doctrine Shape Our Local Mission

By Trenz Pruca

One of the first things you should know about any organization is why it exists and what particularly it is aiming for. It’s easy to assume that every church exists for the same reason, however God’s Kingdom is much more diverse than that. Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, WaWa, and Panera Bread all sell coffee and treats yet they serve different purposes around those common items. Churches exist to make Jesus famous (no we’re not selling Jesus, He’s free), and each church does that in a unique context called vision. The vision for Grace International Church is different than the vision from most other churches and that’s important to know both what you’re either partnering with, or why you may decide there is a different vision you are called to.

At Grace International Church we are unapologetically called to preaching and teaching God’s word in a way that translates into true life change for the hearers, members, and attenders. Beyond that, we feel absolutely and intentionally called to multicultural and multiethnic ministry. This being said, we feel the best way to accomplish this incredible vision for God is through a focus on redemptive relationships, authentic community, and intimate worship. This along with our statement of values (shared in this packet) guides every decision we’ll ever make. In fact, one of the toughest things any church has to do is to have the discipline say “no” to good ideas that are not God’s ideas for us. This is important. This is the focus of this session. What drives us?

“With the changing tides of modern Churches it is necessary for us to know what we believe, know why we believe it and be able to share it with confidence.”
-Brett Clements

“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”
-Paul, The Apostle
Why Churches Have Doctrines
What is ‘doctrine’ anyway?

Our Answer is Simple...We love God's word and want the world to know.

1. Exploring the Truth of God's Word is the best growth tool. Paul calls right doctrine “sound” or “healthy” (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:3). False teaching, by contrast, is spiritually destructive (2 Pet. 2:1).

2. False teaching spreads. The New Testament warns us that false teaching spreads like gangrene (1 Tim. 2:17). Churches should draw boundaries for the sake of their health and even their very lives.

3. Eliminating controversies that distract us from our mission. Paul warned Timothy to “have nothing to do with ‘foolish controversies’” (2 Tim. 2:23; cf. Tit. 3:9). There comes a point at which it is no longer wise for a church to continue arguing over certain controversies. Clear boundaries keep a church from getting bogged down in endless quarrels and becoming distracted from its main work.

4. Jesus holds us responsible for sound doctrine. The New Testament holds church leaders—and whole churches (Gal. 1)—responsible to silence false teaching in the church (Tit. 1:10-11). Jesus rebukes churches that tolerated the presence of false teachers (Rev. 2-3), including the church at Pergamum, which merely had among them people who held to certain false teachings.

Our Statement of Faith
Rooted in the Word of God

The Grace International Church Family holds firm in our faith to the Holy Bible, without error or mistake, as the complete and only divine revelation. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12, 13). We strongly believe that there is one living and true God eternally existing in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial (big word for ‘of the same essence’), and therefore each deserves the same worship and obedience. (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

We believe we are all born in sin and completely separated from God, and regardless of our best efforts, there's nothing we can do to remedy this problem, however through God's grace and His precious Holy Spirit, we’ve been rescued and brought into a wonderful and purposeful life in HIM. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1–3, 12).

We confess that though we are unable to fulfill what God requires, Christ did for us when He died on the cross. Because of Christ's death, God has forgiven us of our sins, reconciled us to Himself, and justified us by making Christ our righteousness. (Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3–5).

We believe that the True Christian life is reflected by the filling and leading of God’s Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Romans 8:9). We believe some of our personal preferences, rituals, and traditions could have been more us and not God and therefore we’re open to reopening God’s word and getting it right, hence the 'unthinkchurch'. (Galatians 5:1).
The Values of Grace - Code7
What Colors our Decision-Making

Seven summarizing Biblically based foundations for which decision making, leadership development, staffing, missional practice, among other things, are:

1. **Biblical Teaching** as the catalyst for authentic transformation both individually and corporately (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 4:12) that not only honors God’s design, but strengthens the believer. (Hebrews 10:24-25; Colossians 3:16; Romans 12:1)

2. **Community** through unity and relationships in intentional diversity along ethnic, social, economic, generational, and cultural lines as the testimony of God’s power to heal and bring reconciliation in the World (1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Revelation 7:9-10, Galatians 3:28), and as the model for true Biblical community, accountability, discipleship and encouragement, and the blueprint for true life transformation. (Acts 2:44-47; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25)

3. **Leadership** as a critical element in the development of disciples, the modeling of the vision and mission, and encouragement of continual growth among the congregation (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-4; Acts 20:28), as well as leading in a spirit of excellence that honors God and inspires and promotes ownership of the vision as a prerequisite to greater blessings & resources to advance God’s Kingdom. This fully embraces methods of evaluation, reflection, review, and a commitment toward continual improvement. (Daniel 6:1-5; Malachi 1:6-14; Colossians 3:23; 1 Kings 10:1-10)

4. **Service** as a missional movement and developing our spiritual gifts in service through the local church as the catalyst for infecting the world with the hope of the Gospel (Isaiah 58:1-14; Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 25:35-40), and as the starting point for earning the opportunity to touch hearts with the Gospel (John 3:16; Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 16:14; John 13:35).

5. **Generosity** as a testimony to the power of a transformed life. Our leaders, staff, and church model outrageous generosity by going above and beyond to give sacrificially to the work of Christ in our region (Luke 6:38; Proverbs 11:24-25; Acts 2:45), and our church does this by demonstrating generosity towards the community at large as the rule, and not the exception.

6. **Courage** with bold prayers, bold risks, and bold initiatives that honor God and reflect our dependence on Him to accomplish His will. (Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 31:6; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:6)

7. **Intentional Diversity** colors our efforts to go outside of our comfort zones and natural conventions to diversify our ministry, outreach, and approach as we fulfill our vision & mission, while presenting a preview of the answered prayer of Jesus & our eternal hope. (John 17:21-24; Revelation 7:9; Revelation 14:6; Acts 1:8)
Reflection Assignment
Looking Ahead

Homework Questions: (use separate paper, if needed).

1. Explain why churches have statements of faith, value, vision, and mission. What examples in the Bible are there of such statements?

2. Find a key passage in the Bible that talks about Christians being like servants. How would you describe a servant as it applies to being a member of a church? How important is serving others to you?

3. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Explain how the attitude of Christ in this passage becomes a pattern for us as church members.

4. Using scriptural backing, explain why the pastor’s family is such an important factor in his ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-5).

5. Reading 1 Timothy 3:2-7, explain the importance of prayer for the spiritual and physical life of the pastor (dealing with temptation, exhaustion, and managing public perceptions). Is “above reproach” even possible for the pastor?

6. Which one of the 7 Core Values of Grace International Church do you appreciate most? Why?

7. What is false doctrine, and why is it so dangerous for the church? (Galatians 4:17 & 6:12-13) Provide some examples either from the Bible or examples in recent culture.
There is no shortage of dream and vision in our nation. Just take a few moments to listen to the average person in conversation and you’ll hear dreams of world peace, prosperity, happiness, and goals that truly have the potential to impact the world. What the world lacks though, is execution. Everyone has goals. Everyone plans to start tomorrow.

At Grace International Church, we do not pretend that the enormous vision that God has given us will be accomplished simply by talking about it. One step forward is better than 1000 better plans sitting still. What we’ve noticed (and you probably have too) is that every human, every organization, every vision has 24 hours in a day. Much of the difference between success and failure lies in executing a plan and directing your efforts in that direction.

What makes organizations different, what makes individuals different, is the amount of execution that goes into moving the vision forward.

We believe God has given us a clear and compelling vision. We also believe God has given us an incredible plan of execution rooted in His word. It is up to us to collaborate our efforts and energy into seeing the vision through. We are called to make disciples of all nations, to serve a dying world, and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Biblical Teaching. Radical Outreach. Small Groups. What a plan.

Our Mission: Redemptive Relationships. Authentic Community. Intimate Worship. But How? This session we’ll show you our focus, and how we’ll go about accomplishing our vision. Glad you could join us.
Outreach & Evangelism
Redemptive Relationships

The first relationship that needs to be redeemed is the relationship between the sinner and God. This broken relationship extends to other relationships in our lives often marked by pain and frustration. **We need redeeming.** Our primary focus then, is working with God to redeem those far from God through the Gospel Message.

When we survey the landscape of churches today, we see lots of energy, time, and resources spent on internal pursuits (new items, church architecture, etc...). All of those pursuits are absolutely vital to continuing the corporate worship experience each week, however those pursuits are always secondary.

**Our primary responsibility as the Church of Jesus Christ is to proclaim to the masses the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

The sad truth, however, is that many churches are falling critically short of focusing on sharing the Gospel and evangelizing those far from God. We prefer to grow instead by attracting members of other churches, or those who already have committed themselves to Jesus Christ. This is tragic.

There are three potential reasons for this: Fear, lack of instruction on “how to evangelize”, and a lack of evangelism as a priority from church leadership. Grace International Church has been guilty at one point or another of all three. That’s the bad news. The good news is that we’re shifting our focus. We will focus our efforts on redemptive relationships in the following three areas:

1. **Redeeming the Sinner to God:** Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Jesus’ ultimate priority is the lost soul as he desires that they not only spend eternity with Him, but that they live out life here in a way that ultimately glorifies God. We will do this through:

   a. **Corporate Evangelism:** The entire church, or teams of members in the church, “hitting the streets” with gospel tracts, and other items in an effort to share the gospel with those in our community.

   b. **Personal Evangelism:** Working diligently to train and encourage each of our members in the area of simply sharing your story with another person. Personal evangelism through relationships is perhaps the greatest opportunity we have to witness to others as you have earned the trust of your close friends, and the difference your life in Christ provides should be visibly on display to reflect God’s glory and point others to Him.

2. **Redeeming the Believer to the Church:** Church membership is critical to maximizing a personal relationship with God. We will seek to encourage those who are looking for a church home to consider partnering with Grace International Church as a place to grow and be taught the word of God.

3. **Redeeming interpersonal relationships & the family unit:** Many families and homes are broken due to a breach in personal relationships. We focus heavy on the family unit (marriage) as the foundation for rearing children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. We also make efforts to encourage our single believers in the biblical direction of courtships, relational boundaries, and utilizing single hood to the glory of God.
Small Group Bible Studies
Authentic Community

Relationships are vital to God, and should therefore be vital to us. Our world longs for the community we used to feel when neighbors knew each other, we dialogued on the telephone for hours on end, family members saw each other more than once a year. Not only do we need community, but we need community that brings us to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

In the early churches there weren’t church buildings. Church existed in homes through what amounted to be long and extended Bible Studies. People were so passionate about doing life together and studying God’s word together that these meetings were known to last into the morning hours and occur several times in a single week. (Disclaimer: In case you’re wondering, we’re not saying that’s what we do now---you can relax.)

The point is this: We were built for community. At Grace International Church we place a high premium on community for accountability, spiritual growth and development, and discipleship. We feel it’s impossible to truly live out the benefits of community by simply coming to church once a week. So through much prayer, fasting, and research, we started Grace Groups.

Grace Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God’s Word. (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25).

**We’ll do this by focusing on four primary activities:**

- **SHARE**: Each week we’ll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing may include planned “sharing questions.” But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable. The idea is to develop open, honest and nurturing relationships with one another.

- **STUDY**: Each week we’ll study a section from God’s Word that relates to the previous Sunday’s sermon. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

- **SUPPORT**: Each week we’ll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.

- **SERVE**: Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Grace Groups usually in cycles of 13 weeks, three times a year with a one month break in between each cycle (January-March, May-July, September-November).

These are held by the gracious servant hearts and hospitality of members of our church who open their homes throughout the region one night a week for the facilitation of discussion.

- "Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with you" (Matthew 18:20)
Corporate Reflection & Biblical Teaching

Intimate Worship

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” - 1 Peter 2:9

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created.” - Rev 4:11

Worship is our foremost priority as believers. Essentially, worship is ascribing worth and glory to something or someone. Worship is as natural to humans as drooling is to a baby. The Bible proves this time and time again as other gods dominated the affections of many nations in the Bible, and many times God’s own children. We’ll worship anything. Many worship their jobs, their families, their favorite sports teams, politicians, their favorite celebrities, etc...anything.

