



The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study Manual

PREFACE

The Bible is the Word of God, spoken in the past and alive in the present. Catholics in great numbers are studying Scripture today. The Second Vatican Council called the faithful to seek the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ by frequent reading of divine Scriptures and by quoting St. Jerome, *“For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ”*. We can come to know Jesus and to follow Him more closely if we take time to read, pray and meditate on the holy and living Word of God.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study strives to build, strengthen and deepen a personal and loving relationship with God and His people through prayer and the study of His Word.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Cornerstone is a fully integrated adult (18 years +) Scripture study. The Cornerstone offers members four exposures to the book of the Bible that is being studied. This is accomplished through a daily Lesson, a weekly meeting, Commentaries written by a Catholic theologian and Spiritual Reflections given by a Branch Facilitator or a trained Cornerstone member.

The name of this Scripture study is based on the reality that, as Christians, Jesus is our cornerstone. He is the very foundation upon whom our lives are built.

In God's Word, we read that Jesus for us is "*a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation*". **Isaiah 28:16b**

And we read, "*...you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord*". **Ephesians 2:19b-21**

In order to insure the integrity of the structure of The Cornerstone, a specific method has been adopted. Details for implementation of The Cornerstone Method are outlined in this Manual.

II. THE CORNERSTONE METHOD

The members of The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study meet once a week for a fall and spring semester to study a book(s) of the Bible. The Cornerstone Method is accomplished through 4 weekly exposures to each passage of Scripture studied. Each of the 4 exposures is necessary to The Cornerstone Method. None of the 4 can stand independent of the others.

The members of The Cornerstone move from the personal dimension of answering study questions independently to the dimension of sharing their answers in a Small Group setting and listening to the thoughts of others. The intent is to uncover the richness of Scripture and the variety of ways that God can touch individual minds and hearts. The 4 exposures to The Cornerstone Method are as follows:

A. Individual Scripture Study

Each week, members are provided a set of study questions that relate to a particular passage of Scripture. These Lessons are divided into 6 days of questions to be completed by the member on a daily basis. Each daily Lesson ends with a Connection Question designed to prompt members to reflect on that day's Scripture passage as it pertains to their individual lives and to lead the members into prayer each day.

B. Written Commentary

In addition to the study questions, the members are provided a commentary prepared by a Catholic theologian.

C. Small Groups

Each member of The Cornerstone is assigned to a Small Group for both semesters of the yearly study. During the Small Group session, the members will share their written answers to the study questions. The Small Groups have trained facilitators who will move the members through the Lesson.

D. Spiritual Reflection

Following the Small Group sessions, the members of the Small Groups come together in a large group setting to listen to a Spiritual Reflection given by a trained Branch Facilitator or a trained Cornerstone member, who upon invitation and through thoughtful prayer has accepted the responsibility of Reflecting. Each Reflector, whether Branch Facilitator or active member, must have had significant experience in presenting Focuses (6 or more) for The Cornerstone, and have been prayerfully discerned by the Branch Facilitator(s), Shepherding Board Mentors and Shepherding Board Spiritual Reflection Mentors. These talks may include historical and theological background of the passages being studied that week, but the primary purpose of the Spiritual Reflection is to share and suggest personal applications of Scripture for everyday living.

III. THE “STONES” of THE CORNERSTONE

There are essential parts of The Cornerstone that make this study unique. While these essential parts are presently considered the “Stones” of The Cornerstone, as the Spirit of God continues to lead The Cornerstone, it will surely grow and change. If it appears that change is needed, the Shepherding Board, with prayerful input from the Branch Core Ministry Teams, will continually strive to discern God’s will.

The “Stones” are as follows:

- A. *“The cornerstone of The Cornerstone is prayer”* ...Prayer always comes before any decisions are finalized because direction for The Cornerstone in all things must come from God.
 - B. The Cornerstone is a Catholic Bible study and will adhere to Catholic teachings but welcomes people of all faiths.
 - C. A consensus must be reached among the members of the Shepherding Board before decisions concerning The Cornerstone are made. A consensus is reached when all or most agree. Everyone agrees they can live with the final decision. If a consensus is not reached, the Shepherding Board will continue to pray.
 - D. The Core Ministry Team of a Branch must be trained and commissioned by the Branch Facilitator(s) each year. Members of the Core Ministry Team are ***strongly encouraged*** to attend the Cornerstone Ministry Conference held during the summer.
 - E. Each Branch of The Cornerstone will have its own Core Ministry Team which includes:
 - Branch Facilitator(s)
 - Branch Facilitator(s)-in-Formation (if any)
 - Branch Coordinator(s)
 - Small Group Facilitator(s) and Alternate Small Group Facilitator(s)
- Other supporting ministries may include: Branch Treasurer, Child-Care Ministry, Audio/Video Ministry, Retreat Ministry, Prayer Ministry, Focus Ministry, Proclaiming Ministry, Social Ministry, Mass Ministry, Set-up/Clean-up Ministry, Music Ministry and Greeters Ministry
- F. There is a commitment on the part of the Core Ministry Team members and the members of the Branch to:
 - Pray
 - Prepare the Lesson each week
 - Presence
 - Participate
 - Support one another
 - G. Each Cornerstone Branch:
 - Will run their sessions in a timely manner
 - Will not operate as an exclusive organization of any particular parish and the finances will be kept separate from parish funds
 - Will not be used for private or political solicitation
 - Will include prayer, song, proclamation, fellowship and the sharing of God’s Word at the weekly sessions

H. All sharing in The Cornerstone is **CONFIDENTIAL**. Given the private nature of Focuses, Spiritual Reflections, Question responses and prayers, the contents of these Cornerstone elements are considered to be private and are not to be shared outside of Small Group audience or the Branch. The privacy of those who share is critical and considered to be a foundational value. Focuses or Spiritual Reflections may only be recorded with prior approval of the Shepherding Board and the Presenter for use.

As a reminder, Study Questions and Commentaries are copyrighted and should not be duplicated or distributed outside of Branch membership without express permission from the Shepherding Board.

I. The Cornerstone seeks to:

- Foster a love of God through increasing knowledge of Scripture
- Develop or enhance a personal habit of daily prayer
- Provide a community for those on a journey of faith

J. The Cornerstone Method is integral to this Scripture study. Each Branch of The Cornerstone is required to incorporate the following 4 exposures to Scripture into their weekly studies:

- Individual Scripture Study
- Written Commentary
- Small Groups
- Spiritual Reflection

K. The physical needs for a Branch of The Cornerstone include:

- A facility to accommodate The Cornerstone sessions once a week from September through April (Catholic facility preferred)
- Ample parking
- A large meeting room
- Adequate meeting places for Small Groups
- A room to be used for child care, if needed

L. In order to become a member of The Cornerstone, it is necessary to attend a Visitors' Session. Visitors' Sessions are held at the discretion of the Branch Facilitator(s).

M. The Cornerstone is a not-for-profit organization and there is no charge to participate in the study. However, each member is encouraged to make free-will donations after prayerful discernment.

IV. THE POLICIES OF THE CORNERSTONE

A. Meeting Cancellation Policy

Each Branch is encouraged to formulate a written, inclement weather policy that is easy to follow. This should be included in the introductory materials at the beginning of the year and reviewed periodically as necessary.

The following points should be considered in your Branch policy:

- Cornerstone members are encouraged to use their own best judgment regarding the safety of travel for meeting attendance
- There are different ways that your Branch can determine whether the meeting will be cancelled. It is essential that each of your members have a clear understanding of your Branch process
- If a meeting is cancelled, it is necessary to make up the missed Lesson. The Lessons have been prepared in sequence and it is important to complete all Lessons in the study

B. Alcohol Policy

A healthy, safe, spiritual community is important in The Cornerstone. It is for this reason that the use of any form of alcoholic beverage is inappropriate before or during regular on-site Branch meetings. The responsible enjoyment of alcohol at social functions related to The Cornerstone, however, is at the discretion of the Branch Facilitator.

