

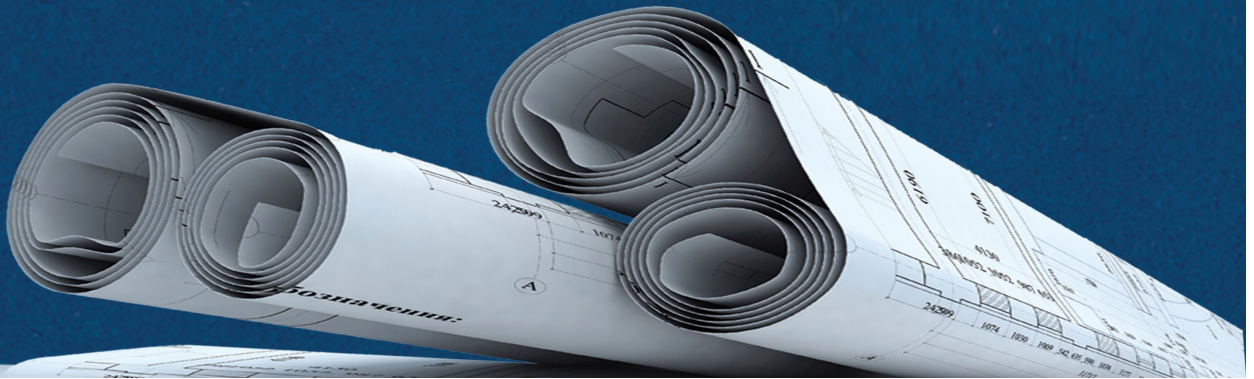
PROJECT TITLE:

Blueprints for Life

ARCHITECT:

Jesus

BLUEPRINTS FOR LIFE



An Event for Christian Men



The mission of CTA is
to glorify God by providing purposeful products
that lift up and encourage the body of Christ—
because we love him.

Blueprints for Life
An Event for Christian Men

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If this event planner proves to be helpful to you, we would like to hear from you. Your words will encourage us! If you have suggestions for us to consider as we create ministry helps like this in the future, please send those, too. Send e-mail to editor@CTAinc.com. Please include the subject line: BLU7DR. Or write to Editorial Manager, Dept. BLU7DR, PO Box 1205, Fenton, MO 63026-1205.

Planning Your Event

Getting Started

This event is designed to help men of all ages and life stages grow in faith, mature in Christlike commitment to one another, and celebrate the new life of faith and purpose they have received because of all that Jesus has done for them.

We've done much of the planning for you, leaving you time to modify the details to fit your group's needs, questions, goals, and concerns.

While intended for groups of from 8 to 35 participants, these materials can be adapted for larger and smaller groups. Depending on how you schedule your time, it will take about a half day to present. See the scheduling options that follow.

The activities focus on the theme *Blueprints for Life*. Check out the free downloadable resources available (for example, water bottle labels and name tags) and use them to tie your event together visually. To find these, go to www.CTAinc.com and click on the Resource & Idea Center tab. Then scroll down to *Blueprints for Life*.

When? Where?

Plan this event for several hours on a Friday evening, Saturday morning, or Sunday afternoon. Choose a time that will appeal to your intended audience.

Since the event will take only a few hours, it's not essential that you leave your church campus, but a change in scenery may be helpful. Exchange your usual meeting room for the church fellowship hall. Move from your customary meeting room to a different one—one with a better view or one that's closer to the kitchen. Invite everyone to the pastor's basement or to a deacon's backyard deck. You get the idea—change things up for the sake of a fresh perspective. Once you have a time and location, consider these details:

- Ask two or three prayer warriors who won't be attending to pray for the event leader(s) and participants before, during, and after the event.
- Assign a volunteer to take care of physical arrangements (for example, tables, chairs, supplies) ahead of time so you are ready to begin when everyone has arrived.

Note: Discussion will, in most cases, work best if participants sit at tables so they can see one another. If your group is relatively small (8–12 men), consider arranging rectangular tables in a horseshoe configuration. If the group is larger, you may want to form three or more groups of 5–7 men each. Round tables are ideal in that case.