Media sells simply based upon our desire to be like someone. Subliminally, we are taught that if we just had the same pair of shoes, shopped at the same store, sipped the same coffee, or listened to the same music as our celebrity affection that in some way we can be just like them. That’s idolatry. Idolatry is simply misplaced worship. Idolatry should be enough proof for the average person to see our bent toward dumping our affections so easily on people and things.

God simply says: “That belongs to me.” Following people is not the problem, so long as they aren’t your idol and they’re leading you to a deeper relationship with Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Our worship belongs to God though. He is our creator, deliverer, and sustainer and therefore all of our days belong to Him.

How then do we worship? Jesus responds simply: “In spirit and truth.” It’s not enough to desire to worship. Our worship must be led by the right understanding.

Grace International Church is committed completely to the teaching of God’s word (truth), and the facilitation of corporate worship experiences through congregational singing experiences (spirit) that reflect hearts toward God.

Multicultural Worship is at the forefront of our endeavors when planning worship experiences. Keep in mind that because our church and vision are expressed through a diversity of cultures, experiences, and tastes, that this is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of our church. How do we plan worship so that as many as possible can reflect and participate in a way consistent with their cultural experiences? Easy: we don’t.

Part of the beauty of being in a diverse crowd is that we are united when we focus on what our common objective is. When at a football game, most are there because in spite of their ethnic and cultural differences, they are united in their hopes of a team winning. This allows them to escape from the convenient and legitimate differences they have and unite their passions and energies toward supporting the same goal.

The same with church. As we come together, we are coming together in our common goal of glorifying God in corporate worship. Although the worship music and style will reflect experiences with some of the people some of the time, we know it’s not going to reflect the experiences of most of the people most of the time. Therefore, the key to multicultural worship in a diverse setting is knowing that we surrender our cultural comforts, musical tastes, and our private worship preferences for the glory of God as we come together in one voice singing the praises of God.
Corporate Reflection & Biblical Teaching

Intimate Worship

*Singing is not the only form of worship.* We do not suggest that singing is the only form of worship, for anything that is done for the glory of God is a form of worship. Cleaning the sanctuary, serving in our community, distributing Bibles, babysitting a married couple’s child so that they may have a rare opportunity for a date-night is all a form of worship. Through your walk with God you are enhancing the life and faith of others, and this brings God glory. We simply refer to singing as it is one of the most common forms of worship in a corporate church setting.

**The Goal: grow in truth; be able to worship on your own.** We desire to end the days where the only time people are expressing their relationship with God and growing in His Word is on Sunday. Just as independence is the goal of adolescence into adulthood, you have truly grown in Christ when you move beyond only being fed on Sundays. This cycle propels you to want to include others in these experiences (Redemptive Relationships). The cycle then continues.

**Biblical Teaching is Critical**

Intimate Worship

One of the greatest threats to your natural growth is an unhealthy diet. It follows that one of the greatest threats to your spiritual growth is unhealthy, unbiblical teaching. The Bible tells us that in the end, this will actually be the preferred diet of those professing Christ.

> "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" - 2 Timothy 4:3

> “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.” - 1 John 4:1-3

We are committed to preaching the truth of Jesus Christ, and teaching the truth of His Gospel. The Bible warns us in many passages about guarding our hearts, spirits, and ears against a spiritual diet that could run us off of the course God has laid before us. Consequently if you’re committed to growing in your faith, you have to take what you spiritually feed on seriously.

Although no preacher is perfect (certainly not our own pastor), there are some examples of false teaching that you should be aware of:

1. Any message completely anti-biblical (Jesus wasn’t the son of God, Jesus didn’t die, there are many roads that lead to Heaven, everyone goes to Heaven, etc...)
2. Any message that mixes other philosophies/world views with the Gospel (Humanism, secularism, pragmatism, etc...)
3. Any message that emphasizes only one aspect of a whole, or essentially a half-truth that ignores a counterpart (no such thing as “sin”, “judgment”, “sickness”, poverty, etc...)

What you will receive at Grace International Church is a full and firm commitment to the truth of God’s word from a pastor in full fear of God in preaching and teaching (James 3:1). Some of the Bible is uncomfortable and flies in the face of much of the ear-soothing messages that dominate our day. However, you can rest assured we are committed to the full truth of God’s word in an effort to facilitate your spiritual growth and development.
Spiritual Gifts Survey
Using God’s gifts to you for His Glory

This is not a test, so there are no wrong answers. The Spiritual Gifts Survey consists of 80 statements. Some items reflect concrete actions; other items are descriptive traits; and still others are statements of belief.

• Select the one response you feel best characterizes yourself and place that number in the blank provided. Record your answer in the blank beside each item.
• Do not spend too much time on any one item. Remember, it is not a test. Usually your immediate response is best.
• Please give an answer for each item. Do not skip any items.
• Do not ask others how they are answering or how they think you should answer.
• Work at your own pace.

Your response choices are:
  5—Highly characteristic of me/definitely true for me
  4—Most of the time this would describe me/be true for me
  3—Frequently characteristic of me/true for me–about 50 percent of the time
  2—Occasionally characteristic of me/true for me–about 25 percent of the time
  1—Not at all characteristic of me/definitely untrue for me

  ____ 1. I have the ability to organize ideas, resources, time, and people effectively.
  ____ 2. I am willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching.
  ____ 3. I am able to relate the truths of God to specific situations.
  ____ 4. I have a God-given ability to help others grow in their faith.
  ____ 5. I possess a special ability to communicate the truth of salvation.
  ____ 6. I have the ability to make critical decisions when necessary.
  ____ 7. I am sensitive to the hurts of people.
  ____ 8. I experience joy in meeting needs through sharing possessions.
  ____ 9. I enjoy studying.
  ____10. I have delivered God’s message of warning and judgment.
  ____11. I am able to sense the true motivation of persons and movements.
  ____12. I have a special ability to trust God in difficult situations.
  ____13. I have a strong desire to contribute to the establishment of new churches.
  ____14. I take action to meet physical and practical needs rather than merely talking about or planning to help.
  ____15. I enjoy entertaining guests in my home.
  ____16. I can adapt my guidance to fit the maturity of those working with me.
  ____17. I can delegate and assign meaningful work.
  ____18. I have an ability and desire to teach.
  ____19. I am usually able to analyze a situation correctly.
  ____20. I have a natural tendency to encourage others.
Spiritual Gifts Survey
Using God’s gifts to you for His Glory