C. Financial Assistance Policy

- Cornerstone members may request financial assistance to cover the cost of the Cornerstone Ministry Conference and/or travel expenses. The Financial Assistance (F-11) must be completed and submitted by the financial assistance deadline of the Cornerstone Ministry Conference.
- The completed form should be submitted to their Branch Facilitator who will coordinate all of the submissions from their Branch. A Shepherding Board subcommittee called the Financial Assistance Committee will prayerfully review each submission and advise the requesting member regarding the financial assistance decision. All submissions will be handled prayerfully, respectfully, confidentially and lovingly. We want to encourage attendance and maintain respect for all individuals.
- The order of priority for financial assistance is as follows: Shepherding Board, Branch Facilitators, Branch Coordinators followed by Small Group Facilitators/Alternates, and general membership. Exceptions may include individuals within the Branch who have been identified as future members of the Branch Core Ministry Team.

D. Branch Social Policy

The Cornerstone focuses on the sharing of God's Word in an environment that is welcoming and based on love for one another. To encourage faith and fellowship, Branches are encouraged to plan at least one social gathering each semester to assist in that goal.

In order to ensure that all Cornerstone members may share equally in these events without financial strain, we encourage voluntary potluck/brown bag events and discourage catered events which would require monetary contributions from individual members or from the

Branch Treasury. The Shepherding Board is committed to this policy of “self-funded” social activities. General Branch donations should not be used.

E. Branch Masses, Reconciliation, Retreat Policy

Donations to The Cornerstone Branches are used for many things, including the priest’s stipend for celebrating Mass at a Cornerstone Branch event. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the greatest participation in events at the least cost to our membership.

Each Branch is encouraged to have a Retreat or Day of Reflection each year. It should be self-funded, with the members paying for the event. The Branch Treasury should not be supporting the Retreat/Day of Reflection. It is acceptable to ask for donations over and above the amount of the actual cost, in order to help pay for others who would need financial assistance.

Retreat expenses (including Retreat Master’s honorarium, stipends for Mass and/or Reconciliation) should be covered by the Retreat registration fee or donations made at the Retreat.

The separate funds collected for Retreats should be included in the Branch Treasury log, in a separate subset log for this income and expense. Total revenue and expenses for each “self-funded” event should then be posted to the Branch’s main accounting record. A helpful tip to pass on to Branches is to ask members writing checks to please include “Retreat” on the memo line.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis Guidelines will give you some parameters on the proper remuneration:

Sunday Mass: \$40-50

Weekday Mass: \$30-40

Reconciliation: \$25+

Branches are encouraged to check the guidelines in their Diocese.

V. THE PROCEDURES OF THE CORNERSTONE

A. Essentials of a Cornerstone Session

In order to meet the goals of The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study as expressed in the Mission Statement on page 1, there are certain essential components of The Cornerstone session that must take place each week at the Branch meeting. These elements are designed to meet specific spiritual goals and are listed below. *(Spiritual Goals are italicized)*

1. The Culture

The session should have a welcoming, spiritual atmosphere.

- *To provide a setting that is conducive to hearing God's Word*

2. The Timeframe

- To begin and end the session in a timely manner
- To provide a framework that is consistent and responsible
- To show respect for time and members

3. The Format

a. The Opening Song

- Additional music may be added to the session
- *To call the membership to worship and to gather in the Lord's presence.*

b. The Opening Prayer

- *To unify the minds and hearts of the membership and focus them on the Lord*

c. The Focus

- *To help center the membership in God's presence*
- *To give the members an opportunity to hear how God's Word has impacted other individuals' lives*

d. The Small Group

- *To provide members an opportunity to gain a greater familiarity and understanding of God's Word*
- *To provide members an opportunity to gain a greater awareness of God working in their lives and in the lives of others*
- *To provide members with a faith-building experience through the sharing of answers to the Study Questions*
- *To share prayer in a safe, comfortable and supportive environment*

e. The Proclamation

- The location of the Proclamation may be scheduled before or after Small Group sharing, at the discretion of the Branch Facilitator
- *To review and re-unify the Scripture passages that were prayed over, studied verse by verse during the week and shared in the Small Group sessions*

f. The Spiritual Reflection

- May include historical and theological background of the passages being studied that week
- *To share and suggest personal applications of Scripture for everyday living*

Each session must include the following: 1) Opening Song, 2) Opening Prayer, 3) Focus, 4) Small Groups, 5) Proclamation, and 6) Spiritual Reflection.

When the format for the session is established this same format is to be followed each week.

B. Beginning a New Branch.

There are 4 Stages to beginning a new Branch. They are: 1) Information, 2) Exploration, 3) Formation and 4) Transformation

- 1. Information:** The Information Stage begins when a person(s) contacts a member of the Shepherding Board to inquire about initiating a Branch of The Cornerstone. A designated member of the Shepherding Board will share information with this person about The Cornerstone. The person is then asked to pray about starting a Branch of The Cornerstone. The Shepherding Board will also begin to pray for discernment.

If, after a period of prayer and discernment, both the interested person and the Shepherding Board believe that God is leading him/her to continue, additional information will be provided. At this time, the person will be asked to find others of like mind and meet with them regularly to learn about The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study from the information packet that will be sent to them. They and the Shepherding Board will continue to pray for discernment.

- 2. Exploration:** God's hand will lead the exploration! The interested participants will pray and discuss the feasibility and appropriateness of beginning a Branch of The Cornerstone Scripture Study. The Shepherding Board will also continue to pray. If, after several weeks or months of prayer, both groups feel God's hand leading them to continue, the Exploration stage will begin.

At this time, a member of the Shepherding Board will be assigned to mentor the group. The group will begin to "try out" The Cornerstone. They will come together to pray and share the study questions from a selected Cornerstone study for approximately six weeks. At the end of this time, each individual will be asked for a commitment. If there are at least five people who commit to become part of a core group for the new Branch, and the Shepherding Board agrees, these people will begin step three, the Formation Stage.

- 3. Formation:** To begin the Formation Stage, the core members will ask others to join them. The total number of members should not exceed fourteen. These people will meet as one Small Group to do a session of The Cornerstone Study. They will begin the study 2-3 weeks after the St. Louis Branches have begun to meet so that a recorded Spiritual Reflection given by a trained Branch Facilitator can be provided. The core group members will practice facilitating the groups, choosing the music, presenting the focuses and organizing the Branch. Those who give a Focus will

follow The Cornerstone Focus Guidelines. During the second semester, various members may give a Spiritual Reflection(s) with the guidance of a mentor from the Shepherding Board. To begin a Branch of The Cornerstone, a Core Ministry Team must have four members including at least one Branch Facilitator and Branch Coordinator, and one or more of the following: Small Group Facilitator(s) & Alternate Facilitator(s).

The period of Formation is absolutely necessary and essential. During this time, the new group, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is closely monitored and shepherded by the Shepherding Board in St Louis. This stage usually requires 6 -12 months of guided study, discernment, and evaluation by the Mentor and Shepherding Board. When the Core Ministry Team and the Shepherding Board agree that the group is ready to move forward, it may require another 3 months or more to prepare for the opening of the new Branch in concert with the schedules of a selected established Branch(s) of The Cornerstone.

