



DISCIPLESHIP

God's Life Changing Work

An Exciting Challenge

Dedicated! Devoted! Disciplined! Diligent! Daring! Dynamic! What difference would disciples demonstrating these characteristics make in your church and community? One such group described in Acts 17:6 turned their part of the world upside down.

“When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city officials, shouting, ‘These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’” (Holman CSB)

From that point on, courageous followers of Christ have participated valiantly in this world changing mission. Today, the world we face could use a little upheaval. If upside down means opposite of the worldly mess seen on the evening news or heard in office conversations, bring it on.

If you listen carefully, you can hear the challenge of those who have walked before us, “Turn it upside down”. The challenge comes not with harsh criticism, but with a hint of anticipation. They know something many of us have yet to discover. As a parent encourages a child who hesitates to do something that brings certain joy, these voices of the past encourage us to plunge into the deep water. Be disciples who make a difference in observable ways. Excitement awaits those who choose to be different.

Most contemporary Christians probably like the thought of making a difference. Listen to a few as they talk in a local coffee shop. They are tired of the wickedness of the world and the onslaught of evil ripping individuals and families unmercifully. Many hunger to make a stand and challenge the status quo, but aren't quite sure how to become disciples equipped with the necessary qualities.

“Turn the world upside down” stirs the hearts of Jesus' followers. A vast army of world changers fill the churches of America Sunday after Sunday. When they hear the truth of God's Word, their hearts burn with anticipation. Unfortunately for many, the fire fades as they walk away feeling unable to meet the challenge. Disappointment moves to the head of the line. Joy and blessing take a back seat.





A Remarkable Purpose

How can the disciple's heart retain the fire of inspiration? Maybe the incredible response to *The Purpose Driven Life* reveals the answer or at least provides some pretty good hints. People want to know why they exist and God's intentions for them personally. Sure, they may have some interest in the big picture, but the prevailing question continues to be "What does God want for me?" To the Corinthian, Ephesian, Philippian, and Colossian disciples the Holy Spirit spoke through Paul giving them an answer.

"We all, with unveiled faces, are reflecting the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:18 (Holman CSB)

"... so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world." Phil. 2:15 (Holman CSB)

"...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness." Eph. 4:13 (Holman CSB)

"...and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of his Creator." Col. 3:10 (Holman CSB)

What a remarkable purpose! We are to be reflections of the Lord shining like stars on a crystal clear night. We are the image of the Creator measuring maturity by the fullness of Christ. Shining stars, Creator images, Christlike reflections describe God's intentions for His followers. God uses disciples who reflect and shine like Christ to change the world, to turn it upside down.

How in this world does such a heavenly transformation occur? Fortunately, becoming like Christ centers on His work in us and not our work for Him. Peter, one of those early shining star world changers explained

"For His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires." 2 Pet. 1:3-4 (Holman CSB)

Every disciple already possesses the necessary qualities and equipment to become like Christ. The moment we trust Christ for forgiveness the divine transformation begins. The blood of Christ covers our sin and the power of the resurrected Lord surges through our dead spirit raising it to eternal life. That initial stage of transformation stands completed at conversion. However, additional work remains before disciples clearly reflect His glory and shine like stars. Though that additional transformation remains an activity of God and not man, He clearly gives each disciple personal responsibility for growth. God changes us as we learn more about His ways and follow Him in obedience.

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." John 13:17 (Holman CSB)

"So then, we must pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another." Rom. 14:19 (Holman CSB)



“Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.” Phil. 4:9 (Holman CSB)

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Pet. 1:5-8 (Holman CSB)

“But have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness.” 1 Tim. 4:7 (Holman CSB)

“But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who acts—this person will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:25 (Holman CSB)

Look at some of the verbs in those verses. *Do, pursue, make effort, train, persevere, and act* describe the disciple’s responsibility in this transformation process. Without question, God does the renewing, the empowering, the re-creating but disciples must do the yielding, the submitting, and the obeying. Such is the nature of this man-God relationship.