- Order themed products the guys who attend can take home as they leave. Plan to spread these items out on a table—maybe near the food, where they are sure to be noticed! Invite everyone to take what they will use—personally or in sharing Christ with others. You can also order additional products based on this theme. Order these by calling 1-800-999-1874 or going to www.CTAinc.com and typing "Blueprints for Life" in the search box.

For example:



BLU7TM Multi-Purpose Tape Measure



BLU7CKN Multi-Tool Knife on Split Ring w/Card



BLU7CFL/BLU7CFLKJ Solar-Powered LED Flashlight Keychain w/Pocket Card



BLU7CMB/BLU7CMBKJ Ceramic Mug w/Gift Box



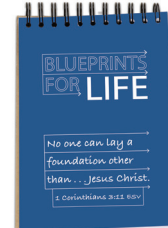
BLU7CC Pocket Piece w/Pocket Card



BLU7WL Credit Card Tool



BLU7CP/BLU7CPKJ Hammer Pin w/Pocket Card



BLU7NP Waterproof Notepad



BLU7TL Multi-Function Pen Tool

Note that several of these are available in a KJV version (the second item number, if listed).

- Should you like to print ball caps, t-shirts, or other mementos for the day, visit www.CTAinc.com/customconnections and choose from the many options there.
- Whatever other products you order, be sure to include copies of the *Blueprints for Life* devotion book (BLU7SC/BLU7SCKJ or with a pen as BLU7DGS/BLU7DGSKJ) for everyone who will attend. **Everyone will need a copy in order to participate in the discussion described in this guide.** Encourage everyone to take one copy for themselves and an extra for a friend.
- Arrange for snacks and soft drinks or for a light meal, depending on your setting and schedule.
- Arrange for musical accompaniment if you plan to include it during worship times.

Possible Schedules

Keep the schedule simple. By adjusting the suggested time frames below, you may shorten or lengthen the event to meet your goals and the needs of individual members of your group.

Option 1: Friday Evening

- 5:00 Getting to Know You (Icebreakers)
- 5:30 Supper (pizza, subs, BBQ, or ?)
- 6:15 Session 1
- 6:45 Break
- 7:00 Activity
- 7:45 Session 2
- 8:15 Prayer time
- 8:30 "Be a Blessing Blitz"
- 9:00 Closing Devotion
- 9:15 Go in Peace

Option 2: Saturday Morning

- 8:45 Continental breakfast (coffee, bagels, juice, or ?)
- 9:00 Getting to Know You (Icebreakers)
- 9:30 Session 1
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 Activity
- 11:00 Session 2
- 11:30 Prayer time
- 11:45 "Be a Blessing Blitz"
- 12:00 Closing Devotion
- 12:15 Go in Peace



During Your Event

The pages that follow, describe the activities listed in the sample schedules above. They explain any necessary materials and preparation. They also cue leaders in on what needs to happen to keep the event moving along. Adapt the suggestions to fit your group.

Getting to Know You (Icebreakers)

30 minutes

Choose one or more of the three options below. If your group is small, you may have time to do two or even all three. Ask a volunteer or one of the obvious extroverts from your group to go first. Or have someone from event leadership do so.

Option A: Two Truths and a Lie

Give each participant a notecard and pen. Ask that each person write on the card two interesting and little-known facts about himself and one interesting untruth. (For example, "In high school I bought and drove a Plymouth" or "I hate bacon" or "I can milk a cow.") Take turns reading the cards and guessing which statement in each list is untrue.

Option B: Common Denominator

Form groups of three and have the groups spread out. Say, "Your assignment is to find five specific things the three of you have in common. These cannot be job-related. Nor can they be obvious. For example, we already know you are all men and you all have thumbs. Find less obvious commonalities. You have 10 minutes."

Appropriate answers include, for instance, memberships at the same gym, having been born in the same state, having wives named Janet, or having birthdays in March.

When all the small groups are finished, have one, two, or more groups share their commonalities with the larger group.

Option C: Build a Snowman

Form teams with three to four players each. Give each team two rolls of toilet paper. Each team is to choose one team member to be the snowman. Others on the team have 5 minutes to wrap the snowman in the toilet paper, creating the most realistic facsimile possible.

Retreat leaders can judge the results and award prizes—perhaps for the best, the worst, and the most creative.