- 4. Transformation:** At the end of the Formation Stage, after prayer and consensus by both the members of the Branch-in-Formation and the Shepherding Board, a new Branch may be started. The group that has been meeting together will begin to pray for the names of others to invite to join the new Branch. In the fall, they will begin a Branch of The Cornerstone following the policies and procedures that are stated in The Cornerstone Manual. They will begin the year with a regularly scheduled Visitors' Session.

The Shepherding Board will prayerfully select, commission and train the Branch Facilitator(s) and the members of the Core Ministry Team. The group's mentor will continue to prayerfully monitor and assist the new Branch. The group may continue to receive recorded Spiritual Reflections for their weekly sessions from The Shepherding Board. To facilitate this, the Branch will, as before, begin the study a few weeks after the established Branches. This will allow time for a Spiritual Reflection to be posted to the website for downloading.

The Shepherding Board, through the group's Mentor, will guide and closely monitor the new Branch during the period of formation. Most decisions for the new Branch will be made after prayer and consultation with the Shepherding Board. Frequent contact will be maintained between the Ministry Team of the new Branch and the Shepherding Board through their Mentor.

C. Visitor Session

If a Branch of The Cornerstone has space available to increase their membership and has a member trained to facilitate a Small Group, the Branch Facilitator(s) may choose to schedule a Visitors' Session. Each of the current members is asked to pray for potential new members and then to invite those whose names come to mind in prayer. Invitations to Visitors' Sessions may also be extended through a church bulletin or through other approved methods. Potential new members must attend a Visitors' Session in order to register for The Cornerstone. A person may attend a Visitors' Session at one Branch with the intention of enrolling in another Branch.

During the Visitors' Session, the guests will hear about the history of The Cornerstone, the format of The Cornerstone Session and The Cornerstone Method. They will also be informed of the many benefits and blessings derived from membership in The Cornerstone. Guests will be asked to prayerfully consider commitment, when deciding to join a Branch.

D. Commitment

All members are asked to make a time commitment of at least 15-20 minutes for daily study questions with prayer as well as 1½ -2 hours for the weekly Branch session. Faithful attendance and preparation of daily studies are emphasized as essential to The Cornerstone Method. As a faith community, we are accountable not only to ourselves but to each other.

When attendance of a member is sporadic, the Small Group Facilitator will keep in contact with the member and pray for him/her. In the case of an absence, members are asked to contact their Small Group Facilitators.

E. Community Builders

The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study is designed to give the members an opportunity to experience Christian community within their Small Groups and also in the larger Branch. To help this sense of community become a reality, Branches are encouraged to schedule community building activities on a regular basis. The preparation and logistics for these functions should be kept simple. Examples of these activities would include: social gatherings for the Small Groups, Mass and social for the entire Branch at the end of each semester and a Branch retreat.

F. Membership Development

It has been determined that the best way to bring new members to The Cornerstone is through word-of-mouth. Branch Facilitators and Small Group Facilitators will regularly encourage individual members to continually pray for and invite others to join The Cornerstone. Other means of membership development can include: announcements in church bulletins, distribution of Cornerstone brochures and promotions in the media.

The Shepherding Board must approve all Cornerstone forms of membership development.

G. Financial support

The Cornerstone financial policy is based on Acts 4:32, "*Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.*" Because of this, there is no membership fee. Each member is asked to pray about what he/she will donate to support the whole The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study. No one in The Cornerstone takes a salary. Many people may choose to donate not only their time but also their expenditures to support The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study.

Significant expenditures above the typical costs of operating a Branch will be paid by the Central Shepherding Board Treasury after the Shepherding Board reviews and approves the expenditures. These expenditures may include:

- Supplemental funding for Branches that require financial assistance
- Administrative expenses incurred by the Shepherding Board and the Administrative Board to conduct the business of The Cornerstone (e.g., travel expenses to visit out-of-town Branches, insurance, mailings, video recording, meetings, printing, training sessions and technology fees)
- Expenses associated with the Cornerstone Ministry Conference

1. Branch Financial Responsibilities

- a. Maintain a checking account bearing the name of the Branch (e.g. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study-Annunziata).
- b. Keep a log of income and expenses.
- c. Use the Tax-exempt Purchasing Letter (**F-8**) when purchasing items for The Cornerstone.
- d. Schedule a financial talk to be given at the beginning of each semester to inform the members of the Branch regarding The Cornerstone income and expenses (Members will be asked to pray about the amount that they will donate).
- e. Record free-will donations from the membership, deposit donations in the Branch checking account and keep accurate records of all deposits and withdrawals.
- f. Pay expenses the Branch incurs by using Reimbursement Form (**F-1**) to document reimbursement.

NOTE: Funding Branch social activities, meals and retreats are not covered by the Branch Treasury. Members pay their own expenses.

- g. Use the Large Expense Request (**F-2**) to communicate to the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer any individual expense greater than \$100. The Central Shepherding Board Treasurer will contact the Branch Shepherding Board Mentors who will gather additional information from the Branch. The Mentors will share the information with the Shepherding Board for a final decision.
- h. Transfer Branch funds in excess of \$100 or local bank minimum balance requirement to the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer at the end of November, February, May and August. Use the Branch Quarterly Transfer of Funds (**F-3**).
- i. Contact the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer if the Branch requires additional money.
- j. Keep records of donations and gifts including deposit slip and a thank you letter to the donor. In order to comply with tax exempt status, use the Tax Donor Letter (**F-5**) for any gift of \$75 or more. Copies of tax donor letters must be sent to the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer at the end of the calendar year.
- k. Send a Branch Financial Year End Report (**F-4**) and income/expense log to the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer at the end of the study year or as of **May 31st**.

- l. Use funds from the Branch checking account for any monetary stipends to priests, janitors, etc.
- m. Give a \$75.00-\$300.00 Host Parish Gift at the end of each study year, at the discretion of the Branch Facilitator(s), taking into consideration the generosity of the Host Parish. If the Branch is not able to cover the entire expense, the Branch may request funds from the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer.

NOTE: In certain instances, the Host Parish may require different financial arrangements. The Shepherding Board must approve the specifics of these arrangements. However, in all cases, the Branch must maintain separate financial records from the parish and The Cornerstone monies will not be controlled by the parish except where acknowledged by The Shepherding Board.

All the Branches will support The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study financially in accordance with St. Paul's words from Scripture: *'I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance.'*

It is written, "The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little." 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

2. Shepherding Board Financial Responsibilities

- a. Provide a gift card for teaching materials up to \$50 annually to each Branch giving Spiritual Reflections, if appropriate.
- b. Communicate the financial status of The Cornerstone to the Branches with annual copies of financial reports and through a presentation given at the annual Cornerstone Ministry Conference.
- c. Provide Guidelines for Handling Branch Finances (F-6) to Branch Facilitators, Branch Coordinators/Treasurer.
- d. Provide a "Dear Branch" Letter (F-7) to Branch Facilitators and Branch Coordinators/Treasurer of New Branches that explains the members' contributions and The Cornerstone finances.
- e. Assist Branches with any other financial questions.
- f. Prepare appropriate reporting to IRS to maintain 501(c)(3) status.

VI. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CORNERSTONE

A. The Shepherding Board

The Shepherding Board consists of “elders” in The Cornerstone who are spiritually mature and have knowledge of the history of The Cornerstone. They are people of prayer who have a love for the Word of God, for God’s people and for The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study. They must be active and committed members of a Branch of The Cornerstone, maintaining regular attendance, faithfully completing the lessons, contributing in their Small Groups, and having served as a member of the Branch Core Ministry Team.