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____ 21. I am willing to take the initiative in helping other Christians grow in their faith.
____ 22. I have an acute awareness of the emotions of other people, such as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger.
____ 23. I am a cheerful giver.
____ 24. I spend time digging into facts.
____ 25. I feel that I have a message from God to deliver to others.
____ 26. I can recognize when a person is genuine/honest.
____ 27. I am a person of vision (a clear mental portrait of a preferable future given by God). I am able to communicate vision in such a way that others commit to making the vision a reality.
____ 28. I am willing to yield to God’s will rather than question and waver.
____ 29. I would like to be more active in getting the gospel to people in other lands.
____ 30. It makes me happy to do things for people in need.
____ 31. I am successful in getting a group to do its work joyfully.
____ 32. I am able to make strangers feel at ease.
____ 33. I have the ability to plan learning approaches.
____ 34. I can identify those who need encouragement.
____ 35. I have trained Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.
____ 36. I am willing to do whatever it takes to see others come to Christ.
____ 37. I am attracted to people who are hurting.
____ 38. I am a generous giver.
____ 39. I am able to discover new truths.
____ 40. I have spiritual insights from Scripture concerning issues and people that compel me to speak out.
____ 41. I can sense when a person is acting in accord with God’s will.
____ 42. I can trust in God even when things look dark.
____ 43. I can determine where God wants a group to go and help it get there.
____ 44. I have a strong desire to take the gospel to places where it has never been heard.
____ 45. I enjoy reaching out to new people in my church and community.
____ 46. I am sensitive to the needs of people.
____ 47. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.
____ 48. I often am consulted when fellow Christians are struggling to make difficult decisions.
____ 49. I think about how I can comfort and encourage others in my congregation.
____ 50. I am able to give spiritual direction to others.
Spiritual Gifts Survey
Using God’s gifts to you for His Glory

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SESSION THREE

THE MODEL

51. I am able to present the gospel to lost persons in such a way that they accept the Lord and His salvation.
52. I possess an unusual capacity to understand the feelings of those in distress.
53. I have a strong sense of stewardship based on the recognition that God owns all things.
54. I have delivered to other persons messages that have come directly from God.
55. I can sense when a person is acting under God’s leadership.
56. I try to be in God’s will continually and be available for His use.
57. I feel that I should take the gospel to people who have different beliefs from me.
58. I have an acute awareness of the physical needs of others.
59. I am skilled in setting forth positive and precise steps of action.
60. I like to meet visitors at church and make them feel welcome.
61. I explain Scripture in such a way that others understand it.
62. I can usually see spiritual solutions to problems.
63. I welcome opportunities to help people who need comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counseling.
64. I feel at ease in sharing Christ with nonbelievers.
65. I can influence others to perform to their highest God-given potential.
66. I recognize the signs of stress and distress in others.
67. I desire to give generously and unpretentiously to worthwhile projects and ministries.
68. I can organize facts into meaningful relationships.
69. God gives me messages to deliver to His people.
70. I am able to sense whether people are being honest when they tell of their religious experiences.
71. I enjoy presenting the gospel to persons of other cultures and backgrounds.
72. I enjoy doing little things that help people.
73. I can give a clear, uncomplicated presentation.
74. I have been able to apply biblical truth to the specific needs of my church.
75. God has used me to encourage others to live Christlike lives.
76. I have sensed the need to help other people become more effective in their ministries.
77. I like to talk about Jesus to those who do not know Him.
78. I have the ability to make strangers feel comfortable in my home.
79. I have a wide range of study resources and know how to secure information.
80. I feel assured that a situation will change for the glory of God even when the situation seem impossible.
### Spiritual Gifts Survey

**Using God’s gifts to you for His Glory**

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<th>SESSION THREE</th>
<th>THE MODEL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual Gifts Survey</strong></td>
<td>Using God’s gifts to you for His Glory</td>
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Follow these directions to figure your score for each spiritual gift.

1. Place in each box your numerical response (1 - 5) to the item number which is indicated below the box.
2. For each gift, add the numbers in the boxes and put the total in the TOTAL box.

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Spiritual Gifts Survey
Using God’s gifts to you for His Glory
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GRAPHING YOUR PROFILE

1. For each gift place a mark across the bar at the point that corresponds to your TOTAL for that gift.
2. For each gift shade the bar below the mark that you have drawn.
3. The resultant graph gives a picture of your gifts. Gifts for which the bars are tall are the ones in which you appear to be strongest. Gifts for which the bars are very short are the ones in which you appear not to be strong.

Now that you have completed the survey, thoughtfully answer the following questions.

The gifts I have begun to discover in my life are:
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

- After prayer and worship, I am beginning to sense that God wants me to use my spiritual gifts to serve Christ’s body by ____________________________.
- I am not sure yet how God wants me to use my gifts to serve others. But I am committed to prayer and worship, seeking wisdom and opportunities to use the gifts I have received from God.

Ask God to help you know how He has gifted you for service and how you can begin to use this gift in ministry to others.
Passionate about being the hands and feet of Jesus in our region?

What a coincidence.
So are we.

Find out how you can be a part of one of our many opportunities to serve our region by sending an email to: outreach@thepowerofgrace.org.
Session Four: The Mission {Begins}

What Passion In Action Looks Like...

We get one shot. One shot to experience the fulness of all God has for us. While many people will wither away their lives selfishly pursuing things that fade away with the passing of time (or introduction of the next new fad), those truly desiring to live a legacy for God live with a sense of Holy Urgency that centers their entire lives and pursuits on God.

You’ve completed three-fourths of this journey in our New Members’ class, and now we’re on the last turn headed to the line. This line though isn’t the finish line. In the kingdom of God, the starting line here. The moment you sign on and decide that your life is going to be combined with other lives and a great movement of God will be realized in our region.

When you look back at the end of your life, what do you think will really matter? Will your bank account matter? Will your accomplishments and promotions on your job matter? Will the accolades, recognition, and rewards received from friends on social media matter?