Discipleship is the process God uses to accomplish His transforming work in us. Some define discipleship as ***the lifelong journey of obedience to Christ that transforms a person’s values and behavior and results in ministry in one’s home, church, and the world.*** Define it any way you like and approach it any way you want, but measure it by its fruit. Christ intends for those who follow Him to “...deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mark 8:34 Holman CSB). He expects followship to be demonstrated by obedience. “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock” (Matt. 7:24 Holman CSB). He commissions all disciples to reproduce themselves in others. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...” (Matt. 28:19 Holman CSB).

A Fruitful Process

How can a church develop a discipleship strategy that demonstrates effectiveness by empowering disciples to be world changers? Churches implementing a discipleship strategy identified by the following characteristics produce disciples who make a difference. Approaches vary from church to church but these characteristics form a unifying connection.

- Effective discipleship must be **intentional** and **ongoing**. A hit and miss, part-time, seasonal effort produces little fruit.
- Effective discipleship must be **comprehensive** in church practice.
 - a. Every action of the church should be connected with the strategy to disciple believers. For example, Sunday School and other ongoing open group Bible studies provide foundational discipleship and a lab environment to practice leadership and ministry skills learned in other discipleship experiences. Closed groups provide short-term experiences that demonstrate a deep degree of accountability: for attendance, preparation, participation, transparency, and confidentiality.



- b. Every stage of discipleship should be given intentional focus.
 - i. New Disciple – How does the church help the new disciple begin the journey of discipleship?
 - ii. Growing Disciple – How does the church help all disciples grow spiritually, develop skills for ministry, and learn to disciple others?
- c. Every age disciple is included in the strategy: adult, student, childhood
- Effective discipleship must be **transformational**. Disciples should be more like Christ in attitudes and actions as a result of discipleship. This transformation process follows a biblical pattern described with three simple words; Be, Know, Do.
 - a. Be – Who the disciple becomes at conversion as a child of God and who he is becoming through the ongoing renewal work of the indwelling Spirit. Disciples need help to evaluate the progress of personal transformation. In attitudes of the heart and actions of daily living does the disciple look more like Christ?
 - b. Know – What the disciple learns about God. This learning comes through studying His Word, seeing His Work, and hearing His Voice. Knowing God more completely provides fuel for the ongoing transformation.
 - c. Do – What the disciple does in response to what he knows about God and who he is. As stated previously, Christ expects obedient action.

These three transformational elements exist as interdependent actions. In isolation, neither has the ability to produce a Christlike reflection in a disciple. Together, they serve as catalysts for a God-work that changes the disciple from the inside. A world-changing mission results from the interaction of these transformational elements.

- Effective discipleship must be **accountable** and **relational**. Disciples cannot grow in isolation from the fellowship of others. Lone ranger disciples often become ineffective and unproductive. Iron does sharpen iron.
- Effective discipleship must be **focused**. Providing disciples specific spiritual disciplines to target for their growth and evaluation makes discipleship more concrete. Growth in Christlikeness becomes more of a “can do now” that an “ought to someday.”
- Effective discipleship must use **relevant** methods to implement the strategy. Home-based small groups, church-based short term and ongoing groups, self-directed studies, on-line opportunities, enrichment events, leader training events, and many other approaches form a resource pool for effective discipleship methods. Church leaders need to discover what works best in their specific situation.

Remember these words; *intentional, comprehensive, transformational, accountable, focused, and relevant*. These criteria can help leaders evaluate whatever discipleship strategy the church implements. The following model builds on these criteria. This model is presented not as the sole prescription for doing discipleship but as one approach among many. For those desiring specific instructions for developing an effective discipleship strategy, the model helps make the necessary plans. For others, it may provide some “think about this” suggestions. Start now setting your church’s course for a discipleship strategy that produces world changers through the power of God.



Steps for Developing a Discipleship Strategy

The following steps provide a comprehensive process for developing a discipleship strategy in your church. If this is your initial attempt to build an intentional plan of discipleship, accomplishing every step may be difficult. Review the list and choose steps best suited to your situation. Establish a goal of getting started rather than getting it all completed. Refuse to be overwhelmed by this list of sixteen steps. Build from year-to-year as you set your sights on an ongoing process of discipleship.

