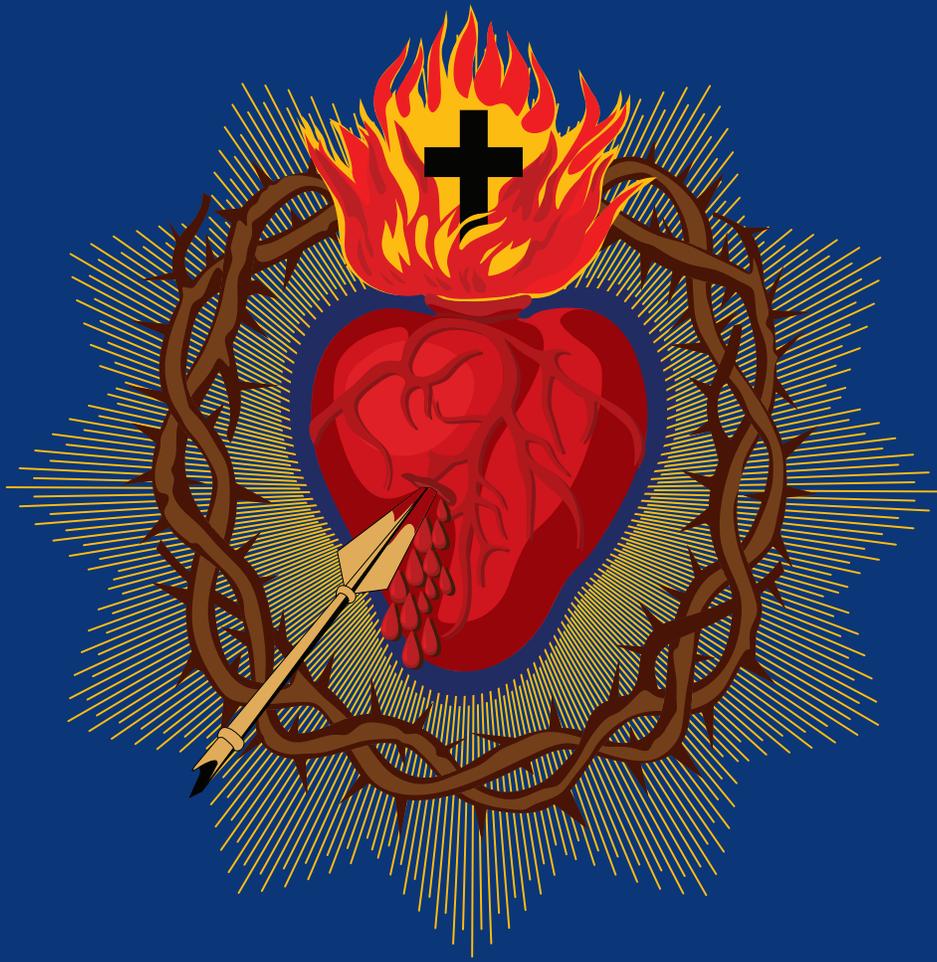




Cor Startup Guide



Overview

The Knights of Columbus empowers Catholic men to live their faith and serve their family, parish, community, and country. Why? Because families need strong husbands and fathers, and the world needs courageous witnesses to Jesus Christ. Through *Cor*, men will be formed and sharpened as disciples of Jesus, who are committed to serving him and willing to boldly live and share their faith. It is the mandate of every Catholic man to bring Jesus to a broken world. To live his faith and engage in this mission, every Catholic man needs a strong relationship with God that is rooted in prayer and the sacraments. Catholic men need to proactively invest in their ongoing faith formation, to be a part of a dynamic brotherhood that supports, sharpens, and strengthens them to be holy men, husbands, and fathers, and to engage in the mission of the Church.

The mission of *Cor* is to refocus Catholic men on Jesus Christ and to form and strengthen them in faith and virtue through a brotherhood committed to **prayer, formation, and fraternity**. The goal of each *Cor* gathering is to provide the opportunity for men to encounter Christ, to pray together, to be formed in their faith, and to strengthen their bonds of brotherhood, preparing them for courageous leadership and the **mission of evangelization** for their families and communities.

STOP: Before you continue further it is important that you commit to reviewing and applying the following key concepts and principles for *Cor*. *Cor* should only be implemented after reviewing this guide and after consulting the pastor for his permission to build *Cor* for the men of the parish. This will take time, commitment, and prayer but is well worth the investment.