As Scripture advises, “...select from among yourselves (men and women) of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom...” **Acts 6:3**

The Shepherding Board will consist of 6 or more members from various Branches who commit to serve on the Board, after prayerful discernment. Members must be committed to attend the regular monthly meetings and other meetings to be scheduled as needed. In addition to the scheduled meetings, there will be a workshop in January or February to: set the yearly Shepherding Board calendar, choose officers and committee heads, work on the Cornerstone Ministry Conference and attend to any other concerns that need to be addressed.

A member of the Shepherding Board will commit to serve a 3-year term. Each succeeding year thereafter, the member will prayerfully discern with the Shepherding Board whether to continue. During the discernment process, serious consideration should be given to both the member’s ability to attend meetings regularly and to commit the necessary time required to accomplish the work of the Shepherding Board.

With prayer and God's help the mission of the Shepherding Board is to:

- Maintain and guard the unity and continuity of The Cornerstone
- Establish guidelines and policies to insure the integrity of The Cornerstone
- Facilitate the growth of The Cornerstone
- Discern the spiritual direction for The Cornerstone through prayer and consensus of the members

1. The Shepherding Board’s Responsibilities

a. Prayer and Spiritual Development

- To pray for all Branches of The Cornerstone, Administrative Board and Shepherding Board
- To pray for all decisions and prayer issues that are brought to the attention of the Shepherding Board
- To attend to personal spiritual growth through prayer, spiritual direction, the study of God's Word, and other avenues such as participation in the sacraments of the Church, spiritual retreats, etc.

b. The Lessons

- To secure new studies
- To find published commentaries
- To find authors for new commentaries
- To write study questions or find question writers for new studies

- To revise and update study questions for existing studies
- To obtain copyrights and imprimaturs
- To make Lessons available to the membership

c. Printed Materials

To oversee and/or generate, review and approve all printed materials for The Cornerstone. This will include:

- The Cornerstone Manual and updates
- The Cornerstone Lessons and Commentaries
- Folders
 - ◆ New Branches-in-Formation
 - ◆ Branch Facilitators
 - ◆ Small Group Facilitators
 - ◆ Visitor Sessions
 - ◆ Branch handouts
 - ◆ Training materials
- Legal documents
 - ◆ Articles of Incorporation
 - ◆ By-laws
 - ◆ Copyrights
 - ◆ Imprimaturs
 - ◆ 501(c)(3) Not-for-profit tax status
- Financial reports and materials
- Brochures and promotional materials

d. The Branches

- New Branches

To mentor and guide new Branches through the 4 Stages:

 - ◆ The Information Stage
 - ◆ The Exploration Stage
 - ◆ The Formation Stage
 - ◆ The Transformation Stage
- Established Branches
 - ◆ To shepherd, mentor and communicate regularly with existing Branches through phone calls, notes, emails and visits
 - ◆ To be involved with the discernment, choosing and training of new Branch Facilitators
- All Branches
 - ◆ To make the final decision on the number and location of Branches
 - ◆ To help discern and train the persons who will serve as the Branch Facilitators
 - ◆ To give prayerful input and guidance to the Branches

e. Branch Facilitators

- To provide training for Branch Facilitators at the annual Cornerstone Ministry Conference
- To provide on-going training as needed
- To shepherd/mentor Branch Facilitators
- To communicate with the Branch Facilitators regularly

f. New Branches:

- To encourage and mentor new Branch Facilitators
- To maintain regular communication with the Branches
- To facilitate development of potential Branch Facilitators in all Branches
- To be involved in final approval of all new Branch Facilitators
- To provide training and mentoring for new Branch Facilitators giving Spiritual Reflections
- To provide Small Group Facilitator's Training for a new Branch

g. Spiritual Reflections

To provide training and mentoring for anyone who is learning to give a Spiritual Reflection in a Branch

h. The Administrative Board

To work with and coordinate the activities of the Administrative Board

i. The Cornerstone Finances

- To maintain financial solvency
- To comply with federal 501(C)(3) regulations
- To provide financial information to the Branches
- To provide financial support for Branches as needed
- To select a Central Shepherding Board Treasurer to manage The Cornerstone finances
- To make decisions about large expenditures for The Cornerstone

j. Marketing & Promotion

To review and approve the following:

- Brochures
- Flyers
- Website
- Bulletin inserts
- Letters to priests and parishes
- Media releases
- Presentations regarding The Cornerstone
- Videos

k. Audio/Video Materials

To oversee the generation and distribution of Focuses and Spiritual Reflections to all Branches

I. The Cornerstone Archives

- To organize and store:
 - ◆ Paper and and/or electronic copies of Lessons and Commentaries.
 - ◆ Any other pertinent documents that are deemed important to preserve
- To organize and store copies of anything pertinent to the history of The Cornerstone

All documents and recordings, etc., should be stored in two separate locations.

2. The Shepherding Board Members

a. Selection of New Members to the Shepherding Board

The members of the Shepherding Board will spend 2-4 weeks praying individually to discern names of new persons the Lord might be calling to serve on the Shepherding Board.

- After a designated period of time these names will be submitted to all the members of the Shepherding Board who will then spend several weeks praying for the Lord's guidance in choosing new members.
- At a meeting of the whole Shepherding Board the members will pray and then by a consensus of voting members, select those persons who are to be contacted by a member of the Shepherding Board:
 - ◆ The potential members will be asked to spend several weeks praying to discern the Lord's call regarding this Ministry.
 - ◆ At this time, prospective members will be advised to read The Cornerstone Manual, found on the website and on Dropbox, paying particular attention to the Shepherding Board's duties and responsibilities and any other pertinent materials concerning the Shepherding Board and The Cornerstone.
 - ◆ They will also be advised of the time commitment required of Shepherding Board Members.
- At the end of this prayer time, the prospective members will be asked if they feel led to serve on the Shepherding Board. If there is an affirmative response, the members will be invited to attend the Shepherding Board meetings for a period of 6 months as non-voting members before making a final decision.
- After 6 months of discernment, with consensus of the Shepherding Board, the new members will be asked whether they feel called to serve on the Shepherding Board, with the understanding that it entails a minimum 3-year commitment.

b. Term of Membership

A member of the Shepherding Board will commit to serve a 3-year term and will prayerfully discern with the Shepherding Board each succeeding year whether to continue as a member. Serious consideration should be given to both the member's ability to attend meetings regularly and to commit the necessary time to accomplish the work of the Shepherding Board.

c. Resigning from the Shepherding Board

At such time as a member and/or the Shepherding Board has prayerfully discerned that his/her time on the Shepherding Board has come to an end, a 6-month resignation notice will be given in writing to the Shepherding Board (if possible).

3. The Officers of the Shepherding Board

The officers of the Shepherding Board and the Shepherding Board Co-Chairs shall be prayerfully discerned and commissioned annually at the Shepherding Board Workshop held in January or early February.

a. Co-Chairs

- Facilitate meetings, oversee committees and scheduled activities of the Shepherding Board
- Facilitate communication among the Shepherding Board members
- Set the agenda for the Shepherding Board meetings and send it to members several days prior to an upcoming meeting
- Insure that the Shepherding Board adheres to the Shepherding Board calendar of events

b. Recording Secretary

- Keeps accurate records of the Shepherding Board activities
- Records the minutes of each meeting and after the Shepherding Board's approval, submits the minutes to the Dropbox Administrator
The date, time and place of each meeting is recorded in bold print on the last page of the minutes at the bottom of the page
- Resubmits the Articles of Incorporation and by-law changes to the State of Missouri, as necessary

c. Corresponding Secretary (optional)