	Step	Completed
1	Establish the pastor as the primary discipleship leader	
2	Organize a discipleship leadership team.	
3	Know the purpose of discipleship and use that purpose to create a vision statement for discipleship in your church.	
4	Determine the specific spiritual disciplines that will form the foundation for the discipleship strategy.	
5	Determine the people groups in your church and community in need of discipleship.	
6	Discover the discipleship/ministry needs of the identified people groups.	
7	Establish discipleship study approaches relevant to the needs of the identified people groups.	
8	Assimilate new church members into the life of the church.	
9	Provide opportunities for disciples to develop leadership and ministry skills.	
10	Choose resources for disciples to study in a closed group setting.	
11	Provide personal enrichment and devotional resources.	
12	Guide all disciples to develop an annual spiritual growth plan and create a process to track and evaluate the plan annually.	
13	Communicate the vision and complete strategy to the church. Set a date to launch the study element of the strategy and begin promotion.	
14	Enlist and train leaders for your small group studies.	
15	Launch the strategy.	
16	Evaluate the plan regularly and make necessary adjustments to improve effectiveness.	



Step 1: Establish the pastor as the primary discipleship leader. The pastor can delegate the administration of the discipleship strategy to another leader, but he should personally model discipleship and be the ongoing champion and cheerleader. Without his consistent leadership and support effective discipleship has little chance of success.

Step 2: Organize a discipleship leadership team. In many churches, planning an intentional process for discipleship is led by a discipleship director who plans internally with discipleship leaders and externally with leaders of other areas of ministry in the church. Selected discipleship leaders serve on the discipleship leadership team. Together, team members plan and promote discipleship experiences, enlist leaders, and evaluate the effectiveness of the experiences. Members of the leadership team include the discipleship director, the pastor, and the church's educational staff. Beyond that, the team can include representatives who will champion a particular area of discipleship or special study. Some churches find that having discipleship leaders as part of their Sunday School organization strengthens their discipleship ministry. Discipleship leaders can be a part of a Sunday School class or department, or both. Their work consists of identifying the discipleship needs of their class or department and planning discipleship experiences to meet those needs. Some churches include the Sunday School director on the discipleship leadership team, and the Discipleship director on the Sunday School council. This highlights the foundational discipleship function of Sunday School while strategically connecting disciples to growth opportunities beyond Sunday School.

List leadership team information on page 1 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*.

Step 3: Know the purpose of discipleship and use that purpose to create a vision statement for discipleship in your church. Simply stated the purpose of discipleship is to make disciples. Communicating that purpose to the church will be vital to the success of your discipleship strategy. Many churches are discovering the importance of thinking through and having a written vision statement. The discipleship vision statement must connect with the church's overall vision. A vision statement (sometimes called a mission statement or a purpose statement) provides a focal point for identifying the reason for existence. A vision statement develops out of a common vision with which all people associated can identify. Sometimes trying to put your vision into words is harder than it seems. Present it to the church body for approval. Including the church as a whole will insure a greater sense of ownership in the statement. As you are thinking about a vision statement for a growing discipleship strategy consider the following questions:

- What is God calling us to do?
- How do we plan to get there?

Write your discipleship vision on page 1 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*.

Step 4: Determine the specific spiritual disciplines that will form the foundation for the discipleship strategy. Do you remember that "focused" is one of the characteristics of effective discipleship? Deciding on specific spiritual disciplines provides the consistent focus needed. As you think about the disciplines your team wants to recommend, consider actions that you believe help disciples grow in Christlikeness. Keep your list simple, short enough to memorize yet complete enough to cover the bases. The following disciplines are provided to give you some ideas. Discipleship experiences presented later use these disciplines as the framework.