Of course not. What will matter is what we’ve done to advance the cause of Christ and make Him known. We are working for two words: “Well Done.” Partnering with a vision such as Grace International Church’s allows you to utilize your life for the glory of God in such a way that the earth is changed forever and your legacy in the plan of God is eternal. You matter. Your life is a treasure trove of God’s grace and God’s gifts and talents. It’s time to use them with others doing the same. Let’s put this passion to action.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.” - Jesus Christ

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. - Paul, The Apostle

“Church should be more den Sunday.”
- Keygan Jordan, Grace Member
Evangelism Quick Guide
Using the G.R.A.C.E. Card

Adapted from the “Experiencing God’s Grace” Tract - Property of the Southern Baptist Church Conference

**Stereotype Everyone.** We’re so serious. Stereotype everyone you see. Don’t even give them a chance to prove you wrong, and even if it seems they prove you wrong don’t believe it. Be relentless in your stereotypical pursuits. Live in the stereo-zone. What do we mean?

*See everyone as someone God loves, and someone Jesus died for.* There. We said it. When sharing the gospel with them, we recommend pulling the G.R.A.C.E. card:

**G**...stands for GOD

- God is the *beginning* of GRACE. In fact, he is the beginning of all things (Gen 1:1)
- God, our Creator, is a God of holiness and love.
- Because God is our loving Creator and Ruler, we are responsible to love, worship, and obey Him alone. (Matthew 22:37-38)

**R**...stands for REBELLION

- **All** of us fall short of God’s perfect standard (Romans 3:23)
- We are all sinners, both by nature and by choice. (Romans 5:12; 1 John 1:8)
- Our sins have separated us from our Creator. (Isaiah 59:2)
- Because sin separates us from God, it carries tragic consequences. (Romans 6:23)

**A**...stands for ATONEMENT

- **Atonement** means “to repair a broken relationship.” God, because of His great love for His creation, sent His Son---Jesus---into the world so that sinners may be made one with God. (John 3:16; Romans 5:1)
- By His life, Jesus attained righteousness on sinners’ behalf. By His death, Jesus paid the penalty that sinners owed. By His resurrection, Jesus defeated the death for all who will follow Him.

**C**...stands for CONVERSION

- To receive Jesus as Christ and Lord, we must trust in Him alone for salvation. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
- We must turn from our sins (repent) and turn to Him in love and obedience. (Luke 13:3; John 14:5; Acts 17:30)
- God’s GRACE comes to those to receive Jesus by faith. (John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Romans 1:16; 10:9, 13)

**E**...stands for ETERNAL LIFE

- Jesus brings all new life to all who place their faith in him. (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17)
- This wonderful gift of eternal life is given to all those who have been saved through faith in Jesus.

*The Most Important Question: “Where Do You Stand in the sight of God?”* Jesus suffered on the cross on behalf of all those who trust Him as Savior and Lord. Those that choose to trust in themselves or something other than Jesus as Savior and Lord will suffer the *judgement* of God themselves. (John 3:36) There is no middle ground with Jesus. (Matthew 12:30)

**Are You Ready?** If so, repent of your sins and place your faith in Jesus alone for your salvation. You must believe that Jesus lived, died, and rose again for your salvation. You must commit your life to Jesus if you’re ready to be forgiven and to receive the gift of eternal life. *Trust in Jesus at this moment.*

*Live Daily with God through prayer, worship, Bible Study, fellowship, witnessing, and serving.*
Class Assignment
The Gift of Grace

Your challenge: Begin your legacy today. Your class is unique in that you are all entering the family of Grace International Church together. What’s your impact? How will you hit the ground running? How will you announce to the rest of the family of Grace International Church that our best New Members’ class has arrived?! (Are you getting fired up yet?!).

Your task: Complete a project as a class that highlights the mission, vision, and values of Grace International Church. This project must be completed within (3) months of the completion of Grace|101. Some examples are:

2. Do a neighborhood survey & prayer walk
3. Give out free waters in Downtown Arbutus or Arundel Mills
4. Spring/Summer Clean Grace’s building
5. Host a FREE car wash (with tracts & church info cards given out)
6. LIFESAVERS giveaway (label/website info…)
7. Free gift-wrapping at the Arbutus Wal-Mart (Christmas)
8. Host a Kids Night at Grace (Christmas shopping/mass date night)
9. 4th of July Parade Outreach in Arbutus or Dundalk
10. Hand out roses to ladies working in strip clubs (be sure to form an appropriate team)
11. Locate bars around UMBC and serve free bottled water to students as they exit the venue.
12. Host a FREE Car Wash for the faculty of Landsdowne High/Arbutus Middle
13. Community Cleanup
14. Offer Christmas Shopping for Inmates w/Children
15. Google some other ideas! These are just starters!

Class Name: ____________________________________________

Class Term: (Circle One) Fall Winter Spring Summer Year:_____________________

Project Title: ___________________________________________

Project Description: ____________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Date Approved: ___________________ Estimated Completion Date: ________________

Proposed Budget (If Any): _____________________________ Date Approved: __________

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* -Mark 10:45 NIV
1. **Identifying** with the church through proper means. || *Biblical support: Acts 2:41; 18:8; Romans 6:3-4.*
   Ways to fulfill this commitment to my church:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. **Attending** worship and small groups. || *Biblical support: Psalm 95:6; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25*
   Ways to fulfill this commitment to my church:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. **Giving** finances. || *Biblical support: Malachi 3:8-12; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7*
   Ways to fulfill this commitment to my church:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

4. **Serving** in ministry. || *Biblical support: Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-13*
   Ways to fulfill this commitment to my church:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

5. **Protecting** church unity. || *Biblical Support: John 17:11; Acts 1:14; Romans 12:5*
   Ways to fulfill this commitment to my church:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
Session Four: The Mission {Begins}
Membership Expectations Pentagon
The 5 Focus Areas

1. Identify with the church through proper means

A. Baptism - Our prayer is that members are baptized by immersion as a public declaration and identification with God’s Church, as well as with Grace International Church. We believe baptism is transferable which means if you’ve been baptized before, we feel no need for you to do it again unless you desire to.