Session 1: Tools of the Trade

About 30 minutes

What You'll Need

- Copies of the handout for Session 1
- Pens
- Bibles, at least one per group, or encourage participants to use their favorite Bible version on their smartphones.

What You'll Do

Form groups of four to six men per group. Be on the lookout for participants who seem unconnected to others. Introduce them to someone they may not know and with whom they share personal, professional, or ministry commonalities. Do what you can to help everyone fit into an appropriate group.

Explain that the groups will have about 30 minutes to complete this activity. Ask that each group choose a discussion facilitator. This person will guide the group through the questions, keeping track of the time. Other group members carry responsibility for listening carefully to one another's comments and adding thoughtful, helpful responses themselves.

Let the small groups work on the questions, noting that they will need to set aside five to ten minutes at the end for prayer.

Activity Options

45 minutes



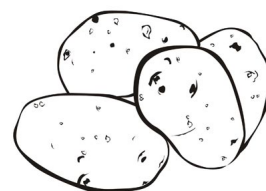
Option 1: Prayer Walk

Walk together through the church building and around the church property. Or walk through the neighborhood, praying for the people who live there and needs that arise in your mind and heart.

Plan to walk and pray silently. Or form partnerships, pausing and praying aloud in pairs or triads. If you need further details, type "how to do a neighborhood prayer walk" into an Internet search engine. Plenty of suggestions should pop up.

Option 2: A Blueprint for Fun & Friendship—Spud Gun Tournament

Several weeks before the retreat, form teams of two to six men each—men who have signed up to attend the retreat. Ask each team to work together to create a potato gun to be entered in a retreat tournament.



Note: Blueprints for spud guns are readily available online, including several versions that have been posted in YouTube. Urge teams to prioritize safety as they select the "gun" they will build (and fire) together.

During the retreat, teams will compete with one another to see which team's spud gun can shoot a potato the longest distance. You will need a venue for this; an open field or large pond would be ideal. You will also need a bag of potatoes, all of approximately equal size and weight.

Choose a judge and equip that person with binoculars to help estimate distances. As you begin, remind everyone that safety is vital and the judge's ruling will be final.

Option 3: Minute to Win It

Note: Each of the challenges below must be finished in one minute or less.

Build and Demolish

Give each contestant 36 cups to stack in the form of a pyramid. Once built, the pyramid must be disassembled and put back into a single stack of cups—all within 60 seconds. The first player to finish earns five points, the runner-up scores three points, and the third-place finisher earns two points.



You Nailed It

Fill five empty soda cans each with varying numbers of nails, nuts, bolts, or screws. Contestants must line up the cans in order, most contents to least. The player who gets it right in the shortest amount of time earns five points, the runner-up scores three points, and the third-place finisher earns one point.

Pasta Pyramid

This challenge requires two players, each of whom holds a piece of uncooked spaghetti. Contestants must work together to pick up three empty soda cans, one by one, moving them from one table to another and creating a three-can pyramid on the second table.

Neither contestant may touch the cans with any part of their body. Teams that finish first score five points, the runners-up score three points, and the third-place finishers earn one point. (For an extra challenge, have participants clasp their hands behind their backs.)

A Shifty Foundation

Fill a tub with water and float a plastic plate in it. Contestants must stack five empty aluminum cans on the plate. Because the plate is floating, it has no solid foundation; thus, the challenge! The first player to finish earns five points, the runner-up earns three points, and the third-place finisher earns one point.



Session 2: First Fruits and Prototypes

30 minutes

What You'll Need

- Copies of the handout for Session 2
- Pens
- Bibles, at least one per group, or encourage participants to use their favorite Bible version on their smart phones.

What You'll Do

As before, ask participants to form groups, four to six men per group. If you form new groups, help everyone, especially visitors, fit into an appropriate group.

This activity should take about 30 minutes. Ask that each group designate a facilitator to guide the group through the questions, keeping track of the time.

Let the small groups work on the questions, noting that they will need to set aside five to ten minutes at the end for prayer.

Prayer Time

10 minutes

Think of this time on the schedule as a kind of "buffer zone," allowing the prayer activity from the end of Session 2 to expand into it. Have snacks or soft drinks set up in another area for those who finish early so that those who are still praying are not interrupted.