- Handles all correspondence for the Shepherding Board
- Arranges for purchase and distribution of gifts, cards, etc. as needed

d. Central Shepherding Board Treasurer

- Follows the direction of The Cornerstone Finance Committee
- Maintains the checking account titled "The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study"
- Pays all bills in a timely manner
- Pays for the commentaries for the Branches
- Reimburses any individual who has expenditures on behalf of The Cornerstone
- Requests a financial report including income/expense log from each Cornerstone Branch Treasurer and keeps these reports on file
- Prepares a financial report at the end of each fiscal year (A fiscal year shall be from September to August)
- Makes this financial report available to all Branches
- Keeps a file containing copies of all Tax Donor Letter (F-5) written to individuals who have made donations of cash or materials in excess of \$75.00 per annum
- Provides the Branch with a \$75.00-\$300.00 Host Parish Gift if the Branch treasury cannot cover this expense

- Maintains a file of all The Cornerstone financial records and forms
 - Sends files of the prior year to the Archivist
 - Reminds Branch Facilitators and/or Branch Treasurers of the Branch Quarterly Transfer of Funds (F-3) and Branch Financial Year End Report (F-4)
 - Reminds Branch Facilitators and/or Branch Treasurers of the two financial Focuses, one per semester
 - Complies with federal regulations required to maintain the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status of The Cornerstone
- e. Shepherding Board Advisory Council (SBAC) Liaison**
- Corresponds with the SBAC members to relay information from the Shepherding Board to the Branches
 - Provides feedback from the Branches to the Shepherding Board
- f. Administrative Board Liaison(s)**
- Attends the meetings of the Administrative Board to facilitate communication and coordination of responsibilities between the Shepherding Board and the Administrative Board
 - Helps facilitate effective and efficient implementation of the business of The Cornerstone between the two Boards
 - Serves as an ex-officio member of the Administrative Board
- 4. Committees of the Shepherding Board**
- a. New Studies and Existing Studies**
- Secures published commentaries or enlists authors to write new commentaries
 - Oversees the Writing Committee through Shepherding Board liaison
 - ◆ To coordinate writing and editing of study questions for new studies
 - ◆ To revise existing studies and study questions
- b. Printed Materials**
- Oversees and maintains printed materials
 - Maintains Dropbox
 - Seeks copyrights, permissions and imprimaturs
 - Seeks Spanish translation
- c. New Branch Development**
- Oversees all aspects of New Branch Development
- d. Mentoring**
- Mentor of Mentors
 - Branch Mentors
- e. Cornerstone Ministry Conference**
- Oversees and coordinates the annual summer Cornerstone Ministry Conference
 - Facilitate ongoing training of Branch Ministry Teams
 - Increase knowledge of the upcoming study year

- Facilitate sharing of ideas and communication among members, Branches and the Shepherding Board
- Maintain the culture and the “Stones” of The Cornerstone among all Branches

f. Spiritual Reflections

Assigns Shepherding Board members to review and advise the presenters

g. Marketing

- Oversees all material and activities developed at the Branch level
- Promotes The Cornerstone through various modes

h. Technology

- Oversees Audio/Video ministers at the Branch level
- Posts the recorded Focuses and Spiritual Reflections on the website
- Assigns Shepherding Board members to oversee and approve Facebook postings
- Responds to web-help and info link emails from the website
- Updates the website and Dropbox
- Oversees annual renewal of domain registration and web posting
- Oversees Branch Webmasters

i. Archives

To organize and store:

- Paper and/or electronic copies of Lessons and Commentaries
- Any other pertinent documents that are deemed important to preserve.
- To organize and store copies of anything pertinent to the history of The Cornerstone

j. Finance Committee

- Prepares annual budget
- Monitors financial records maintained by the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer
- Reviews quarterly and annual financial reports prepared by the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer
- Arranges for annual review of financial records maintained by the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer

k. Shepherding Board Advisory Council (SBAC) Liaison

- Provides the Shepherding Board Advisory Council (SBAC) member of each Branch with timely Shepherding Board updates
 - ◆ Emails from the Shepherding Board
 - ◆ Current Shepherding Board minutes found in Dropbox
- Solicits input from the Shepherding Board Advisory Council (SBAC) member and provides feedback to the Shepherding Board in areas related to the improvement and growth of The Cornerstone

B. The Administrative Board

1. Organization

The Administrative Board shall be made up of Chair/Co-Chairs, Secretary, Liaison from the Shepherding Board and representatives from the St. Louis Branches.

They are chosen:

- To work with the Shepherding Board to carry out the business and organizational work of The Cornerstone
- To provide prayerful input on issues being considered by the Shepherding Board
- To implement the policies of The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study
- To meet monthly as designated by the Chair/Co-Chairs of the Administrative Board
- To pray for The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study

The members of the Administrative Board will anticipate serving a 3-year term. Each year, thereafter, they will prayerfully discern whether to continue in this ministry.

2. New Members

The Administrative Board and the Shepherding Board, with input from Branch Facilitators of the respective Branches, will pray for discernment in the selection of new Administrative Board representatives. An ongoing list of perspective members will be generated and maintained. After an agreement is reached by the Shepherding Board and Administrative Board, a prospective Administrative Board member will be contacted. He/she will be advised to read The Cornerstone Manual, found on the website paying particular attention to the Administrative Board's commitments and responsibilities to begin a period of prayerful discernment. When a person has agreed to serve, he/she will be invited to attend the next Administrative Board meeting. At this meeting, the new member will be commissioned by the Chair/Co-Chairs of the Administrative Board and given access to the following:

- The Cornerstone Manual
- Administrative Board Guidelines
- Master Calendar of the Administrative Board
- Ministry Team Directory
- Tax Exemption Letter
- The Cornerstone Prayer

3. Administrative Board Positions

Chair/Co-Chairs of Administrative Board

- Coordinate and oversee the activities of the Administrative Board
- Plan Administrative Board meeting agendas
- Distribute agendas to the members of the Administrative Board and the Shepherding Board Liaison prior to meetings
- Act as ex-officio, non-voting, member of the Shepherding Board and attend their meetings as needed
- Conduct Administrative Board meetings
- Act as the contact person for the Shepherding Board Liaison
- Determine the Administrative Board Committee Chairs for the Cornerstone Ministry Conference

- Appoint members to:
 - ◆ Coordinate the purchase and distribution of published Cornerstone Commentaries as applicable
 - ◆ Oversee revision of the Ministry Team Directory annually. Send electronic “Save the Date” information and registration forms for the Cornerstone Ministry Conference to all members on the Ministry Team Directory
 - ◆ Coordinate Outreach Activities

Secretary of the Administrative Board

- Provide minutes of the Administrative Board meetings to the Administrative Board and Shepherding Board Liaison
- Maintain records and minutes of Administrative Board meetings and activities
- Update the Administrative Board calendar including all Administrative Board activities and responsibilities
- Provide copies of Administrative Board records and minutes to the Dropbox Administrator

Shepherding Board Liaison to the Administrative Board

- Attend the meetings of the Administrative Board as an ex-officio member
- Facilitate communication and coordinate the work between the Shepherding Board and the Administrative Board

All Members of the Administrative Board

- Take turns opening the meetings with prayer and participate in shared prayer for The Cornerstone
- Pray for The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study
- Serve on or chair the Administrative Board committees to accomplish the work of The Cornerstone, including the Cornerstone Ministry Conference
- Compile a detailed record of each event or project organized or carried out by the Administrative Board during the year (by the Chair of each event or project)
This should include: the event name, date, times, location, and the names, addresses and phone numbers of all contact persons and committee members, as well as a description of their responsibilities, suggestions for improvement and an account of all expenses incurred. This information should be updated yearly and given to the Chair/Co-Chairs of the Administrative Board. These files will be distributed and re-used by future committee chairs.

C. BRANCH MINISTRY TEAMS

“For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us....”

