**Sample Retreat Schedule**

**Fellows Program**

**The Life, Faith and Writings of C.S. Lewis**

**Retreat Schedule:**

***Friday, Sept. 10***

**8:15 am Coffee/Tea/Refreshments**

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**8:30 – 9:00 am Introduction to Fellows Retreat**

* Go through Retreat Packet:
  + Commitment to Fellows Group: what is said in group stays in group, and define “unavoidable” (illness, family emergency, unavoidable work assignment)
  + Refreshments Schedule for Saturday mornings

**9:00 – 10:30 am Lecture and Q&A with Christin Ditchfield Lazo**

(Author of *A Family Guide to Narnia: Biblical Truths in C.S. Lewis’s* The Chronicles of Narnia)

“Smuggling the Gospel: The Power of Story in Evangelism and Discipleship”

**10:30 am Drive to Retreat Center (stop for lunch along the way)**

**2:15 pm Arrive and Check-In at Retreat Center**

**2:50 – 3:20 pm Session 1:**

**Review: *LFW Small Group Dynamics Handout***

**Review and Do: *LFW Spiritual Biography Exercise***

***(You will use the product from this exercise in the next Session)***

Song: Amazing Grace

**3:20 – 3:30 pm** **Break**

**3:30 – 5:50 pm Session 2: Small Group Gatherings: Sharing Spiritual Journeys**

**(Use the product you developed in the LFW Spiritual Biography Exercise to share your spiritual journey)**

**6:00 pm Dinner:** Sit with your Small Group

**7:00 – 8:30 pm Session 3: Small Group Gathering: Sharing Spiritual Journeys (continued)**

If you complete the sharing of your spiritual journeys, then begin discussion of June Assignments.

**8:30 pm Ice Cream Social** (Optional Social Time in the dining room)

***Saturday, Sept. 11***

**8:00 am Breakfast**

**9:00 – 9:45 am Session 4: *LFW Spiritual Impact of Music and Art Exercise***

**(Meet in Lower Level Classroom #7)**

Song: Take My Life and Let it Be

**9:45 -10:45 am Session 5: Small Group Gathering: Discuss June Assignments**

**10:45 – 11:00 am Break**

**11:00 – 12:15 pm Session 6: Small Group Gathering: Discuss July Assignments**

**12:30 pm Lunch**

**1:30 – 5:45 pm Free Time**

**6:00 pm Dinner**

**7:00 – 7:45 pm Session 7: *LFW Poetry in the Life of the Christian Exercise***

Song: Holy, Holy, Holy

**7:45 – 9:00 pm Session 8: Small Group Gathering: Discuss August Assignments**

**9:00 pm Free time – Fire/Smores**

***Sunday, Sept. 12***

**8:00 am Breakfast**

**9:15 – 10:15 am Session 9: Group Sharing of Highlights from the weekend**

Solo: Be Thou My Vision

**10:15 – 10:30 am Break**

**10:30 – 12:00 pm Session 10: Final Session**

**Upcoming Topics/Assignments/Announcements**

***LFW Further Up and Further In Exercise***

Lecture by John Lennox from YouTube

Final Comments

Prayer in Small Groups

Song:

**12:00 pm Check - Out and Depart for Home**

**Small Group Dynamics**

**In**

**Life, Faith and Writings of C.S. Lewis**

Small group interaction, discussion, prayer and relationships are vital to the spiritual growth process in this program. This is demonstrated throughout Scripture, but especially among Jesus’ approach to his small group of disciples.

As well, C.S. Lewis benefitted greatly from small group dynamics in his life as demonstrated in the weekly “Inklings” meetings he had on many Tuesday mornings at the pub and on Thursday evenings in his living quarters at Magdalen College. These “Inklings” gatherings enabled friends to share ideas, discuss philosophy and theology, and help one another create some of the world’s greatest works of literature of the 20th century. Lewis himself came to faith in Jesus Christ and grew spiritually in large part to due to these small group interactions

In this program, there are no official “mentors,” although one could say that we are being mentored by C.S. Lewis through his writings. Hopefully it will be made evident to all of us that Lewis’s goal is to point people to Jesus Christ through his writing and that he in no way considers himself to have all the answers, nor to be a perfect example.

