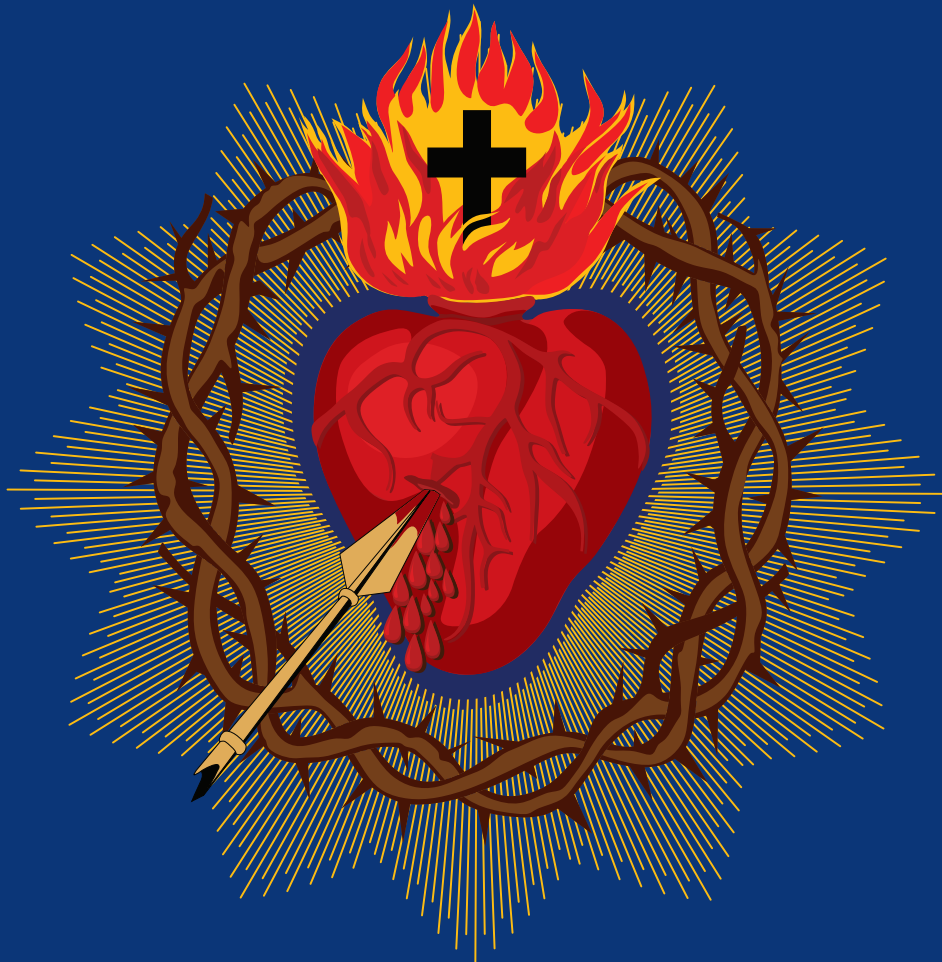




Cor Startup Guide



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.

Cor – Communication Strategy

Communication Strategy:

Effective and consistent communication is essential for generating awareness and successfully implementing and sustaining Cor moving forward. Your communication strategy should consider key stakeholders in the parish, such as the pastor, his staff, and other men's ministries or groups. Your target audience is every man in the parish. The greatest form of communication is a personal invitation. Additional avenues of communication can include parish bulletin, pulpit announcements, posters, emails, social media, and forms of text messaging services. Sample and customizable communication resources are available in the Cor Marketing Kit which can be requested by completing the request form online or by downloading from Supplies Online.

Bulletin Announcement:

The parish bulletin is helpful to generate awareness and develop a contact and interest list. Be sure to work with the designated individual in the parish office to obtain permission and the timeline needed to include your announcement in the bulletin. The bulletin announcement should have a link to an interest survey which will help you build a communication list moving forward for either email or text communication.

Pulpit Announcement:

A pulpit announcement is a great way to announce your council's plan for Cor and to generate initial awareness. Once you obtain permission from your pastor, identify the best council member to deliver the announcement. Your council's Grand Knight or Evangelization and Faith Formation Director are obvious choices; however, you want to find people that can deliver the message clearly and energetically. Additionally, since you should deliver this announcement at all weekend Masses, you may need to identify multiple people to help cover them.

Posters:

A variety of customizable posters are available for you to promote Cor. You should choose the image that best represents the prayer, formation, and/or fraternal aspects of your event. Additionally, you can customize the date, time, location, RSVP contact and other information. With your pastor's permission you can post these in public areas of your parish community. Additionally, with your pastor's permission, you may be able to have these printed and included as an insert in your parish's bulletin. If doing this, please be mindful of any bulletin deadlines.



Emails:

Sample emails are provided as an initial invitation for your *Cor* gathering and to remind them the week of. In addition to sending these emails to your council email distribution, these can be sent to non-members who express interest in attending. You may also wish to share these with your parish secretary and other parish groups who might be willing to share and promote your event as well with their email lists.

Social Media:

A variety of social media assets are available for you to promote *Cor*. You should choose the image that best represents the prayer or formation aspect of your event. In addition to posting on your own social platforms, you should ask your pastor if the parish would be willing to post or share these on the parish's social media accounts. Also, encourage members to engage with these posts and share with their friends.