Be-a-Blessing Blitz

30 minutes

Before you leave, talk together about a specific way in which you as a group can meet a significant need for an individual or family in your sphere of influence, perhaps by some kind of needed home repair. What might you do to bless your community or someone in it?

What one-time blitz of Christian love might you accomplish?

Talk about these questions as a group. Then prayerfully make specific plans to tackle the project you adopt.



Closing Worship and Prayer Time

15 minutes

If possible, include one or two worship songs or hymns before or after the devotion.

Read the free Ministry Message “Blueprints for Life” found in the Resource & Idea Center at www.CTAinc.com, or adapt the content for your group and present it.

If a pastoral leader is present and is willing to speak a blessing over the group before you leave, by all means take advantage of this.

Remind everyone to grab an item or two from the table where you have displayed the *Blueprints for Life* mementos.

As participants leave, make sure everyone has a copy of the book *Blueprints for Life* (BLU7SC/BLU7SCKJ). This book is also available with a pen (BLU7DGS/BLU7DGSKJ). By sending a copy home with each participant, you will encourage the men who attend to pray for one another and for themselves day by day. As they spend time in God’s Word and in prayer, their love for Jesus and for their Christian brothers and sisters will deepen, as will their commitment to grow in service. Consider sending a second copy with all participants, too, asking that they share it with a friend, brother, son, or neighbor.

Participant Handout

Session 1: Tools of the Trade

About 30 minutes

1. (5 minutes) Tell about a time when using the right tool saved you a lot of headaches OR about a time when the wrong tool made a task much harder.
2. (15 minutes) Architects and builders use a variety of tools in their work. Each devotion in *Blueprints for Life* centers on one of these. Read the devotion "Compass" from pages 6–7.
 - Though the author does not quote the words of 1 Corinthians 3:11, how do his words in this devotion reflect the words of this verse?
 - Read the directions in "Using the Tool" on page 7. Then have each guy in your group work on the activity independently in the space below:
 - When you finish, share your general impressions.
 - What truth(s) did the devotion and the activity bring home to you, perhaps from a slightly new angle or in a more memorable way?
 - What one challenge and one encouragement will you take away?
3. (10 minutes) Anyone who has built anything, even a birdhouse, has probably used a measuring tool of some kind. Read "Tape Measure" from page 12 in *Blueprints for Life*.
 - When did you first hear, "Measure twice, cut once?" From whom?
 - How does the author apply this carpenter's adage to our relationship with God in Christ?
 - In what ways does this devotion echo the previous one you read, "Compass"? How do both emphasize the truth of 1 Corinthians 3:11?

Wrapping Up: With one or more men from your group, choose one of the prayer starters from the two devotions you just discussed. Use it to begin a conversation with the Lord Jesus. Take turns, adding your own words of praise, confession, request, and thanksgiving.

Participant Handout

Session 2: First Fruits and Prototypes

1. (5 minutes) Builders and manufacturers in many fields rely on prototypes as they work. When you hear the word *prototype*, what comes to mind? If you have personal experience with a prototype, tell a little bit about it.
2. (10 minutes) Read the devotion "Prototype" from pages 44–45 in *Blueprints for Life*.
 - Summarize the author's point in the space below, using 10 words or less. Then ask each person in your group to read their personal summaries.
 - In what ways is Jesus a "prototype," detailing the Father's plans for us? (Work with your group to develop as long a list as you can.)
 - Read and respond to the directions in "Using the Tool" on page 45. Work individually at first. Then share your ideas with the whole group.
3. (10 minutes) Two pieces of wood. Three spikes. These were God's materials as he fashioned a whole new life for you! Read about that in "Together" from pages 46–47 in *Blueprints for Life*.
 - What insights especially stand out for you from this reading and from Ephesians 2:10?
 - The author stresses the importance of our connection with Christ as we live and serve, following the blueprints for life God has drawn up for us. Based on what you know about those blueprints, how important are partnerships with other Christian men? Why?
 - What encouragement and strength do you gain through these partnerships?

Wrapping Up: Spend some time in prayer about the partnerships God has given you with other Christian men. Thank him for those partnerships and ask him to deepen them. Pray also for men in your church who do not seem to be leveraging this partnership as fully as they might. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you consider ways to reach out to them. Pray with the members of your discussion group or partner up with a brother in Christ and move to a quiet spot to pray together.