- *Cor* is a simple concept. It consistently brings men together to refocus on Jesus Christ through shared time of prayer and formation.
- *Cor* requires dedicated leadership. The Grand Knight is encouraged to appoint a council Evangelization and Faith Formation (EFF) Director to fully oversee the implementation and leadership of *Cor*.
- *Cor* must be implemented with the permission of the pastor.
- Frequency is essential and should range from a minimum of monthly, to weekly.
- *Cor* is open to all men of the council and parish.
- *Cor* must always have the three key elements of prayer, formation, and fraternity. See examples below.
- *Cor* should utilize and collaborate with any existing men's group or men's ministry, not compete with, or control it.
- *Cor* is not a KofC program or intended to replace the traditional council meeting. The Grand Knight does not have an official or formal role. *Cor* should be led by the appointed EFF Director.
- *Cor* does not have a formal curriculum or set schedule.
- *Cor* is driven by the fraternal brotherhood, enabling *Cor* to continually serve as a foundation that answers, "what's next?" for any time or curriculum bound retreat, ministry, or event.

- Choose content that genuinely responds to the needs of the men. Suggestions for content can be found in the sample schedule below and in the *Cor Reference Guide*.
- Short term goal:
 - To consistently and frequently bring men together to center their lives and friendships on Christ through intentional times of prayer and formation. Begin building a fraternal culture of faith, prayer, accompaniment, and accountability.
- Long term goal:
 - For Knights to provide every Catholic man in the parish with ongoing opportunities to encounter Jesus Christ, grow in his faith, strengthen his prayer life, and transform his friendships.
 - To strengthen brotherhood where men are comfortable and willing to sharpen and accompany each other in the pursuit of holiness.
 - To provide a foundation of continued evangelization and discipleship for the parish and community.
 - To animate and enhance all Knights of Columbus programs and activities, strengthen leadership, and increase participation.

STOP: If you are prepared to apply these concepts, please continue to review the key elements of Cor, it's simple structure, and steps to begin planning and implementing Cor for your council and parish.

Key Elements of Cor

Cor consists of three key elements which **must be present for every gathering**: prayer, formation, and fraternity. The word 'cor' is Latin for **heart** and the root of the word **courage**. Prayer, Formation, and Fraternity all begin with the heart and direct the heart in relationship to God and each other. These three elements build and strengthen each other and help provide consistency.

- **Prayer: Lifting of our minds and hearts to God**
 - Through prayer, we encounter Christ and animate our faith and relationship with him. We must first know Jesus and receive from him before we can share him with our families and communities. Shared time in prayer will help men focus their minds and hearts on God and give depth and life to formation and fraternal brotherhood. Like all relationships, prayer requires commitment and consistency.
- **Formation: Becoming like Christ**
 - As disciples of Christ, the goal of Catholic formation is to become like Christ, taking on his character and virtue, his life of prayer, and his mission. He is the model of holiness. Formation is life-long and requires an intentional commitment. Alongside prayer, formation helps increase our knowledge and love of God and of neighbor. Intentional and structured times of formation help direct fraternity toward the shared pursuit of Christ, of holiness, and a life of faith and missionary discipleship. Formation requires the animation of prayer and the accountability of fraternity.

- **Fraternity: Centering brotherhood on Christ**

- Fraternity is not just friendship or hanging out, it is a true brotherhood centered on Christ. This type of brotherhood has depth and trust, where men sharpen one another and accompany each other as disciples of Christ. Brotherhood made up of Christ-centered friendships is necessary for men to grow in holiness, as leaders, and as missionary disciples. Like prayer and formation, fraternity must be intentional, requires proximity and consistency, and the shared mission of evangelization.

General Content Structure:

For these examples, *Cor* is set on a Saturday morning. These examples demonstrate how one key element, ie. prayer or formation, can be more heavily emphasized and still incorporate all three elements together. The timing for each is up to the leadership and may affect the order and content structure.

****Indicates a *Catholic Information Services* resource that can be found online at www.kofc.org/cis.**

Cor: Prayer Centered #1 – Rosary (60 min)

1. **Fraternity:** Coffee & donuts with table conversation
2. **Formation:** Read and discuss “Praying the Rosary”** (10-15 min)
3. **Prayer:** Scriptural Rosary** with group prayer intentions (20 min)

Cor: Formation Centered #1 – Into the Breach (ITB) (60-90 min)

1. **Fraternity:** Coffee and Donuts + Small group conversation on ITB
2. **Formation:** *Into the Breach*** – watch video and discussion questions
3. **Prayer:** Rosary or Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Cor: Prayer Centered #2 – Holy Hour (60-90 min)

1. **Fraternity:** Coffee & donuts with table conversation
2. **Formation:** Read and discuss “Prayer Time”** (10-15 min)
3. **Prayer:** Adoration or prayer in church (30-60 min)

Cor: Formation Centered #2 – *Patris Corde* book discussion (60-90 min)

1. **Fraternity:** Coffee and Donuts + Small group conversation on ITB
2. **Formation:** *Patris Corde*** – read and discuss questions (45 min)
3. **Prayer:** Rosary or Chaplet of Divine Mercy

How to run Cor:

This general structure is meant to provide a simple framework for the leadership to fill with appropriate content according to what is previously planned and shared with the pastor/chaplain. Each gathering must have a designated leader to manage the content flow and timing.

