

Welcome to Living Stones

“Living Stones” is your introduction to what it means to be a part of Sturbridge Worship Center and is your first step on the journey to church membership. We call this course “Living Stones” because of the passage in I Peter 2:5 that calls the believers “living stones”, who are “being built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

We are God’s “living stones” and it is our goal as a church to help each member be properly joined to our congregation so that together we form that “spiritual house” that brings pleasure to God.

Q: What are we, as living stones, called to offer up to God?

A: _____

Q: What are some of the spiritual sacrifices that you personally offer up to God? (Circle those that apply)

Studying and Living the Word

Worship

Serving

Fellowship

Missions Trips/Outreach

Personal Prayer – Corporate Prayer

These six areas of our Christian faith are very important to having a strong foundation in Christ and successfully enjoying a living connection to the body of Christ. Through Christ our cornerstone they help us to find our proper fit in the spiritual house that God is building!

In this Living Stones course, these 6 things are referred to as “building blocks”.

How the Building Blocks Work:

Reading this study guide and answering the questions will help you learn about each of the 6 building blocks. For each of the six segments there is an accompanying short audio message included on the accompanying CD.

There is also a “field trip” part of each building block. By going on your field trip, you will see the building blocks come to life. You will be with other living stones! You may discover where you would like to join your living stone with others on a regular basis. It is our intention that these field trips will help you meet other members of the “body” and cause you to become exposed to many of the central ministries of the church so that you can “find your fit” and “fulfill your function!”

It is a good idea to bring your study guide along on your field trip. You can fill out the field trip questions on the site.

You will find throughout this and other church literature that Sturbridge Worship Center is frequently abbreviated “SWC”.

There is no required time frame for completion of the Living Stones material but it is step one to church membership and we believe the material will be very helpful to you succeeding in body life here at SWC. Because of this conviction we recommend that you try to complete at least one field trip per month. At the end of your course please submit the completed booklet to the church office.

It is our experience that those who do not take the time to connect tend to drift and lose ground on their spiritual journey. Don’t become a casualty, become a part of the family.

Living Stones Conclusion

Congratulations!

You have completed the Living Stones Orientation course. We hope that God has used this experience to build you up, and to help you begin to connect to the life of Sturbridge Worship Center. It is our prayer that the six foundation stones of the Word, Prayer, Worship, Missions/Outreach, Fellowship and Serving have been strengthened in your life.

We've only touched the surface of these areas through this study guide and these targeted field trip experiences. Our hope is that Living Stones has begun to whet your appetite for more of the Lord, and has helped you discover what you would like to invest more in while you are a part of SWC.

Now that you've visited a home group, why not join one? Also, please plug into the many training opportunities that are available to you as a part of our SWC family. Please also remember to connect to one or more of our many prayer meetings both for the sake of those that you pray for and for the strengthening of your own personal life of prayer. It is also a great time to get involved with an area of service in the church. Don't wait! Act while you are freshly connected.

Now that you are finished:

Please call the church office at 508-347-9642 and let us know that you have completed this course so that we can assist further in being rightly connected to your church family here at Sturbridge Worship Center.

"You also, as living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house, a holy priest hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. " (I Peter 2:5, NIV)

Your Advisor:

The first step in participating in the Living Stones introductory course is to receive a course advisor. We have trained members of the body who have been a part of the congregation for a while and who will be happy to answer questions you may have about Sturbridge Worship Center or this study guide.

Your advisor is also available to accompany you on some of your field trips to help you find your way if you should so desire. Our primary purpose in providing an advisor for you is to give you a personal sense of connection with someone whose ministry is to help you enjoy your participation in the life of Sturbridge Worship Center.

Name of your advisor: _____

His/Her phone number: _____

Email: _____

My personal information:

Name: _____

Names of Family Members: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Building Block #1: The Word of God

Our Primary Statement of Faith: We believe that the Bible is the living and inspired Word of God, that it is inerrant, that it's cross all cultures and generations and that its message is the primary building block for our lives today!

Psalms 138:2 states about God's word, "you have exalted above all things your name and your word." The scriptures declare that the Word of God is living and active yet unchanging. (Hebrews 4:12, Psalms 119:160, Hebrews 13:8)

At SWC it is our goal to place the scriptures at the center of our teachings, sermons and worship songs because we believe the words that Jesus spoke in Luke 6:46-49 that when a life is built upon knowing and living the Word of God that it is built upon a rock that will stand through the storms of this life.

It is our conviction that every believer should study the word, meditate on the word in our devotional lives, pray the principles and promises of the word and as a lifestyle seek to obey the word in our everyday lives.

Questions:

Read 2 Timothy 3:16

"Where did the scripture come from and what is it for?"

Read Psalm 119:11

"Why should a person hide God's word in our heart?"

Read Romans 10:17

"What does hearing God's word produce?"