Romans 12:4-6a

In every Branch, there will be a Ministry Team comprised of members who have been prayerfully discerned and commissioned by the Branch Facilitator(s). These members will commit to serve in the various ministries of their Branch and will work together to conduct the business and facilitate the operation of the Branch.

All members of a Branch Ministry Team will make the following commitment to:

- Pray for The Cornerstone
- Complete the current Lesson each week in order to promote personal growth in the Lord and to promote unity with the other members of their Small Group
- Attend to personal spiritual growth through as many of the following as possible:
 - ◆ Daily prayer
 - ◆ Daily Bible study
 - ◆ Daily Mass
 - ◆ Regular Reconciliation
 - ◆ Spiritual direction
 - ◆ Personal retreats
 - ◆ The Cornerstone Retreats or Day of Reflection
 - ◆ Spiritual reading

The attitude, behavior and appearance of the Ministry Team convey a definite (though non-verbal) message to the membership. Being prepared, present, punctual, caring and prayerful will set a good example to the members and help the members of the Ministry Team be in a loving relationship with God, with each other and with the membership as a whole.

In each established Branch, there will be a Branch Ministry Team and a Core Ministry Team.

1. The Core Ministry Team of the Branch Ministry Team

The Core Ministry Team of a Branch includes: Branch Facilitator(s), Branch Facilitator(s)-in-Formation, Branch Coordinator(s) and Small Group Facilitator(s). Alternate Small Group Facilitator(s) must be present if he/she will be facilitating the Small Group that week or if he/she chooses to attend these meetings on a regular basis.

Unity among the members of the Core Ministry Team is essential. To provide a setting for this unity to grow and develop, the Core Ministry Team of each Branch gathers for one hour each week to pray, bond with each other in Christ, share their answers to the week's study questions and attend to any Branch business matters as time allows. This session precedes the weekly meeting of the entire Branch. All members present at this meeting will be asked to give prayerful input to the Branch Facilitators concerning Branch decisions.

The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study recognizes the richness and beauty of other faith traditions, but because the following ministries of the Core Ministry Team often involve issues that are sensitive to the Catholic Church and its teachings, Branch Facilitators, Branch Facilitators-in-formation, Small Group Facilitators and Alternate Small Group Facilitators must be practicing Catholics. Persons of other faith traditions are welcome to participate in any of the other ministries of The Cornerstone.

2. Other Ministers of the Branch Ministry Team

- Audio/Video Ministers
- Branch Treasurer
- Child-Care Ministers
- Greeters

- Music Ministers
- Prayer Ministers
- Proclaiming Ministers
- Publicity and Promotion Ministers
- Set-up/Clean-up Ministers
- Shepherding Board Advisory Council Member (SBAC)
- Social Ministers
- Webmaster

Practicing Catholic

- Focus Ministers
- Mass-Liturgy Ministers
- Retreat Ministers

As space allows, all Ministry Team members could be invited to attend the pre-session meetings of the Core Ministry Team, but those who elect to attend must commit to regular attendance. To encourage fellowship and bonding, retreats, days of recollection, social and spiritual gatherings may be offered to members of the Branch Ministry Team. Members will be asked to attend periodic training or refresher sessions.

3. Branch Ministry Team Members' Responsibilities

a. Branch Facilitators

It is suggested that, if possible, there should be at least two Branch Facilitators in each Branch. Their function is to prepare and present Spiritual Reflections, facilitate weekly Branch sessions, oversee the responsibilities of the Branch Ministry Team and shepherd the Branch Ministry Team. Branch Facilitators will be prayerfully discerned, chosen, commissioned and trained by the Shepherding Board. These individuals are strongly encouraged to attend the Cornerstone Ministry Conference held during the summer.

The Branch Facilitator(s) will:

- Commit to ongoing spiritual development
- Pray daily for their Branch Ministry Team and their Branch
- Have served as a Branch Facilitator-in-Formation
- Prepare and present 15-20-minute Spiritual Reflections to be given at the weekly Branch sessions using Scripture, The Cornerstone commentaries and other supplemental materials
- Strive to include in the Spiritual Reflection historical and theological background of Scripture, as applicable, and share personal applications relating to the Scripture passage of the Lesson
- Facilitate the Core Ministry Team meeting prior to the Branch session to discuss Branch business, share the week's study questions and participate in shared prayer
- Shepherd the Ministry Team members through frequent personal communication and attention to the needs of each individual

- Prayerfully discern and choose the members of the Core Ministry Team (May include conferring with the prospective member's Small Group Facilitator, alternates and/or other ministry team members who might have valuable insights about the individual)
- Schedule Ministry Team activities to foster group unity and promote fellowship (e.g. luncheons/dinners, retreats, summer activities, etc.)
- Inform Co-Branch Facilitator of any impending absence
- Review and approve all decisions for the Branch as well as any routine printed materials, announcements and presentations given to the membership
- Oversee the Focus Ministry and preview all Focus presentations
- Oversee the Proclamation Ministry
- Communicate regularly with Shepherding Board Advisory Council Member
- Assist and mentor the Branch Facilitator-in-Formation as they discern their call to ministry and develop necessary leadership skills

b. Branch Facilitators-in-Formation

The Branch Facilitators-in-Formation are to prayerfully discern if they are called to the duties of a Branch Facilitator of The Cornerstone. The final decision will be made by the Shepherding Board and the Branch Facilitators of the relevant Branch. These individuals are strongly encouraged to attend the Cornerstone Ministry Conference held during the summer.

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-2, M-3) (M-25)

The Branch Facilitator-in-Formation will:

- Develop his/her personal spirituality through daily prayer, participation in the sacraments, guided spiritual direction, Scripture study, spiritual reading, etc.
- Be trained and guided by Branch Facilitators and Shepherding Board Mentors
- Have been an active and committed member of a Small Group and an active member of the Core Ministry Team for at least a year
- Demonstrate a love of Scripture and a commitment to and appreciation of The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study
- Develop the skills needed to give a Spiritual Reflection by periodically preparing and presenting an occasional Spiritual Reflection under the guidance and supervision of the Branch Facilitator(s) and The Shepherding Board Spiritual Reflection Mentors
- Assist the Branch Facilitator(s) as needed (May include facilitating Core Ministry Team meetings, filling in as a Small Group Facilitator, presenting Focuses and a Spiritual Reflection, etc.)

There may be a period of time in a Branch when there is no Branch Facilitator-in-Formation, but the development, discernment and training of Branch Facilitators should be an ongoing process in all The Cornerstone Branches.

c. Branch Coordinators (2 are recommended)

The Branch Coordinators will be prayerfully discerned, chosen and trained by the Branch Facilitator(s) and the current Branch Coordinator(s). Branch Facilitator(s)

will confer with the prospective Branch Coordinator's Small Group Facilitator and other members of his/her Small Group who may have valuable insights about this person. These individuals are strongly encouraged to attend the Cornerstone Ministry Conference held every summer. The function of a Branch Coordinator is to provide for the physical needs of the Branch. The Branch Coordinator will work closely with the Branch Facilitator(s) to keep the Branch running smoothly, taking care of administrative responsibilities.