- **Set Up:**
 - Considering hospitality, if any materials or books are needed for prayer, formation, or fraternity, either provide them or communicate in advance. Ensure that the space is set up to match your predetermined content.
- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**
 - Open with a prayer, even if starting with food and social fraternal time.
 - Clergy should be asked to lead the prayer, if present.
 - The opening prayer alone does not satisfy the required “prayer” element.
- **Introduce Theme or Focus**
 - Make any needed introductions or announcements such as the focus or theme. Use this as an opportunity to transition into the main content or focus for this specific gathering.
- **Cor Content – Prayer, Formation, Fraternity**
 - Begin the predetermined content structure, either emphasizing the key elements equally or with a specified emphasis. Formation and fraternity usually occur first, concluding. The examples provided above have the content arranged with formation and fraternity occurring first and ending with prayer.
 - If utilizing *Into the Breach* or another *Catholic Information Service* resource such as the *Cor Ecclesiae* series, here is where it fits.
- **Wrap up**
 - Always end on time. This honors everyone’s time.
 - Recap any action items, reminder for next *Cor*, and invite to any upcoming council and/or parish events.
- **Closing Prayer**
 - Consider using a consistent prayer and asking for prayer intentions that allows for repetition and familiarity.
 - The closing prayer alone does not satisfy the required “prayer” element.

Cor Leadership

Grand Knight: Adoption of *Cor* should only add minimal work to the Grand Knight. He is encouraged to survey all council members and then appoint and empower an Evangelization and Faith Formation (EFF) Director who will own all aspects of implementing and running *Cor*. The Grand Knight is encouraged to attend, but is not required to, nor does he have an official role in the event itself. He is expected to continue to foster goodwill, collaboration, and communication with the pastor, specifically by first asking for the pastor’s permission to implement *Cor* for the parish and also how he would like the Knights to work with any existing men’s groups

or ministries. To that end, he is encouraged to bring the EFF Director into any appropriate and corresponding meetings with the pastor and other men's groups or ministries in the parish.

Council Evangelization and Faith Formation Director: Appointed by the Grand Knight, he will facilitate the planning, structure, and hosting of all *Cor* gatherings. He is encouraged to build an EFF team that will help shoulder these responsibilities, especially if meeting more frequently. He will ensure adequate preparation for each event. Preparation includes reserving space, communicating timing and content, and ensuring the meeting is run excellently every time. Along with the Grand Knight, the EFF Director should coordinate and communicate with any existing parish ministries, particularly men's ministries in such a way that fosters collaboration and the possibility of a hybrid experience achieving the aims and goals of both groups. The Council Director is supported by the State EFF Director and his Team.

Pastor/Chaplain: The pastor must give his permission for *Cor* to be held at the parish. He is primarily responsible for the formation of the souls in his parish and therefore should be consulted and involved. He should be made aware of the scheduled meetings and their content focus with a standing invitation to lead prayer and to speak to the men as he so desires.

STOP: Before reviewing the follow implementation phases and action items, confer with council leadership that the council is prepared to move forward with implementing *Cor*.

Cor Implementation Phases and Action Items

Grand Knight, Council Evangelization and Faith Formation Director, and Director's EFF team are to work on the following *Cor* action items.

All action items in a given phase must be completed before proceeding to the following phase. In addition to these listed phases, be sure to utilize the *Cor Startup Checklist* to help keep track of your progress.

Phase 1:

- **Meet with Officers of the Council**
 - The Grand Knight is encouraged to identify and appoint a Council Evangelization and Faith Formation Director to oversee and implement *Cor* for the council and parish.
 - The EFF Director is encouraged to build council EFF team (2-3 men).
- **Grand Knight and EFF Director are to meet with the pastor and ask permission to:**
 - Implement *Cor* for men of the parish.
 - Partner with existing men's group (if applicable) – See *Cor Reference Guide* for more information.
 - Advertise *Cor* in the bulletin.
 - Speak after all weekend masses to share and invite the men of the parish to *Cor*.
- **Meet with your council for buy-in and invitation**
 - Presented by the EFF Director at the next general body meeting.