Creating a short survey:

A short survey is a simple way to engage the men of the parish and create an email or contact list. Intentional questions will help you learn a lot about the men, particularly when they are most available, what they are interested in, and how often they are willing to meet. A generated contact list will enable you to provide attendees with updates or reminders. Keep your contact list up to date as *Cor* continues to grow.

Consider using one of the many free online services to generate an interest survey and a corresponding web link. Keep the survey to no more than 5 questions which equate to about 1 minute in length.

Creating a QR code with short link:

Once you've created your survey, you will want to make it easy to share and access. A QR code is a quick and easy way for individuals to access online content with their cell phone camera without having to type in a link or search online. It helps with convenience and speed, increasing the likelihood that it will be used.

There are free services online that will generate a QR code and a short web link that can be inserted into a parish bulletin announcement. Once created, insert your custom link and QR code wherever you intend to make them available.

Many QR code-generating services will create a "tiny URL" which is easier to put into a small bulletin announcement. In addition to the QR code, consider providing the web link in case someone is unable to use the QR code and would like to fill out the survey on a computer instead of a phone.

Cor – Startup Checklist

Cor Startup Checklist:

Grand Knight and appointed Council Evangelization and Faith Formation (EFF) Director (See role description) are to work on these action items. Following the meeting with the pastor, all items could be delegated to Council EFF Director.

- ☐ Identify and appoint a Council Evangelization and Faith Formation Director that will oversee and implement *Cor* for the council and parish.

**Share and/or delegate all steps following pastor meeting*

Grand Knight and/or Evangelization and Faith Formation Director EFF

- ☐ Meet with your pastor – Ask for his permission to:
 - ☐ Implement *Cor* for the men of the parish
 - ☐ Partner with existing men’s group (if applicable)
 - ☐ Advertise in the bulletin
 - ☐ Speak after all masses for a weekend to share and invite
- ☐ Set date, time, and location for the first three meetings.
 - ☐ Review survey responses to determine best date and time
 - ☐ Date 1: _____ Date 2: _____ Date 3: _____
 - ☐ Reserve the parish hall/space
- ☐ Determine *Cor* content or first three gatherings – See “*Cor Startup Guide*” sample schedule for examples
- ☐ Meet with your council for buy in and invitation – Council meeting director report
- ☐ Create short interest survey with QR code for parish bulletin – See additional resources “*Cor Communication Resources*” and “*Cor Communication Strategy*”
- ☐ Invite all men of the parish – See additional “*Cor – Communication Resources*”
 - ☐ Parish Talk: Announcement and Invitation after all masses over one weekend
 - ☐ Bulletin announcement (week prior to mass announcement, provide text with QR code survey)
 - ☐ Collect contact information from survey – create group contact list – send invites and future communication
- ☐ Hold 1st *Cor* gathering

***If group determines a better time and frequency – send an update to group contact list*
- ☐ Hold 2nd *Cor* gathering
- ☐ Hold 3rd *Cor* gathering
- ☐ Schedule recurring *Cor* following above steps to reserve space and communicate with the group.



Cor – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Cor?

A: 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.

Q: Why Cor?

A: Because families need strong husbands and fathers, and the world needs courageous witnesses to Jesus Christ. Cor provides Catholic men the opportunity to encounter Christ, pray together, and strengthen their bonds of brotherhood, preparing them for courageous leadership and the mission of evangelization for their families and communities.

Q: Where did the name come from?

A: “Cor” is Latin for heart. The inspiration for this name is drawn from the expression “cor ad cor loquitur,” “heart speaks to heart.” This phrase was the episcopal motto of St. John Henry Newman.

Q: Is this replacing the council meeting?

A: No, this is not replacing the council meeting but will exist in addition to it.

Q: Can’t we add this to the existing council meeting structure?

A: For this to be effective, it truly needs its own dedicated space and time.

Q: Is this a Faith in Action program?

A: No. But many Faith in Action programs can be inserted into it and count towards programmatic requirements.

Q: How long should any given Cor last?

A: Each Cor meeting should last ideally 60 – 90 minutes.

Q: When and how often should we hold Cor?

A: Cor should be held at least once a month. It is up to the men of the council if they would like to meet more frequently. Consider surveying your group to determine the best day and time of the week/month.



Q: Is anything consistently required for Cor, specifically content or structure?

A: Yes. The three key elements of prayer, formation, and fraternity must be intentionally structured and built into the gathering. The ratio of emphasis on one key element over the others can vary. Consider utilizing existing KofC resources to help structure the content, such as *Into the Breach* or the *Cor Ecclesiae* series.

Q: Who manages and runs this “meeting”?

A: The Grand Knight is encouraged to appoint a Council Evangelization and Faith Formation Director. The Council Director can build a team of council members (2-3 men) who will plan, coordinate, and execute *Cor*. The Grand Knight and Council Director should work with the pastor who must give his permission for *Cor* to be held at the parish.

Q: How should the pastor be involved?

A: The pastor must permit *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.

Q: Who can come and participate?

A: All men of the parish are encouraged to attend.

Q: What if there is another men’s group in the parish?

A: *Cor* should not pose a point of conflict with any existing men’s ministries or groups. Instead, this should be an opportunity for intentional collaboration and enhancement to serve the men of the parish better. Meet with the leadership of the men’s group and look for ways to build up and support each other.

*For more information and elaboration on these questions and more,
please refer to the Cor Startup Guide and other resources at kofc.org/cor.*