B. Be an Ambassador - There is no greater assignment than to partner with other children of God to accomplish the impossible for God here on Earth. The consumer mentality identifies church as a place I attend. We’re praying for mature believers who don’t see it as a building I frequent, as though it were some restaurant, but that it is a people called out to do great things for God. If this message is critical to you in any way, our prayer is that you will simply invite people to your church.

C. Articulate Grace’s Vision - Know your church & what it’s all about. There are 1,000s of churches that are called to some very specific visions for our region, so knowing what the unique vision of Grace will be critical to sharing with people who need to know.

2. Attend Sunday worship & small groups

A. Small Groups - We are committed to your spiritual development. We believe biblically that the best method for realizing this spiritual development is through discipleship and small groups, as in the book of Acts. Your commitment to attending faithfully is an encouragement to others and a regular deposit into your spiritual maturity and our authentic community. Some of the greatest testimonies to spiritual growth and miracles have occurred in the context of small groups and we can’t wait to hear yours.

B. Sunday Worship - We believe wholeheartedly that the primary purpose of the church is worship. God demands our worship, and our own personal creation is to the praise of His glory. Presence at church is encouraging to others, and allows there to be immense encouragement and recharging for the week ahead. While it’s true you don’t have to go to church to be a Christian, you don’t have to go home to be a husband either. Attending worship with other brothers and sisters offers from mutual encouragement with other believers that can’t be achieved alone. You matter. When you miss church, the church misses you.
Session Four: The Mission {Begins}
Membership Expectations Pentagon

Serving in ministry.

A. Grow your gifts - God has given each of His children unique and incredible gifts to bring glory to Him and to bring the world to a place of knowing Him. Your gifts are invaluable to the vision and when you use them for God’s glory, incredible things happen. By serving in ministry, your gifts are going to use and you are declaring to God “thank you” and you are saying “God you can trust me with this gift and more.” Live above and lets share our gifts to impact the world for Christ. We are a team. When one person sits on their talents, we all lose. We all need encouragement. When there are opportunities to serve, encourage your brothers, your sisters, your team, or your small groups to be on the front lines.

B. Redefine “Church” - While “[un]think church” can mean a lot for those outside of church who we’re praying will give us another opportunity to hopefully be a greater representation of Christ's church than what they may perceive “church” to be, many inside the church also have the idea that church is a place where you go to get what you need for the week and go home until next week. It’s way more than that. By being a church essentially known for it’s uncanny and outrageous commitment to outreach, we can reset expectations.

Protecting church unity.

A. Our Greatest Enemy is Division - Championship teams don’t lose because of a lack of talent. More often than not, it’s a lack of unity that does most teams in. They win as a team and as they continue to win more and more of the players want credit, thus throwing off the “balance” provided through unity. Jesus said “upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18) The only thing that can stop us is us. Satan and his forces want nothing more than a divided church.

Special Note: Because we are a diverse congregation, we have multiplied our opportunities for division. Division is rooted in selfishness and personal preferences. Unity is rooted in counting others more than yourself. (Philippians 2:3)

B. Protect the family. - The greater the vision, the more opportunity for division. Championship level teams overcome championship level challenges. Less talented but united teams accomplish more than superstars not working together. Just as you’d protect your family from destructive influences, protect your church family the same. (Matthew 12:46-50)

C. Commit to True Biblical Conflict Resolution
   1. Reconcile Conflicts Quickly. More time = More issues & space for confusion.
   2. Build 5-6 key relationships at Grace to avoid the isolation that suffocates unity.
   3. Serve Heartily to avoid isolation and keep God’s call ever before you. We find that when you’re truly engaged in service and using your ministry gifts, division and small disagreements are suffocated.
Session Four: The Mission {Begins}
Membership Expectations Pentagon

Giving finances. (The Toughest Discussion. Why?)

WARNING: This page trespasses on enemy territory. Proceed at your own risk.

“One more revival, only one more is needed; the revival of Christian stewardship, the consecration of the money power to God. When that revival comes, the kingdom of God will come in a day.”
-Horace Bushnell

Money shouldn’t have to be a difficult subject. It shouldn’t require an entire page in our guide, however it is. In fact, Jesus spoke about money and possessions more than any other topic in the Bible and more than both Heaven and Hell combined. But Why?

When Jesus said “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” He was on to something. He knew that what we did with our money is a bold statement to God of where He is in our lives. Not only does our treasure go in the direction of our hearts, but our hearts go in the direction of our treasures.

Money is the sacred cow in all of our lives. Besides being the toughest conversation any church has to have (and it shouldn’t be), it’s the one thing that severely limits the impact a church has on reaching the world with the Gospel of Jesus. God has designed His Kingdom to be funded by the spiritual maturity of those who He has entrusted with resources. It all belongs to Him. We are not the bosses, and we don’t determine where our resources go. When you are committed to a church, you are committed in every arena of your life.

The going statistics say that 20% of the church will supply 80% of the resources. Unthink church. We don’t have to meet those expectations. Mathematically, if we all gave what God required us to give, our church will be one of the greatest agents of God’s Kingdom in our area. More ministry and more missions for God.

A. Make Generosity a Priority - God owns it all. In giving you are demonstrating that you are maturing beyond marginal Christianity, you’re serious about fulfilling the Great Commission and leaving your legacy, and you trust your church’s vision and financial integrity to see the vision through. If you are uncomfortable with trusting your church, for your spiritual health, we highly suggest that you find one you can trust. We believe that either not giving, or “giving wood to fires that do not light your home” is stealing from God and would rather you be in a place you can fully trust and flourish in than to have you stealing or being contrary to the will of God.

Though we profess our love for Christ as our Savior, we don’t truly flourish until we live out our love for Christ as our Lord. This means our lives are His. All that we have is His. We do with it what He asks. The last thing we’re willing to fully surrender to God is usually the thing that controls us.

B. Make your financial heath a priority - Budget, pray, organize, attend a Dave Ramsey seminar held at Grace International Church. If you are unable to maintain the resources in your own home, you’ll be unable to effectively serve the community with integrity and oneness of mind. We’re committed to maintaining the financial health and integrity with God’s finances as they are given to Grace, and it begins with members who value stewardship with the same integrity in their homes.
Leadership Covenant:
The leadership team of Grace International Church covenant to do their best to be faithful leaders of Christ in the following ways:

• To hold up Jesus Christ and the Gospel in all things.
• To pray and seek God’s best for our church and all members on a regular basis.
• To devote ourselves to study, proclamation, and application of God’s word.
• To be Christlike in our example for the church in all things.
• To be available for prayer, encouragement, and help when called on by our Grace family.