- **Strategize communication, invitation, and rollout**
 - ie. Parish talk + personal invitations + kick off BBQ

Phase 2:

- **Utilize “Cor – Parish Communication Resources” packet for the following items in Phase 2**
- **Set the date, time, and location for the first three meetings**
- **Reserve necessary space**
- **Invite all men of the parish**
 - Bulletin announcement
 - Publish one week before the bulletin announcement.
 - Short interest survey with a QR code
 - Should be included in the bulletin announcement.
 - See the additional resource *Cor Communication Resources* to learn more.
 - Conduct pulpit announcement
- **Build communication list**
 - Should include clergy, council, and those who submitted interest survey.

Phase 3:

- **Determine the structure and content for the first three Cor gatherings**
 - Refer to the “General Content Structure” examples above and the example schedule below to help determine any specific content focus or emphasis.
 - Repeat this and following steps for reoccurring gatherings as needed.
 - After the second *Cor*, begin planning for the next few months so there is a plan in place.
- **Order all necessary supplies (if applicable)**
- **Send invitations to communication list**
 - Be sure to remind all attendees to bring whatever might be needed (i.e., Bible, rosary, etc.).
- **Hold Cor**

Schedule and Content – First six months (EXAMPLE)

- Frequency: 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month @ 8 am
- Content:
 - This is a proposed structure to show how simple and flexible the structure can be using resources and materials readily available at www.kofc.org/cor.
 - This example shows planning in advance, however, if the demands of the men attending require different content, then adapt accordingly. This is to emphasize that the formation and prayer content is supplementary to the needs of the fraternal brotherhood and not necessarily a set formal curriculum.

Month & Day	Goal/Focus	Emphasis	Prayer*	Formation**	Fraternity
July	Parish talk & invitation to all men	Grow with brothers in Christ	NA	NA	NA
August 5	Welcome & Introduction	Fraternity	Rosary	Welcome from pastor – “Why Cor”	Coffee and Donuts or evening BBQ
August 19	Start building brotherhood	Formation	Rosary, Chaplet or Novena	ITB – Brotherhood	Food and Small Group Conversation
September 2	Start prayer	Prayer	Holy Hour	ITB – Prayer or “How to Pray” CIS booklet	Coffee and Donuts
September 16	Where are we going	Formation	Rosary, Chaplet or Novena	ITB – Masculinity	Food and Small Group Conversation
October 7	Feast of Holy Rosary	Prayer	Rosary	“How to pray the Rosary” – CIS	Coffee and Donuts
October 21	Men as leaders	Formation	Rosary, Chaplet or Novena	ITB – Leadership	Food and Small Group Conversation
November 4	Praying for the dead (Cemetery opt.)	Prayer	Intercessory Prayer with Rosary	Theology of intercessory prayer and the dead	Coffee and Donuts
November 18	Spiritual battle – call to arms	Formation	Rosary	ITB – Spiritual Warfare	Food and Small Group Conversation
December 2	Advent as anticipation	Prayer	Holy Hour	Reflection on Incarnation in Holy Hour	Coffee and Donuts
December 16	Keep Christ in Christmas as a family	Formation	Rosary – Joyful Mysteries	Presentation of Advent and Christmas traditions – family application	How to Keep Christ in Christmas discussion

* Additional Prayer: Sacred Scripture with Lectio Divina, Viva Jesus, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Novenas
 ** Additional Formation: Other formative content could be used such as the Catholic Information Service’s *Cor Ecclesiae* series, *Men of the Word* Bible Study, Building the Domestic Church booklets, Supreme Chaplains Monthly Challenge, Luke E. Hart or Veritas series from CIS or other formative material.

Key principles for success:

- Keep it simple. Consider utilize existing Knights resources at the beginning to help build familiarity and consistency.
- Be consistent. Set your schedule and hold to it.
- Practice good hospitality. Plan ahead and communicate in advance.
- Keep the pastor involved and aware to the extent he desires to be. His approval and support is crucial for success.
- Build group ownership. *Cor* is intended to meet the needs of all men of the parish.
- Be intentional with your content selection and schedule. Consider the liturgical year, local and parish customs and celebrations, and council programs and events. Encourage attendees to invite others.
- Be patient, and allow the Holy Spirit to lead.

Pitfalls to avoid:

- Don't over think the structure or content. Keep it simple and START!
- Don't let a spirit of discouragement overtake you! Surround this initiative in prayer. You do not have to have a degree or masters in theology to do this and succeed.
- Don't worry about a small number of men attending while you are beginning *Cor* in your parish. It will grow over time.
- Don't let this become a closed club. ALL men need this brotherhood and should be frequently invited.
- Don't let it become self-focused where formation and the consumption of content becomes the primary intent and the gifts and faith we receive are never shared or acted upon.
- Don't let this become isolated from the rest of the council activity. Intentionally work to integrate brother Knights and council initiatives into *Cor* and *Cor* into council communication and events, particularly Faith in Action programs.