The Branch Coordinator will:

- Pray for the Branch
- Organize the facility for the weekly Branch sessions
- Participate in the culture of The Cornerstone fellowship to provide an atmosphere conducive to the study of Scripture and prayer
- Act as a contact person and communicate with the host facility to secure the signed facility agreement, coordinate schedules and obtain keys for the host facility and meeting rooms
- Open and light the facility each week prior to the Core Ministry Team meeting and check for members' belongings before turning off the lights and locking the facility at the conclusion of the session
- Be knowledgeable of exit procedures in case of emergency, the locations of telephones, fire alarms and extinguishers and communicate the rules of the facility to the Branch membership
- Determine, with the Core Ministry Team, a method of cancellation for a Branch session due to inclement weather or unexpected schedule conflicts or problems
- Keep registration cards and provide the Small Group Facilitators and the Branch Facilitators with a list of each Small Group with the members' names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses before the first Branch session of the year (These lists will be up-dated after the first few sessions)
- Make sure that each member of the Branch has a nametag
- Distribute attendance sheets to the Small Group Facilitators prior to first session
- Explain The Cornerstone philosophy of financial stewardship at the beginning of each semester or get a volunteer (e.g. the Branch Treasurer) to give the financial talk as a Focus
- Be responsible for putting the donation basket out prior to each session and forwarding the Branch donations quarterly to the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer unless there is a Branch Treasurer
- Provide Login Procedures for Downloading Weekly Lesson (**FD-9**)
- Submit all forms/handouts generated for the Branch to the Shepherding Board for review and approval
- Provide assistance to anyone who becomes ill or has a problem during a session
- Work with the Branch Facilitator(s) in planning and implementing Visitors' Sessions to facilitate a smooth introduction for new members into the Small Groups
- Copy and distribute handouts and other take-home materials (e.g. yearly schedules, evaluations, membership lists)

- Explain any collections requested for the needs of The Cornerstone at the end of the year or as requested by the Shepherding Board
- May attend weekly Core Ministry Team meeting on a regular basis
- Attend the Core Ministry Team Meeting when necessary to pass on any pertinent information for that week's session
- Oversee the twice-yearly Branch Masses and any accompanying community-builders in conjunction with Social Minister and Mass Minister
(See Dropbox Handouts: BC-1 through BC-4; M-4) (M-25)

d. Small Group Facilitators and/or Co-Facilitators

Small Group Facilitators will be prayerfully discerned, chosen and trained by the Branch Facilitator(s). When discerning a prospective Small Group Facilitator, Branch Facilitator(s) will confer with Small Group Facilitator(s) and members of his/her Small Group who might have valuable insights. These individuals are strongly encouraged to attend the Cornerstone Ministry Conference held in the summer.

The function of the Small Group Facilitator is to:

- Elicit the weekly sharing of answers to the study questions in a caring, secure atmosphere
- Shepherd the Small Group members with The Cornerstone culture in mind
- Provide prayerful input to the Branch Facilitator(s) on matters concerning the Branch (SG-1 through 10; M-25)

The Small Group Facilitator will:

- ◆ Have been an active and committed Small Group member for a year and have served as an Alternate Small Group Facilitator
- ◆ Attend Small Group Facilitator training session and Refresher session annually
- ◆ Prayerfully prepare and finish the Lesson each week.
- ◆ Attend the Branch sessions regularly and punctually
- ◆ Adhere to the scheduled time allotments during the session
- ◆ Contact all members of his/her Small Group before the year begins and regularly throughout the year
- ◆ Keep an attendance record for his/her Small Group or designate this function to the Alternate Small Group Facilitator
- ◆ Inform the Small Group Co-Facilitator/Alternate Small Group Facilitator of impending absences as early as possible so he/she may prepare to facilitate the Small Group
- ◆ Contact Small Group members in the event of a cancellation
- ◆ Initiate periodic community-builders for the Small Group members
- ◆ Demonstrate insight and spiritual maturity in his/her answers to the study questions
- ◆ Attend the Branch and Small Group socials
- ◆ Express love for the Lord, the Church and The Cornerstone
- ◆ Show respect and concern for the members of The Cornerstone
- ◆ Exhibit, enhance, promote and sustain the Culture of The Cornerstone

- ◆ Have a deep love of Scripture

e. Alternate Small Group Facilitators

The Alternate Small Group Facilitator will be prayerfully discerned, chosen and trained by the Branch Facilitator(s). Branch Facilitator(s) will confer with the prospective Alternate's Small Group Facilitator and members of his/her Small Group who might have valuable insights about this person. The function of the Alternate is to support the Small Group Facilitator, help make the Small Group session run smoothly and assume the role of the Small Group Facilitator as needed.

(SG-1 through10; M-25)

The Alternate Small Group Facilitator will:

- Have been an active and committed member of a Small Group for at least one year
- Work in close contact with the Small Group Facilitator
- Complete each week's Lesson to be able to fulfill the Small Group Facilitator function if needed
- Attend the Core Ministry Team meeting when he/she is facilitating the Small Group. (Alternates are encouraged to attend all Core Ministry Team meetings, but if he/she chooses to attend these sessions, he/she will commit to come on a regular basis)
- Attend Small Group Facilitator training session and Refresher session annually
- Meet all the criteria for a Small Group Facilitator and be willing to fill the role

f. Focus Minister(s)

The Focus Minister(s), in conjunction with the Branch Facilitator(s) and the Core Ministry Team, identifies members of the Branch who exhibit spiritual maturity and are willing to give short spiritual talks (Focuses) at the Branch Session. This person will have experience in giving Focuses and will be a practicing Catholic. **(M-25)**

The Focus Minister will:

- Give the first Focus of the year as a model talk to explain to the membership the purpose and format of a Focus presentation and encourage the members to prayerfully consider presenting a Focus
- Encourage speakers to SPEND TIME IN PRAYER asking for God's wisdom and inspiration
- Schedule speakers and provide Branch Facilitators with the Focus schedule
- Provide the Focus presenters with these documents:
 - ◆ Focus Guide and Outline **(M-7.3)**
 - ◆ Sample Focus Talk & Outline **(M-7.4)**
 - ◆ Preparing Members to Give A Focus **(M-7.5)**
 - ◆ The Focus Weekly Schedule **(M-7.2)**
- Review these materials with the presenters
- Ensure the Branch Facilitator receives a copy of the Focus for review 2 weeks prior to the presentation

- Work with the Branch Coordinator(s) and/or the Branch Facilitator(s) to ensure that a financial Focus is given once each semester

g. Greeter(s)

The function of the Greeter is to welcome the members as they arrive to The Branch Session each week with a hospitable, Christian attitude.

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-8) (M-25)

To accomplish this, the Greeter will:

- Arrive 10-15 minutes before the Branch Session begins
- Meet and greet the members as they arrive, making sure that everyone feels welcome and that no one is left standing or sitting alone

h. Music Minister

The function of the Music Minister is to prayerfully select and implement music to be sung by the members at the weekly session and at special Masses of the Branch.

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-9) (M-25)

To accomplish this, the Music Minister will:

- Confer with Branch Facilitator to select music as necessary
- Make selections based on the song's pertinence to the Lesson or relevance for the group
- Provide lyrics for songs through songbooks, printed pages or screen projection so that all may participate
- Either play a musical instrument for accompaniment, use recorded music or lead the group a cappella

i. Proclaiming Minister

The function of the Proclaiming Minister is to schedule members to read aloud portions of Scripture from the week's Chapter(s) at the weekly Branch Sessions

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-10.1, M-10.2) (M-25)

The Proclaiming Minister will:

- Enlist volunteers to read the selected Scripture passages each week
- Remind those who have agreed to proclaim a few days before they are scheduled to read
- Provide the Branch Facilitator(s), near the beginning of each semester, a schedule listing the names of those who have agreed to proclaim each week

Proclaimers will reverently and prayerfully read aloud Scripture to the membership at the weekly Branch Session.

j. Shepherding Board Advisory Council Member

The function of the Shepherding Board Advisory Council (SBAC) Member is to represent his/her Branch and facilitate communication between the Shepherding Board and the Branch Ministry team. The Shepherding Board Advisory Council Member solicits input from his/her Branch Ministry team and provides advice and feedback to the Shepherding Board in areas related to the growth of The Cornerstone, Branch expansion, ministry development, governing policies,

procedures, study practices and any other issues being considered by the Shepherding Board.

