



Life Concepts Introduction

When Christ enters the life of a new believer, real change occurs. The new believer is transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son. The gift of new life is imparted through the Spirit, and the power of sin is broken through identification with Christ's death and resurrection. In Christ, the new believer is entrusted with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. The list of the new realities brought about by this transformation is almost endless.

Despite these changes, the new believer still has significant needs. Two of the fundamental needs are the need for truth and love (Ephesians 4:15). Truth is needed to help the new believer understand what has happened and is happening in his life as a result of this new relationship with Christ. Through love, the new believer is encouraged to press on amid the struggles of the Christian life.

It's a great privilege and responsibility for us to help provide the ingredients of love, truth, encouragement and understanding for the new believer. Life Concepts and the LC2 family of resources, of which it is a part, are designed to assist you in meeting these genuine needs.

Distinctive Elements of Life Concepts

Life Concepts focuses on providing essential truths and understanding in the context of a growing relationship of love and encouragement. Five foundational concepts are addressed in this series:

- *Assurance of Salvation*
- *Forgiveness of the Believer*
- *Filling of the Spirit*
- *Walking in the Spirit*
- *Spiritual Growth*

Each Life Concept is designed around a common template and accomplishes several objectives. It serves as a conversational aid that enables the user to guide each Life Concept interaction in a natural conversational direction. It also serves as a memory aid that can be easily learned and reproduced, either with the printed versions or with only your Bible, a pen and a piece of paper. This, of course, makes Life Concepts far more usable both within the United States and overseas (where at times flexibility is essential and materials are suspect or forbidden).

The Five Elements of the Template

- **Stories**

By sharing our experiences in “Comparing Our Stories,” the relationship is fostered. This also ensures an immediate connection is made between the Life Concept and daily living.

- **Struggles**

“Considering Our Struggles” relates the discussion to the actual needs in the new believer’s life, which fosters internal motivation.

- **Solution**

“Exploring the Solution” enables the new believer to discover the answer to his needs through a key passage of God’s Word. By focusing on a single passage, the new believer will begin to grow comfortable with the Bible.

- **Sketch**

“Examining the Sketch” is a visual way of helping the new believer understand the key concept discovered in the passage.

- **Steps**

“Taking Steps” provides action points to help the new believer begin to experience the solution.

Each Life Concept is printed as a complete guide to the interaction with the new believer. On a basic level, a person could simply sit down with the printed Life Concept and present it with little preparation. However, the effectiveness of the interaction will be greatly enhanced by the leader’s familiarity with the direction and intent of each concept. This Leader’s Guide is designed to assist you in that process.

Principles For Use

1. Learn the overall direction of the series by memorizing the titles. Each title suggests our struggle and God’s solution. Knowing these titles will help you build the bridge to Life Concept interactions (see below). It will also aid you in reviewing past interactions and building transitions between interactions.

- *From Uncertainty to Confidence*
- *From Feelings of Unworthiness to Forgiveness*
- *From Being Unable to Empowered*
- *From Being Unprepared to Equipped*
- *From Being Undeveloped to Maturity*

2. Memorize the five key elements of the Life Concept template.

- **Stories**
- **Struggle**
- **Solution/Scripture**
- **Sketch**
- **Steps**

3. Become familiar with the overall structure of the Life Concept series as reflected in the following table.

	Stories	Struggles	Solution	Sketch	Steps
Confidence	Comparing our stories of uncertainty	Having uncertainty about this new relationship	Assurance 1 John 5:9-13	Two Lines (Reviewing the gospel)	Read John or 1 John
Forgiveness	Comparing stories of sin and the resulting feelings	Feeling unworthy because of sin and failure	Forgiveness 1 John 1:5-2:2	Walking in the Light	Confession
Empowered	Comparing stories of frustration	Being unable to live the Christian life	Empowered 1 Corinthians 2:9-3:3	Life in the Spirit #1	Filling of the Spirit
Equipped	Comparing stories of inner struggle	Being unprepared for struggles in the Christian life	Equipped Galatians 5:16-26	Life in the Spirit #2	Walking in the Spirit
Maturity	Comparing stories of growth	Being undeveloped in the Christian life	Maturity Acts 2:42-47	Growth Environment	Growth Plan

4. When sharing your story at the beginning of each concept, share only about the struggle you experienced. Do not share your testimony of how Christ solved that issue in your life. At this point in the interaction, your desire is for the new believer to identify with your struggle, not to discover the solution through your experience. Rather, you want the new believer to discover the solution through the Bible. If you have not experienced a particular struggle, talk to some of your Christian friends about their struggles. You can easily use their story to introduce the concept (e.g., “Let me tell you the story of my friend Bill. When he first trusted Christ...”).