Adult Spiritual Disciplines

- 1. Abide in Christ
- 2. Live by God’s Word
- 3. Pray in faith
- 4. Build godly relationships
- 5. Minister to others
- 6. Witness to the world

Student Spiritual Disciplines

- 1. Understand the cost of discipleship
- 2. Build accountable relationships
- 3. Set godly priorities
- 4. Dig into God’s Word
- 5. Develop deeper prayer lives
- 6. Minister to/evangelize others
- 7. Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- 8. Demonstrate godly character

Childhood Spiritual Disciplines

- 1. Learn and love God’s Word
- 2. Live godly lives
- 3. Prepare to lead the next generation

After reviewing these lists, determine disciplines on which your discipleship strategy will focus. Put a check by the disciplines above that match your discipleship goals for the year. You may decide on different or additional ideas. List those ideas in the space provided.

Our adult spiritual disciplines: _____

Our student spiritual disciplines: _____

Our childhood spiritual disciplines: _____



Step 5: Determine the people groups in your church and community in need of discipleship. One way of approaching planning your discipleship strategy is to identify the people-groups in your church membership and in your community. People-groups represent categories of people who share life-situations with others. Each individual in a people-group is unique, but they share many of the same needs with others in the group. The most basic people-groups are adults, youth, children, and preschoolers. Married couples is another example of a people-group. All married couples have some of the same needs, such as knowing how to communicate effectively with each other, learning to honor God in their marriage, and knowing how to show their love to each other. On the other hand, due to differences in the ages of couples and the length of time they have been married, the needs of some couples can differ from the needs of others.

There are two types of people-groups: inside people-groups and outside people-groups. Inside people-groups are those within your church, including church members and their families, and regular attenders. Outside people-groups are made up of people in your community who, though they don't belong to your church, are reachable for some of the discipleship experiences your church might offer. For instance, a church in Indiana is reaching a large number of neighborhood children through TeamKID Clubs. Also, a church in Texas consistently reaches a large number of non-members through the many support groups it offers. TeamKID Clubs, DiscipleNow youth events, parenting courses, marriage enrichment events, and support groups are but a few of the ways churches can minister to people outside the church. Because of its foundational discipleship function an effective connecting point for these people-groups would be Sunday School. Guiding them to a small group where needs are met, relationships are built, and God's Word is taught is the key for reaching them for the long-term. Churches with an outward focus are constantly seeking to meet the needs of all persons. Knowing your people-groups is a good way to sharpen your focus. Your discipleship strategy can't do everything for everyone at all times, so this will help you determine where to put your time and energy.

People-Groups Inside the Church Who Need to Be Discipled

Adults

Caregivers	Senior adults	Senior adults
Church leadership	Shift workers	Shift workers
College students	Mothers working outside the home	Single adults
Divorced	Newly married couples	Single parents
Expectant mothers	Parents of children	Stay-at-home moms
Grandparents	Parents of preschoolers	Young adults
Married couples	Parents of teenagers	Widows/widowers
Median adults	Retirees	Women
Men		



Youth

High school dropouts
 Junior high youth
 Middle school youth
 Pregnant teens
 Senior high youth
 Teenage parents

Children/Preschool

Children of single parents
 Latchkey children
 Older children
 Older preschoolers
 Younger children
 Younger preschoolers

Multi-generational

Abused	Gifted	New church members
Alcoholic	Handicapped	Non-members who attend
Battered	Hearing impaired	Overweight
Bereaved	Homebound	People with AIDS
Blended families	Homeless	Substance/drug abusers
Children of divorced parents	Homosexuals	Terminally ill
Codependent	Inactive church members	Underweight
Dysfunctional families	Internationals	Unemployed
Ethnic	Learning disabled	Visually impaired
Families of people with AIDS	New believers	

People-Groups Outside the Church Who Need to Be Reached

Many of the people-groups identified inside the church are the same as people-groups outside the church. Additional people-groups include:

Church dropouts	Nursing home residents
Families of nursing home residents	People in group homes
Gang members	People in prison
Juvenile offenders	Transient workers
Migrant workers	

After you have identified your people-groups you can begin looking at specific discipleship/ministry needs within each group.