Since we have no official mentoring in this program, we are asking you in the small groups to take responsibility for the small group dynamics and to take initiative in assuring that your group is active in the following ways (Notice the not so subtle, CSLEWIS acronym):

**C - Christian**: Christian discipleship, character and formation are the purpose of these groups so work together in encouraging one another in loving God and neighbor.

**S – Spirit-led and Scripture-grounded**: Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discussions and allow God’s word as revealed in the Scriptures as your foundation for knowledge, wisdom and life.

**L – Listen:** Listen well to one another so that each person in the group feels heard and is able to contribute. If you tend to be a teacher or talker, try to hold back and give other people the floor. If anyone begins to dominate, gently remind the group the need to give everyone the opportunity to speak.

**E – Encourage/Exhort:** Encourage one another with words and actions. Be intentional about coming alongside those in the group with compassion and care as they share difficult things. Share genuine words of thanks and uplift one another. Only when necessary and with gentleness and respect exhort one another for the purpose of protecting and helping that person draw closer to Jesus Christ.

**W – Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Questions:** Ask these kinds of questions of one another, of the materials you’re reading and in general, be inquisitive. Through questions you can encourage others to share and also learn about others. An “Ask, don’t tell” policy helps small group dynamics.

**I – Intercession:** Pray for one another regularly throughout the year. Add the members of your small group to your personal prayer list. Pray during your meetings both intentionally and spontaneously as led by the Spirit.

**S – Strategize:** Help one another develop intentional strategies and plans for making disciples in the family, church, workplace and neighborhood. Then submit these plans to the Lord for Him to tweak, change and guide as He directs. We all need the wise counsel of godly friends to help us walk through life.

**Some Practical Suggestions:**

1. **Start and End on Time**: Throughout the year, be faithful in showing up for meetings whether it be the monthly group meeting, or your “quad/triad” meeting. Be on time and agree on end times.
2. **Consider a Rotating Facilitator:** While not mandatory, one way to help the discussion of the monthly themes will be to have one fellow take responsibility for that month’s discussion. This doesn’t mean that you will be teaching, but rather preparing some questions to get the discussion started, ensuring that each person has the opportunity to share freely and that no one is dominating the discussion.
3. **Pray, Pray and Pray:** Don’t forget the power of prayer. Pray that your small group and quad/triad meetings will be encouraging and helpful to all as the Lord works in your lives.

**Spiritual Biography Exercise:**

**Communicating Your Story Using Reason and Imagination**

**Context:**

*The Pilgrim’s Regress* was the first book C.S. Lewis wrote after his conversion to Christianity, his first book of fiction and the first book published under his own name. It is an allegory which describes his spiritual journey in the vein of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress.* It is very different from the more traditional narrative approach Lewis used later in *Surprised by Joy* to share his spiritual journey.

In the Afterword to the Third Edition of *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, C.S. Lewis addresses some of the “Whys” behind this work of fiction that reflected upon his conversion experience. He relays that his goal was to present the two key sides, influences, or approaches that converged to lead to his decision to follow Jesus Christ.

The first would be **“the argued dialectic of his philosophical progress.”** This might be called the intellectual influence on his decision. He states that on the intellectual side that he traveled a road that led from, “popular realism to Philosophical Idealism; from Idealism to Pantheism; from Pantheism to Theism; and from Theism to Christianity.” He points out that he thought this intellectual road to be perfectly normal, but later realized that in some ways his was a unique journey. By using the allegory of a spiritual journey, he was able to give the reader visuals which help the reader remember and identify both false worldviews and truth.

The second is **“the dialectic of Desire,”** a lived dialectic that is experienced and addresses the intense longings of the heart that lead one on the search for truth and meaning. Lewis states that what he was really trying to do in *The Pilgrim’s Regress* was to focus on “the experience” which led to his conversion. The “particular recurrent experience which dominated my childhood and adolescence and which I hastily called ‘Romantic’ because inanimate nature and marvellous literature were amongst the things that evoked it. I still believe that the experience is common, commonly misunderstood, and of immense importance.”