5. Keep your story short – two minutes at the most. Remember this is an interaction, not a presentation.

6. When asking about his story or experience, remember the new believer may not yet have experienced the struggle in any real way. If he has, he will feel more of a need to understand and apply the concept. If he hasn't, remember you are preparing him for struggles he will most likely face in the future.

7. Your objective is to help the new believer understand the concept, not answer every question. You may want to skip some questions. Feel free to do so according to the need of the moment. These concepts can be shared in 20-25 minutes. If you discuss each question thoroughly, each one can take 45 minutes or more. Be aware of the pace you are setting.

8. It's good for a new believer to use his own Bible (if he has one) to read the key passage. This will help him to become comfortable with using it. If he doesn't have a Bible, be sure to get one for him.

9. As you meet, remember the other important "life connections." Your one-on-one interaction is an important element in the new believer's growth environment. But equally important are his life connections to a small group of believing friends and to a larger body of believers (in particular, a local church). It may take time to help him establish these relationships. Helping him do so is one of our highest priorities.

10. Be aware that these concepts and interactions may also meet the needs of many older Christians. Because each focuses on real experiences and a key biblical passage, the concepts can serve as guides into deeper explorations of essential truths applicable for all believers.

Building a Bridge to Life Concept Interactions

The following is an example of how you can build a bridge to using Life Concepts with someone who has just received Christ. The best way to introduce her to the series is by identifying her real needs as a new believer. This example highlights both the need for the understanding provided by the Life Concepts and the encouragement which would come from meeting Christian friends. You may or may not want to build a bridge to both needs at the beginning. This example is intended to instruct you on how to do either approach.

Suppose Shelly has just prayed and received Christ:

"Shelly, I'm very excited for you and am confident this decision to trust Christ as your Savior and Lord will prove to be the most significant decision of your life. But I'm aware this is the beginning of something new for you. At the beginning of any relationship, there is much to learn and experience. In light of that, I want to mention a couple of things that will be helpful to you down the road.

"I think you'll discover you have two great needs as a believer: the need for understanding and the need for encouragement. We all need to grow in our understanding of our relationship with Christ and how to live the Christian life. But we also need encouragement from others to help keep us going.

"In regard to understanding, most new believers begin to have some significant questions and face some significant issues in the first few weeks or months."

Five common issues new believers will confront are:

- They are UNCERTAIN, that is, they have a lot of questions about what has happened in their life. "Did I do it right? Did Christ really come into my life? Can I lose this?"
- Over time, they see themselves failing to live the Christian life as they think they should, and they begin to feel UNWORTHY.
- They sincerely desire to live the Christian life but at times get frustrated because they feel UNABLE to do it.
- Often they are UNPREPARED for the struggles they begin to experience.
- Of course, they are spiritually UNDEVELOPED.

These five needs are common to virtually all new believers and the New Testament address each one.

"I've found it's helpful to look at the Bible's answer to each of these issues with another person. There are several key passages in the New Testament that address each of these issues. If you're open to doing so, I'd love to get back together to discuss the first issue, which deals with UNCERTAINTY. I think you'll find it helpful.

"The encouragement you'll need will come mainly from others who also have a relationship with Christ. Do you know anyone else who has a relationship with Christ? (If they do know someone...) That's great. I'd suggest telling them what you have done today. If they've trusted Christ as well, they'll be genuinely excited for you. (If they don't know any believers...) I'd love to introduce you to some of my Christian friends on campus."

Remember, the key to building motivational bridges for new believers is helping them recognize the need to know how to deal with these issues (whether or not they are currently struggling with them).