Serving Field Trip:

Psalms 100:2 "Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing." KJV

For your serving field trip, please help out by doing one or more of the following:

- Work at a church work day (See the church calendar)
- Help with set up or clean up before any event (like a church picnic or outreach) or conference. You can do this by showing up early or staying for a bit afterward.
- Help for a few hours in the church office or cleaning in the building (call to arrange a time and task: 508-347-9642.)
- Volunteer for any open-invitation call for volunteers you hear during the church announcements.

Questions:

1.) **I helped out by** _____
on _____ **(date)**

2.) **"One thing I experienced while serving during this time was:**

3.) **"What do you believe your spiritual gifts are for serving the body of Christ?"** _____

Building Block #2: A Life of Prayer

In the book of Philippians 4:6 Paul commands us to “not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

For many Christians a consistent life of prayer is a neglected part of our spiritual experience. However, Jesus himself taught us of the importance of prayer in Matthew 6:5-18. Some of the central points of that message are:

- Accept that the Father knows what you need and is just waiting for you to ask him.
- Lean on your relationship to a loving heavenly Father.
- Get your priorities right: God’s Kingdom, God’s Will.

Questions:

1.) Read Matthew 18:19-20

“What happens when we agree in prayer?”

2.) Read Luke 4:40-41

“What happened when Jesus prayed for people?”

3.) Read 1 Timothy 1:6

“What is something else that can happen when we lay hands on people and pray?”

4.) Read Jeremiah 33:3

“What does God promise in this passage?”

Fellowship Field Trip:

For your fellowship field trip, please go to one or more of the following:

- A Home Group (See the back of the bulletin or the individual home group fliers for information concerning home groups)
- A church meal or picnic
- A special event or party such as the Valentines’ Dinner or Super Bowl Party.
- The Young Adult Group (Ages 16-30) Check with the office for the next meeting time and place.
- A Women’s or Men’s ministry meeting (check bulletin for upcoming events)

Questions:

1.) **I attended** _____
On _____ **(date)**

2.) **Name of someone I met:** _____

3.) **“What are some of the benefits you received from this fellowship time?”**

Building Block #6 Serving

“You my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather serve one another with love.”
(Galatians 5:13)

Jesus elevated serving others to a place of supremacy when he stated that the path to greatness was by being a servant. (Matthew 20:26) It is our conviction that the act of serving others produces many different things within the life of the believer. We believe that serving causes us to grow in love and humility, that it helps us understand the heart of Jesus better, that it connects us in relationship to those we serve, that it helps us discover our spiritual gifts and that it is the first step towards realizing our God given purpose.

There is a handbook of church ministries that is available for you to pick up at the church office or the information center that can give you many ideas of where to plug in and serve. Also watch the weekly bulletin for many opportunities to serve as they arise throughout the course of church life. **Please don't wait to be invited personally. This is your invitation to get involved!!!!**

Questions:

1.) Read Matthew 20:28

“What did Jesus, the Son of Man, come to do?”

2.) Read Galatians 6:9-10

“What are the two things we must do if we want to reap a harvest?”

3.) Read 1 Peter 4:10

“What are our gifts for?”

The “Word of God’ Field Trip:

There are many opportunities to hear God’s word and do what it says at Sturbridge Worship Center. For your field trip, please visit one or more of the following:

- School of the Spirit (Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall, when in session)
- An internship Bible Class (Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. in the conference room at the church, when in session)
- Adult Sunday School (Sunday 8:30 a.m. -9:15 a.m. in the conference room, when in session)
- Attend one or more nights of a conference at SWC. We have many anointed guest speakers throughout the year who bring the word of God to life!

Field Trip Check List:

1.) **I attended** _____
On _____ **(date)**

2.) **“What was the main theme of your field trip?”**

3.) **“What were some of the Bible verses from your field trip’s message, and how are you applying them?”**

Building Block #3 Developing a Worshipping Heart

WHO WILL WORSHIP THE LORD?

We must understand that worship is one of the activities that we engage in that we will be doing throughout all eternity. When we participate in worship we are joining with the invisible realms and our voice is becoming one with the voice of heavenly beings.

- I. All the saints will praise the Lord. Psalms 149:1
- II. All nations will praise the Lord Psalms 86:9; Zephaniah 2:11
- III. The angels of heaven worship Jesus! Hebrews 1:6
- IV. All the multitudes of heaven worship the Lord. Nehemiah 9:6

WHY DO WE WORSHIP THE LORD?

I. Because of who He is!

- A. We are to fear God and give him glory because he created all things. Revelation 14:7
- B. We exalt God because he is perfect in faithfulness and because he has done awesome things in the earth. Isaiah 25:1
- C. We worship God because everything he does is right and just and he is able to humble the proud in heart. Daniel 4:36-37
- D. We worship him because he is far beyond our understanding and he is eternal. Job 36:24-26
- E. We worship God because he is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:28-29

II. We worship the Lord because of what he has done for us!!

- A. We worship him because he sent his son to die for our sins! John 3:16-17
- B. We worship God because of what he does on behalf of the weak. Psalms 109:30-31
- C. We worship God because He loves us! Psalms 117:1-2
- D. We worship God because his blessing is upon those who worship him. Exodus 23:25-26
- E. We worship him because when we do, his mighty presence comes. Psalm 132:7-8
- F. We worship the Lord because we are receiving a kingdom that is secure. Hebrews 12:28-29 & 1 Peter 1:3-9
- G. Worship is our way of boasting in the God that we serve-both before the principalities and powers of heaven and before all men as a testimony! Do not be ashamed to praise in front of others. It brings great personal freedom.