Both in *The Pilgrim’s Regress* and *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis addresses this idea of deep longings or desires that point us to something beyond ourselves. In trying to find the object of these longings or desire, we often chase after “false Florimels” or seductive ideas or beliefs that lead us astray. Lewis writes, “To have embraced so many false Florimels is no matter for boasting: it is fools, they say, who learn by experience. But since they do at least learn, let a fool bring his experience into the common stock that wiser men profit by it.”

**Assignment:**

Many of us have already used a narrative approach to describing our conversion stories just as Lewis did in *Surprised by Joy*. In order to delve more into the “experience” or the imaginative side of your conversion, rather than write your conversion story, take the next 20 minutes to draw your conversion story. Allow your imagination to help you in communicating to others how you came to saving faith in Jesus Christ by using visual means of communication.

Later in your small groups, you can use your visual drawing to help in communicating both the rationale (intellectual side) and the experience (imagination side) that led to you putting your faith in Jesus Christ.

**Supplies Needed:**

* Paper
* Pencil/Pen
* Colored Pencils

**Spiritual Impact of Music and Art**

**An Exercise**

**Life, Faith and Writings of C.S. Lewis Fellows Program**

Group reading – everyone open to

*Surprised by Joy*, Chapter V: “Renaissance,” by C.S. Lewis

Reader reads aloud as others follow along: Begin in middle of 2nd paragraph, “The authentic “Joy”… - 5th paragraph ending, “a conflict of sensations without name.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the “authentic ‘Joy’ that Lewis is describing? Describe it
2. ***(Show sample illustrations from Rackham’s work on the screen – Power Point***

[The Project Gutenberg eBook of Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods, by Richard Wagner.](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49507/49507-h/49507-h.htm)

Why do you think Arthur Rackham’s Illustrations awoke something in Lewis?

1. Have you ever had an experience in which a work of art, illustration, a thing of beauty awakened something in you or created a longing? Share
2. Listen to Wagner’s “Flight of the Valkyries” with your eyes closed. (Play Music)

***Link to Wagner’s Flight of the Valkyries and illustrations by Arthur Rackham***

[Wagner - RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES - Furtwangler - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V92OBNsQgxU)

What feelings, sensations were evoked from within you? How might you identify with Lewis’s feelings of “Northerness,” “Joy” or other longings?

Has a song, music or some other sound ever created longing within you? Share

1. Why did Lewis try to write poetry? What did Lewis learn about writing from trying to write poetry?
2. Have you ever been touched by a poem or song lyric? If so, describe.
3. How might you use art, music, poetry, or other art forms to communicate the longing we all have for God? To share your faith with others?

**Poetry in the Life of the Christian**

**Life, Faith & Writings of C.S. Lewis Fellows Program**

1. **Poetry Reading:**

A Selection of Poetry from the Poems of C.S. Lewis from, *The Essential C.S. Lewis*, edited by Lyle Dorsett. (See Poems of CS Lewis LFW Retreat Handout)

Have Fellows read some of these poems aloud to the group.

Listen, Reflect, Respond

What did you feel? What truth was expressed?

1. **Poetry in the Bible:**

Have Fellows read some biblical poetry aloud to the group. Rather than using rhyme like in English poetry, Hebrew poetry uses patterns, parallel ideas (parallelism), alphabet acrostics Possibilities include:

Psalm 1; Psalm 136; Psalm 119:1-16; Psalm 137; Song of Solomon 4:1-16; Genesis 1:1-2:3; Philippians 2:5-11; 2 Timothy 2:11-13

Listen, Reflect, Respond

What did you feel? What truth was expressed? Why makes poetry an effective communication device?

**Exercise:** Write out your conversion story using some form of poetry (non-narrative approach). You might use a biblical style of poetry (Psalm) or another style of poetry (rhyme, haiku, etc.).

**“Further Up and Further In” Exercise**

**Directions:**

Imagine that you are sitting around the fire, drinking tea and enjoying an evening of conversation with C.S. Lewis. What questions would you ask C.S. Lewis?

Make a list of these questions.

As you go throughout the coming months, add to your list of questions. And see how many questions get a response from Lewis through his writings.

**Watch:** [John Lennox Come Further Up & Further In - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ynqfmo07I5c&t=1180s)

Discuss the message by John Lennox in your small groups.