The Shepherding Board Advisory Council Member will:

- Make a minimum two-year commitment (Exception would be a member requesting to leave the position for a personal reason)
- Attend the Cornerstone Ministry Conference held in the summer and participate in the SBAC meeting
- Attend Branch Core Ministry Team meetings while in this office
- Become familiar with The Cornerstone's culture, policies and procedures
- Have served on their Branch Ministry Core Team (Past or Present)
- Participate in scheduled video or phone conferences to address issues being considered
- Provide the Branch Ministry Team with timely Shepherding Board updates and the Shepherding Board's meeting minutes
- Share new ideas for consideration and speak candidly about issues, practices and any concerns that may arise during a Council Member's term
- Pray for all activities of the Shepherding Board and Shepherding Board Advisory Council

k. Child-Care Minister

The function of the Child-Care Minister is to provide care for the "children of The Cornerstone" during each of the weekly sessions, keeping in compliance with Archdiocesan and State regulations for protecting children. Rotating volunteers from the membership may be used to care for the children. If paid babysitters are used for childcare, payment arrangements should be submitted to the Shepherding Board for approval. **(See Dropbox Handouts: M-12 through 12.5) (M-25)**

The Child-Care minister will:

- Strive to create a happy, healthy and holy environment for "the children of The Cornerstone"
- Have a registration card for each child and know of any specific need: allergies, etc. **(See Dropbox Handout: M-12.5)**
- Generate a list of Child-Care "helpers" from a membership sign-up sheet and make arrangements for "helpers" each week **(See Dropbox Handout: M-12.1)**
- Arrive in the Child-Care room prior to the children and be ready, with the "helper," to welcome each child
- Incorporate God's message of love for His children during the class activities
- Coordinate donations of toys, art supplies, snacks, etc.

l. Audio/Video Minister

The function of the Audio/Video Minister is to record the Focus and Spiritual Reflection each week. **(See Dropbox Handouts: M-13) (M-25)**

Audio/Video Minister will:

- Arrive early each week and set up the necessary equipment
- Store equipment in a secure location

- Evaluate the quality of the recordings and maintain the equipment
- Make recordings available to the Technology Committee

m. Retreat Minister

The function of the Retreat Minister is to work with the Branch Facilitator(s) to coordinate the planning of a Branch retreat. The Retreat Minister, in conjunction Branch Treasurer, will collect money to cover the cost of the retreat. The funds will be designated as Retreat funds in the Branch Financial Record. The Retreat Minister will be Catholic. Retreats are optional.

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-15, M-15.1) (M-25)

n. Prayer Minister

The function of the Prayer Minister is to pray for all of The Cornerstone members, The Cornerstone Ministry Teams and the Branches. Implementation and structure of the Prayer Ministry will be determined by the Branch Facilitators.

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-16) (SG-3, M-25)

o. Social Minister

The function of the Social Minister is to coordinate Branch social events with the Branch Facilitator(s) and/or Branch Coordinator(s)

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-17) (M-25)

p. Mass Minister

The function of the Mass Minister is to plan and coordinate liturgies for the Branch. Information concerning the Masses will be communicated to the Branch Facilitator(s). The Mass Minister will be Catholic.

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-18, M-18.1, M-18.2) (M-25)

q. Branch Treasurer

The Branch Treasurer accounts for and manages in a timely manner all donations and expenses of the Branch in coordination with the Branch Facilitator, Branch Coordinator and the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer, in accordance with accepted accounting principles. (See Dropbox Handouts: M-19) (M-25)

r. Set-up/Clean-up Ministry

The function of the Set-up/Clean-up Ministry is to provide a neat and orderly setting for the Branch Session.

(See Dropbox Handouts: M-20) (M-25)

s. Branch Webpage Ministry

Post information on their Branch's Webpage

t. Publicity/Promotion Minister

The Publicity/Promotion Minister works with The Cornerstone Publicity and Promotion Committee of the Administrative Board to promote and publicize the Branch. (See Dropbox Handouts: M-22) (M-25)

4. Ministry Formation in the Branches

a. God's Call

The recognition, invitation, development and training of those who are to become part of the Branch Ministry Team is a continuous and ongoing process of prayer and discernment in every Cornerstone Branch. The Core Ministry Team of the Branch prays for discernment of those whom God may be calling to ministry.

They pray for individuals who will:

- Exhibit, promote and sustain the "Culture of The Cornerstone"
- Demonstrate insight and spiritual maturity in their answers to the study questions
- Attend Branch sessions faithfully
- Arrive on time for the Branch sessions
- Participate in Small Group sharing
- Attend the Branch and Small Group functions
- Complete the Lesson each week
- Express love for the Lord, for the Church and for The Cornerstone
- Show respect and concern for the members of The Cornerstone
- Have a deep love of Scripture

When names are suggested, the Core Ministry Team will begin to pray about these individuals and the Branch Facilitators will get to know them. If there is a consensus reached by the Branch Facilitators, these persons will be invited to pray about becoming a member of the Branch Ministry team. At this time, the individuals will be informed that the Branch Ministry Team has been [and will be] praying for them throughout the discernment process.

b. The Individual's Response

This process should include the following:

- Prayer for discernment
- Assurance of family support
- Consideration of time constraints and availability

When the prospective member believes that God is calling him/her to serve on the Branch Ministry Team, he/she will notify the Branch Facilitators of his/her willingness to commit to serve. A designated member of the Branch Ministry Team will train the candidate for the ministry position.

5. Decisions Made in the Branches

Decisions specific to a local Branch will be made by the Branch Facilitators with prayerful input from the Branch Ministry Team. These decisions will be made in accordance with "The Cornerstone Policies and Procedures" and through prayer and consensus of the Branch Facilitators. If there is ever a time when the Branch Facilitators are unable to arrive at a consensus, they will take the matter to the Shepherding Board for advisement.

All decisions that involve The Cornerstone structure, policy or procedures will be referred to the Shepherding Board.

6. Communications from the Branches to the Shepherding Board

The Branches will send the following:

- Yearly updates for the Ministry Team Directory from the Branches
- All new forms, letters, flyers, or other promotional materials will be sent to the Shepherding Board for review and approval
- Branch Quarterly Transfer of Funds and Branch Financial Year End Report with attached annual Income/Expense log to the Central Shepherding Board Treasurer (F-6)
- Spiritual Reflections
 - ◆ Spiritual Reflections from Branch Facilitators-in-Formation and Spiritual Reflectors will be sent to the Shepherding Board Spiritual Reflection Mentors 2 weeks before they are to be presented. During this time the Reflectors will be given additional training and feedback by their Branch Facilitators.
 - ◆ A Seasoned Reflector is someone who has given 6 Spiritual Reflections under the tutelage of the Shepherding Board Spiritual Reflection Mentors.
 - ◆ All Seasoned Reflectors will be required to send in 1 Spiritual Reflection per study year to the Shepherding Board Reflection Mentors.
- Focus Talks, from new Branches or Branches new to giving Focuses to their Shepherding Board Mentors 2 weeks in advance of their scheduled talk
- Branch calendars, Visitors' Days, Retreat information, beginning/ending dates, etc., to their Shepherding Board Mentors
- Year-end Branch updates to their Shepherding Board Mentors
- Ideas that may be helpful to all Branches (The Shepherding Board Advisory Council Member forwards these ideas to The Shepherding Board for prayerful consideration)

For all Ministries of The Cornerstone:

We pray *“that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you be rooted and grounded in love.”*

Ephesians 3:16-17