9. What was the hardest part of your trip? _____

10.) What are some of the needs of the people in the place you visited?

11.) Would you go back? _____

Why or why not? _____

Building Block #5: Fellowship

Fellowship (spending time with each other) is a fun part of church life, but it is also very purposeful. Proverbs 27:17 states, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” It is God’s intention that our relationships in the body one with another cause us to grow. Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us that we are to continue to habitually meet together with one another so that we may encourage one another and stimulate one another on to love and good works! It is so much easier to stay properly motivated when we have relationship with one another. In fact in Acts 2:43-47 tells us that fellowship was a foundational part of the life of the early Christians.

At SWC we seek to create many opportunities to bring the body together in relationship settings that go beyond simply attending a service or a teaching. We have home fellowship groups, potlucks, picnics, parties and more and they are not just to fill up the social calendar. These activities are intended to provide for you an opportunity to get connected and to begin to develop meaningful friendships with other members of the body. **It is your job to get involved!!!**

Questions:

1. Read Acts 2:42-47
“What did the believers share with each other?”

2. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13
“What are we supposed to do for each other? “How often?”

3. Read Ecclesiastes 4:12
“”What is the benefit of not being alone?”

“A Life of Prayer Field Trip”

There are many opportunities to pray, receive and agree in prayer throughout the week at Sturbridge Worship Center. Please attend one or more of the following for your field trip:

- Sunday morning prayer circle (Sunday before service)
- Weekday Morning Prayer (6:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon, Monday through Friday)
- Wednesday Night Prayer (7:00 p.m. Wednesdays)

Questions:

- 1.) **I attended** _____
On _____ **(date)**
- 2.) **“What were some of the themes of the prayer meeting you attended?”** _____
- 3.) **“What things did the Lord touch your heart about during the prayer meeting?”** _____

- 4.) **“Do you have any testimonies to answered prayer from this week’s activity?”**

Building Block #4: Missions/Outreach

“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.’” (Mark 16:15, NIV)

It is a primary part of our mandate from God to touch our community, the region and the nations of the earth. As a practical response to that conviction we as a church and as individuals are committed to “Going in Jesus name”. We do this through local outreach in the community in the form of various events and programs of the church. We do this in the region through taking work and outreach teams to such places as Brooklyn, NY where we through construction projects and children’s programs and we do this in the nations through sending teams too many different countries in Europe, Asia and Africa many times a year.

It is our hope for you that as you become established in the life of SWC that you will rise up and join the team as we go forth in Jesus name to share the message of the Gospel and to build up the body of Christ.

Questions:

- 1.) Read Acts 13:2-3
“How did Saul and Barnabas know that they were supposed to go on a mission trip?”

- 2.) Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-5
“What is the gospel Paul (the writer) speaks about?”

- 3.) Read Mark 16:20
“Who went out and preached and where did they do it?”

Missions/Outreach Field:

For your missions/outreach field trip, please do one or more of the following:

- Go on a missions trip or outreach trip (Check the church calendar for upcoming events)
- Work at V.B.S. (July), the fall Harvest Party or go on the Christmas Caroling Outreach.
- Participate in the weekly street evangelism
- Interview one of the interns or someone else who has been on a mission trip or outreach event.

Questions:

- 1.) **I attended**

On _____
(date)
- 2.) **“What was the goal of the mission trip or outreach?”**

- 3.) **“What was a personal high point for you?”**

- 4.) **“What was the hardest part about going?”**

If you choose to conduct the interview of a person who participated in a missions trip the follow page provides some sample questions for you to use.

Interview Questions: Missions Trip (These are questions you can use to interview someone who has been on an SWC mission trip)

- 1.) Name of the person who attended the trip:

- 2.) Destination of the Trip: _____
- 3.) Date of the Trip: _____
- 4.) "Why did you go on this trip?" _____

- 5.) "What was your favorite part of the trip?" _____

- 6.) How did you grow on this trip? _____

- 7.) "Were there any Bible verses that helped you be strengthened on this trip?" _____

- 8.) Describe a day of your trip: _____

Questions:

- 1.) Read Psalm 107:1-2
"What did the Redeemed of the Lord say?"

- 2.) Read 1 Peter 2:9
"Why should we declare the praises of the Lord?"

- 3.) Read Colossians 3:16
"What should dwell in us richly as we sing?"

Worship Field Trip:

For your worship field trip, please attend one or more of the following:

- One night of a conference at SWC (Check church calendar)
- Holy Spirit Night (Check church calendar)

Questions:

- 1.) **I attended** _____
On _____ (date)
- 2.) **List some of the recurring themes you noticed in the worship time.**

- 3.) **"What did the leader do that helped you participate?"**