Membership Covenant:

You have personally and consciously repented and placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and expressed this commitment to trust and follow Jesus through water baptism by immersion, either prior to attending Grace, or through intention when available at Grace.

You are making a conscious and ongoing commitment to do your best to support the mission, vision, and values of Grace International Church and to signify such by signing the membership covenant:

I will do my best to support the testimony of the gospel and my church family

• by inviting those unconnected with a church to attend (Luke 14:23)
• by looking for ways to share my faith in Jesus Christ with others (Matthew 28:19-20)
• by praying for the church’s growth in spirit and in numbers (1 Thessalonians 1:1-3)
• by warmly welcoming, in radical love, those who visit church and church activities (Romans 15:7)

I will do my best to live with devotion for God

• by regular attendance at the Sunday Worship Experience of Grace (Hebrews 10:23-25)
• by personally trusting and following Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord, and by holding the core of my faith (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 13:3-5; Galatians 1:6-9)
• by developing a growing personal relationship with God through prayer, Bible study, and obedience (Psalm 1; 1 Peter 1:13-16)

I will do my best to support and be supported by others in our church

• by regular participation in a small group (Acts 2:42-47)
• by focusing on love as Jesus’ central command (John 13:34-35)
• by refusing to gossip or speak ill of others---or to even listen to such (Ephesians 4:29; Matthew 18:18-20)
• by actively pursuing reconciliation with other members when conflict, the perception of conflict, or interpersonal problems arise (Matthew 5:21-26; 18:15-20; Ephesians 4:26-27)

I will do my best to grow in Christlikeness

• by picking up my cross and following Jesus in my daily life (Mark 8:34-37)
• by studying scripture (2 Timothy 3:14-4:4)
• by attending church-sponsored seminars (2 Peter 1:5-10)
• by reaching out to my small group leader or one of the church leaders when I need a visit or help (James 5:14-16)
• by living a godly life and being accountable for any serious or ongoing sinful patterns in my life (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Galatians 6:1-2)

I will do my best to be an agent of Jesus Christ through my church

• by regularly giving back to God a portion of my financial blessings (1 Corinthians 16:2)
• by discovering my gifts and talents and using them in the church (1 Peter 4:10)
• by being equipped by my leaders to serve (Ephesians 4:11-12)
• by developing a humble servant’s heart (Philippians 2:3-4, 7)

Name: ___________________________________________  Sign & Date: __________________________________________
MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES CHECKLIST

Name: ___________________________________________________________________

Phone: ___________________________________________________________________

Email: ___________________________________________________________________

Please mark the following areas you may or may potentially be interested in serving. Please return this form to the Class Leader or to the Outreach Coordinator.

Building Maintenance & Service
- Building Cleaning (Vacuuming, Trash, etc...)
- Sunday Service Pre-Set Up
- Sunday Service Post Breakdown
- Parking Lot Attendant
- Building Security

Ministry Development
- Calling toward Preaching/Teaching
- Spiritual Leadership & Discipleship
- Guest Reception/Connections Participant
- Guest Reception/Connections Leader
- Small Groups Leadership/Development
- College Campus Ministry Leadership/Coordination
- Communion Coordinator

Children's Ministry (Subject to Background Check)
- Nursery Worker (as needed)
- Primary Kids Teacher
- Primary Kids Assistant/Helper
- Upper Primary Kids Teacher
- Upper Primary Kids Assistant/Helper
- General Children's Ministry Helper (clerical duties)
- Visual Arts (plays, skits, dramas for kids)

Music & Arts Ministry (Subject to Audition)
- Worship Team Singer
  (Voice Part) ____________________________
- Worship Team Administrative Helper
- Instrumentalist
  (Instrument) ____________________________
- Creative Arts (Dance, Poetry, Art, etc...)

Sound & Visual Department
- Working Sound & Lighting (Sunday Mornings)
- Operating the Big Screen on Sundays
- Recording, Editing, & Posting Sermons Online
- Video/Live Streaming Sunday Worship

Men's Fellowship
- Coordinator/Leader
- Participant

Women's Fellowship
- Coordinator/Leader
- Participant

Marriage Ministry
- Coordinators/Leaders

Outreach Ministry
- Visitation (Hospital/Other)
- Note Writing to Guests
- Telephone Calls
- Welcome & Guest Reception (Sundays)
- Van Driver
- Mentoring New Believers
- Evangelism Participant
- Evangelism Coordination
- Prayer Ministry
- Prayer Ministry Leader
- Community Association Liaison/Ambassador
- Ministry to the women of My Sister's Place™
- Ministry to the men of Christopher's Place™

Administrative / Office Help
- Computer & IT Support
- Clerical Help
- Newsletter Preparation
- Social Media Management for Grace
- Receptionist

Other:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
NEW MEMBER EVALUATION FORM

I. Awareness

A. How did you first learn about Grace International Church?
- Social Media
- Craigslist
- Personal Invitation By: ________________________________
- Friend
- Outreach
- Other: _______________________________________________

B. What was happening in your life when you came to Grace International Church?
- Geographical Move
- Marriage
- Birth of a Child
- Divorce
- Health Crisis
- Financial Crisis
- None of the Above
- Other: _______________________________________________

C. What were you looking for in a church family? ________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

D. What originally attracted you to Grace International Church (first pleasant thing noticed...)
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

E. When you first attended, were you identified and welcomed as a guest? Yes No
If so, how?
____________________________________________________________________________________

F. Was there anything that almost kept you from being active in this congregation? Yes No
If so, what?
____________________________________________________________________________________

G. How much time passed between the time you started attending and the time you decided to join?
- Fewer than 2 weeks
- Several weeks to 3 months
- 3 to 6 months
- 6 to 12 months
- More than a year

II. Hospitality

A. Did anyone from Grace call or visit you after you began attending? Yes No
If so, how long after your first visit were you contacted?
____________________________________________________________________________________