Step 6: Discover the discipleship/ministry needs of the identified people groups. What kinds of discipleship needs do believers have? Easy. Just think of yourself. What kinds of needs do you have? Do you need to know and use your spiritual gifts, develop a closer walk with God, become a more supportive parent or a more loving spouse? How about your devotional life; could it use a boost? Think of your own needs, and then multiply them a hundred-fold to begin to understand the scope of the discipleship needs of believers today. Each year adults buy millions of self-help publications, attend thousands of special-interest workshops and seminars, and seek the help of an army of trained counselors, therapists, and mentors. Adults may not always know how to meet their needs, but they certainly are in touch with what those needs are. This presents the church with a tremendous opportunity. Adults are searching for someone or something to help them make sense of their lives, find something to belong to, and learn how to make a contribution to their families and friends.

Now that you have identified the people-groups you want to help and some specific discipleship needs within these groups, you're ready to look at ways to meet those needs.

Step 7: Establish discipleship study approaches relevant to the needs of the identified people groups. The approaches used most often for discipling are:

- **Ongoing groups** in which the same core group of people meet together on a weekly basis.
- **Short-term groups** that study a variety of subjects. People belong to such a group only while a particular study is being conducted.
- **Support groups** which are formed to help people deal with personal or emotional needs in a confidential and supportive setting.
- **Individual study** which is used mostly by people who cannot or do not wish to participate in a group study. Online studies provide a convenient opportunity for study at any time.
- **Retreats** which are especially good for people wanting to learn a lot in a short period of time.
- **Events**, both training and enrichment.

Most discipleship experiences today are not locked to any particular time in the weekly schedule. These experiences can be as effective on Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday night as Sunday or Tuesday morning. In one sense, this makes discipleship easier than ever to accomplish. If adult discipleship experiences are planned, remember to plan similar experiences for students and children. Use the time wisely. The challenge for today's discipleship leaders is to plan the appropriate discipleship experiences that meet people's needs, help transform lives, and enable the church to carry out its mission. It's a big challenge, but worth the effort!

Step 8: Assimilate new church members into the life of the church. Through an effective discipleship process, churches can help new Christians and other new members become part of the life of the church. This assimilation process is accomplished in many ways, and actually begins before a commitment to church membership. The key to assimilation is involvement that builds relationships and causes new members to bond with others in the church. The small group environment of Sunday School provides an excellent arena for assimilation. As people develop meaningful relationships, experience spiritual growth, and are involved in



ministry, they will be assimilated into the life of the church. Some churches have discovered that in addition to the ongoing connection through Sunday School, new disciples and other new members should be encouraged to complete a basic study curriculum. Such a curriculum builds an environment for high expectation discipleship. Bill came to Christ as a young adult. His pastor required him to complete two years of specific study in a mentoring relationship. Today, this disciple is a champion for discipleship and a world changer. When asked why he completed those two years of study he answered simply, “I didn’t know I had a choice.” New disciples are eager to grow. Starting them with the right expectations can benefit both the disciple and the church in years to come. The following resources focus on helping new disciples begin their journey of faith and other new members begin a lasting connection with the church.

- Basics for Baptists – Adults
- Body Life Journey – Adults and Students
- Survival Kit for New Christians – All ages
- Taking the Next Step: A Guide for New Church Members - Adult
- Welcome to God’s Family (Tract)
- Your Life and Your Church - Adult
- Living Your Christian Values - Adult
- Redefining Church Membership - Adult
- I’m a Christian Now – Younger Children
- I’m a Christian Now – Older Children

Record your plans for new disciples on pages 2-4 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*. Consider providing each new adult disciple a copy of the “New Disciple” growth plan (page 6 of the planner). Assign a mentor to encourage the disciple’s progress through these initial stages of growth.

Step 9: Provide opportunities for disciples to develop leadership and ministry skills.

Effective leadership and ministry is important to a church that is seeking to carry out the Great Commission. Servant leaders use their spiritual gifts to teach people, coordinate ministries, and equip others for ministry. The discipleship strategy of a church can equip Christians to become strong, biblical servant leaders. Recommended resources to focus on this action are:

- Body Life Journey
- Drawing Men to God: Men’s Ministry Manual
- Forward Together: A New Vision for Senior-Adult Ministry
- Spiritual Gifts: A Practical Guide to How God Works Through You
- Jesus on Leadership
- Paul on Leadership
- Serving God: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts
- Every Christian a Minister
- Single Adult Ministry Solution
- Transformed Lives
- Woman to Woman Mentoring
- Women Reaching Women
- Leadership Magazines:



LeaderLife
 Leading Adults
 Leading Student Ministry
 in mINstry with Kids
 Let's Worship
 Special Education Today
 The Deacon

Record your leadership and ministry skills development plans on page 5 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*.

Step 10: Choose resources for disciples to study in a closed group setting. Disciples need opportunities to learn what God expects from believers and how they can grow to be more like Christ. Foundational discipleship is provided through the open groups of Sunday School where the primary intent is getting people connected. Unlike these open groups, the closed group studies provide an accountable setting for growth. Disciples must be helped to remember that study alone does not develop spiritual maturity. These recommended studies must be connected with obedience and regular attitude evaluations. Use the resources listed on pages 18-25 to chart age group choices for the year. Place those choices on pages 2-4 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*. Save the planner each year to help in determining courses and ministry actions to offer in the future.

Step 11: Provide personal enrichment and devotional resources. LifeWay offers helpful resources for each age group. Select and list your choices on pages 2-4 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*.

Adult	Student	Children
BabyLife	ec:essential connection	More (1 st -2 nd Grades)
Christian Single		Adventure ((3 rd -4 th Grades)
Home Life		Bible Express (5 th -6 th Grades)
Journey		
Living with Teenagers		
Mature Living		
Open Windows		
ParentLife		

Step 12: Guide all disciples to develop an annual spiritual growth plan and create a process to track and evaluate the plan annually. An effective discipleship strategy helps disciples intentionally plan spiritual growth. Annually, consider providing growing disciples with a growth plan similar to the one on page 7 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*. Notice the accountability section on the plan sheet. Encourage every disciple to enlist an accountability partner to pray with them throughout the year and to challenge them in the completion of their plan. An additional part of the growth plan is an annual evaluation. Disciples benefit from answering some questions related to personal attitude and behavior changes throughout the year. The Christian Growth Study Plan is also an excellent tool



to track the growth of disciples. This electronic database provides transcripts of study for individual disciples as well as recommended courses of study for personal spiritual growth and leadership development. You can find this tool at www.lifeway.com/cgsp.

Step 13: Communicate the vision and complete strategy to the church. Set a date to launch the study element of the strategy and begin promotion. There are numerous ways discipleship can be promoted and publicized, but none is as effective as transformed disciples. People who experience positive change in their lives through your transformational discipleship process are the best promoters you will ever have. However, promotion and publicity are still important. Effective publicity will pass the test of the three “C’s” when it:

- Captures people’s attention
- Communicates value, and
- Convinces people to participate.

A key element of the discipleship strategy will be the ongoing and short-term small group studies provided. A number of methods can be used to publicize these discipleship studies. Among them are verbal and written announcements, newsletters and brochures, catalogs, posters, letters and cards, phone calls, personal encouragement, email, and Web pages on the Internet. Desktop publishing programs make it easy. You don’t have to be a computer genius to turn out great-looking brochures, newsletters, and posters. A church in California produces a catalog that describes the discipleship experiences it offers. A copy of the catalog is given to each church family along with an encouragement to participate. Some churches use their own Web site on the Internet. Among the information these sites provide is a list of available church-sponsored ministries, including discipleship study experiences. A description of these experiences and enrollment information can easily be provided on a Web site. In your promotion, help disciples understand that the study element is only part of their growth plan as disciples. Encourage participation in worship, ministry, and evangelism as vital ingredients in a growing disciple’s life plan.

Step 14: Enlist and train leaders for your small group studies. Now that you have a plan, you need leaders. Champions for discipleship make the most effective discipleship leaders. Discipleship champions are persons who:

- love God deeply.
- grow in their relationship with God.
- want to see others’ lives transformed.
- use personal giftedness for the work they do.
- demonstrate patience, kindness, and nonjudgmental attitudes.
- commit to doing their best.
- enjoy working with people.
- have a positive attitude.
- are trainable and flexible.