B. Did the pastor or another minister contact you? Yes No
If so, how long after your first visit were you contacted?
____________________________________________________________________________________
II. **Hospitality (cont’d)**

C. When did you feel accepted in this congregation?
   - ❑ After my first visit
   - ❑ After attending a Grace Group
   - ❑ When joining
   - ❑ After attending membership class
   - ❑ I still don’t feel accepted

D. What, if any, surprises did you experience while getting acquainted with the family of Grace?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

E. Has any experience with Grace made you feel uncomfortable, awkward, or “put off”?  ❑ Yes  ❑ No
   If so, what happened?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

F. Describe the most moving or satisfying experience you’ve had at Grace so far.

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

III. **Response**

A. Besides Sunday worship, in which church programs or activities did you first become active?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

B. How did you get involved in the activity?
   - ❑ Personal initiative
   - ❑ Response to pulpit or bulletin announcement
   - ❑ Response to personal invitation
   - ❑ Other: ___________________________

C. What most helped you move deeper into the life of the church? If possible, list names or positions.

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

D. Does Grace do a good job of making its ministries and programs known to new members?
   - ❑ Yes  ❑ No

E. Which ministries or programs do you wish you knew more about or had known about sooner?

____________________________________________________________________________________

F. Have you been made aware of members’ biblical financial responsibilities?  ❑ Yes  ❑ No
III. Response (Cont’d)

G. Have you learned what’s expected of membership at Grace?  ❑ Yes  ❑ No

H. Briefly describe what you believe to be the church’s major expectations of members:

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

IV. Going Deeper

A. As you evaluate a church, how important is the Sunday worship experience?

Unimportant  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  Very Important

B. Rate Grace International Church’s ability to meet your worship needs.

Unable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  Very Able

C. Did the church encourage you as a new member to develop spiritual disciplines?  ❑ Yes  ❑ No

D. Have you noticed any intentional church efforts to get new members and long time members to get to know each other better?  ❑ Yes  ❑ No

V. Membership Class

A. Please rate the overall value of Grace’s New Members Class

Not Valuable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  Very Valuable

B. Which lessons or topics were more valuable to you?

___________________________________________________________________________________

C. Which lessons or topics were least valuable to you?

___________________________________________________________________________________

D. What changes would you suggest?

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

Name: ________________________________________________  Phone: _________________________

Email:__________________________________________________________________________________
**Membership Interview: The Final Piece**

It’s important to note from the onset that in no scripture in our New Testament was there ever a membership interview conducted. People simply professed Christ, received baptism, and were added to the local church. (Acts 2:41). Why do we conduct membership interviews then? Is this just another ploy? Another unbiblical hoop to jump through before people are added to a “club”. Of course not. Don’t worry, we’re still unthinking church.

There are three reasons we see these as invaluable:
1. So we can personally get to know you.
2. So we can ensure you know enough of the church.
3. So we can begin *pastoring* you.

This will consist of you and a panel of no more than (3) leaders at Grace. We value you, and as our church continues to grow (both spiritually, and numerically...maybe by the 100s?) we want to be certain we’ve personally learned about each member of our family. At the completion of the interview we’ll have a pretty idea of how we can begin to help you become all God has called you to be. We also can make absolutely sure Grace is a good fit for you as you journey in Christ.

**MEMBERSHIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Name(s): ___________________________ Interview Date: ___________________________

Interview Panel: ________________________________________________________________

Questions:

1. Share a little about your life and journey to this point.
2. What goals are you working toward, and how does serving at Grace International Church fit into those goals?
3. Share both one great and one unfortunate experience you’ve had with a local church body.
4. What is the Gospel? How would you explain it to someone who asks?
5. Share what your life has been like since becoming a Christian. Please include any details of pastoral significance (e.g. divorce, addictions, church discipline, and so on).
6. Share how you were baptized (if so), and what the experience was like for you. If not, do you plan on being baptized when the opportunity at Grace International Church arises?
7. What has been your experience at Grace International Church so far?
8. Where do you see yourself impacting the world through the vision & mission of Grace International Church?

*Interview to be scheduled & completed during the Grace|101 introductory session.*
Contributing Sources to This Guide

This guide was not the creation of a single mind, nor the result of one individual's knowledge and expertise. There is an enormous debt owed to a variety of sources much wiser, much more experienced, and much more committed to the task of building God's church. These sources are:

1. **9 Marks of A Healthy Church** - [www.9marks.org](http://www.9marks.org) | “9Marks is a ministry dedicated to equipping church leaders with a biblical vision and practical resources. Our goal is simple: churches that display the glory of God.” email: [info@9marks.org](mailto:info@9marks.org); Toll Free: (888) 543-1030.

2. **Membership Matters** by Chuck Lawless | This book provided much of the thrust and inspiration for the total recreation of our membership program at Grace International Church. For Critical Review of this Title visit: [http://www.9marks.org/books/book-review-membership-matters](http://www.9marks.org/books/book-review-membership-matters)

3. **Harpeth Community Church** - [www.harpethcc.com](http://www.harpethcc.com) | Membership Covenant, consistent with the mission, vision, values, and member expectations of Grace International Church, adapted from their New Members’ Guide.

4. **Spiritual Gifts Survey** - Lifeway Christian Resources | A guide to discovering & developing spiritual gifts. We received permission to utilize this invaluable resource and adapted it to our context.

5. **Together For The Gospel (TGC)** - [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org) | Understanding the membership interview process and discovering why it is both critical and beneficial in building a committed body of believers.

A very special thank you to all of the pastors, leaders, church members, as well as those within and without Grace International Church who donated their time to provide careful Godly review and accountability to ensuring this is the most comprehensive & God honoring curriculum that we’re able to offer.

Also a very special thank you to Jonathan Leeman, Chief Editor at 9Marks ministries for prayer and personal consultation with Pastor Ken in the importance and development of the new members’ curriculum. Much of his published material can be purchased at [www.9marks.org](http://www.9marks.org).
IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER.
- AFRICAN PROVERB

Make It More Than Sunday. Get Connected.

#MoreThanSunday #GraceGroups

For More Information, email: smallgroups@thepowerofgrace.org