Enlisting Leaders

Finding discipleship champions is a challenge. Make a list of persons who you feel would make good leaders. As you begin enlisting, make an appointment to meet with each person. Avoid enlisting someone while they are taking a drink from the water fountain in a hallway at church. Take time to share the church’s vision for discipleship. Explain what is expected of each leader and review a job description if available for the position you’re asking the person to take. Be open and honest. Provide a copy of





the resource they would be using and tell what leadership training would be provided. Suggest that both of you take time to pray and set a time to get back together for an answer.

Training Leaders

When you enlist the very best, be sure to equip them to do their best. There is no substitute for trained, skilled, and spiritually transformed leaders. Leadership training opportunities include: individual study, mentoring by experienced leaders, and training courses provided in your church, association, and state. Every church leader needs to understand the concept of servant leadership as taught and practiced by Jesus. *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader* is an excellent five-week study that helps people become true servant leaders. Two video-driven courses for training leaders are *Serving God: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts*, and *Teaching the Jesus Way*. Another resource *Paul on Leadership* provides help to understand effective leadership qualities. For ongoing leadership help and ministry ideas several leadership magazines are available.

- LeaderLife – pastor and staff
- Leading Adults – adult ministry leaders
- Leading Student Ministry – student ministry leaders
- in mINistry – childhood ministry leaders

The Christian Growth Study Plan (CGSP) provides a systematic approach to developing leaders who want to increase their knowledge and skills. The CGSP provides diploma plans for general and age-group discipleship leaders. Diploma requirements can be found online at www.lifeway.com/cgsp or available by calling (615) 251-2525.

Training conferences for discipleship leaders are held each summer at Glorieta Conference Center in Glorieta, New Mexico and Ridgecrest Conference Center in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. **Discipleship Week** is a week-long opportunity for discipleship leadership training that is perfect for: pastors, ministers of education, associational leaders, church discipleship directors, and age-group discipleship directors. Special track conferences include ministries to children, family, men, preschoolers, seniors, singles, TeamKID, and women. Converge provides special conferences for teenagers. Additional track conferences include Christian health, criminal justice, prayer ministry, and support groups. (For registration information, call toll free (800) 797-4222 for Glorieta and for Ridgecrest (800) 588-7222.)

Step 15: Launch the strategy. When trained leaders are in place, promotional emphases are completed, and resources ordered, launch your discipleship strategy. Keep the plan moving. Don't give up the effort if only a small number of disciples participate at the outset. Be consistent and prepared to grow the process over the years. Making disciples is a long-term commitment and requires consistent, focused, and patient leaders.

Step 16: Evaluate the plan regularly and make necessary adjustments to improve effectiveness. Periodically provide opportunities for participants to give feedback on the process. Ask for suggestions for new studies and approaches.



A Calendar View of Steps in Developing a Discipleship Strategy

A successful discipleship strategy will be built on

- Prayer
- Intentional enlistment of leaders
- Preparation
- Execution of plans
- Enlistment of new and growing Christians
- Follow through with new and growing Christians to assist them in becoming fully devoted followers of Christ.

The strategy will be characterized by being

- Intentional/Ongoing
- Comprehensive
- Transformational
- Accountable/Relational
- Focused
- Relevant

This 16-month planning calendar view provides flexibility because churches differ in the times short-term discipleship studies kick off each year. Though discipleship includes much more than the courses of study, an intentional plan for small group growth experiences is an important part of an effective discipleship strategy. Actions for months 1-4 help lay the foundation for the ongoing strategy implemented in months 5-16.

Month 1

- Pastor communicates to the church through a series of sermons the biblical relevance of the church equipping disciples to become fully devoted followers of Christ.
- Pastor and/or Church staff educator enlists a Discipleship Leader or Discipleship Leadership Team to develop an intentional and ongoing plan of discipleship in cooperation with the pastor and/or staff

Month 2

- Discipleship Leadership Team develops a vision statement for the discipleship strategy if one does not exist. This statement should be linked with the church's overall vision statement.
- Discipleship Leadership Team begins to strategize a comprehensive plan for the church. Part of this plan will be ongoing and short-term discipleship studies. (Keep in mind that when planning discipleship studies for adults, plans for students, children, and preschoolers must be coordinated. If adults meet at 4:30 on Sunday afternoon or 7:00 on Wednesday evening, plans need to be implemented for students, children, and preschoolers at the same time. Do not ask adults to come at 4:30 on Sunday and start everything else at 5:00.)
- As the team develops a comprehensive plan they must keep it focused. A focused plan helps participants understand expectations and directions. Knowing where the plan leads brings satisfaction to the disciples joining the journey. The spiritual disciplines used in this resource provide an example of an intentional focus.





Month 3

- Begin the enlistment of leaders based on the plan you developed in the previous month.
- Provide the leaders with the resources needed for leading studies and the training needed to effectively use the resources.
- Provide an assessment for new and growing Christians that charts a personal discipleship plan for the upcoming year. This can include goals and objectives for each person.
- Begin promotion of a DiscipleAll Showcase that will help people know how they can be involved in the discipleship strategy of the church.

Month 4

- Conduct a DiscipleAll Showcase for new and growing Christians to see what discipleship studies are being offered, to meet the leaders of the studies, and to discover additional ways to grow in Christlikeness.

Month 5 – 16

Launch and Implement your ongoing Discipleship Ministry



Resources for Discipleship Studies

Adult Discipleship Studies

Abide in Christ –Studies that help disciples learn about the nature of the Christian’s relationship with Christ, the character of Christ, the disciple’s identity in Christ, what it means to abide in Christ, and how to have a personal quiet time

- Baptist Adults Curriculum (13)
- Believing God: Experiencing a Fresh Explosion of Faith (10)
- Breaking Free: Making Liberty in Christ a Reality in Life (11)
- Day by Day in God’s Kingdom (Personal resource)
- Discovering the Biblical Jesus (6)
- Experiencing God as Couples (8)
- Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God (12)
- Fingerprints of God: Recognizing God’s Touch on Your Life (6)
- A 40-Day Experience: EKG, The Heartbeat of God (7)
- A 40-Day Experience: Extreme Love (7)
- A 40-Day Experience: Know Fear (7)
- A 40-Day Experience: Reality, 7 Truths from Experiencing God (7)
- God’s Story: Finding Meaning in Your Life Through Knowing God (5)
- He Speaks to Me: Preparing to Hear from God (6)
- A Hunger for the Holy: Nurturing Intimacy with Christ (7)
- In My Father’s House: Women Relating to God as Father (6)
- Jesus, the One and Only (11)
- Life in the Spirit (12)
- The Love Languages of God (8)
- Made to Count Life Planner (10)
- MasterLife 2: The Disciple’s Personality (6)
- The Mind of Christ (12)
- My Identity in Christ (6)
- The Search for Significance Workbook: Build Your Self-Worth on God’s Truth (8)
- Vertically Inclined: Climbing Higher with God (7)
- The Vision of His Glory: Finding Hope Through the Revelation of Jesus Christ (7)
- Walking by Faith: Lessons Learned in the Dark (7)
- The Ways of God (6)
- When God Speaks: How to Recognize God’s Voice and Respond in Obedience (7)
- A Woman’s Heart: God’s Dwelling Place (11)



Live by God's Word – Studies that help disciples learn to study God's Word, understand how the Bible came to be, explore biblical truth for life issues, apply biblical truth to life daily

Baptist Adults Curriculum (13)
Basics for Baptists (8)
Beloved Disciple: The Life and Ministry of John (11)
Enjoy: A Thirst-Quenching Look at Philippians (6)
Foundations of the Faith: The Doctrines Baptists Believe (6)
God's Transforming Word: How to Study Your Bible (9)
A Heart like His (11)
How Much Is Enough? 30 Days to Personal Revival (4)
Jesus on Money (6)
Life Lessons from Women in the Bible ((6)
Living Beyond Yourself: Exploring the Fruit of the Spirit (10)
Living God's Word (6)
Living Your Life as a Beautiful Offering: A Bible Study Based on the Sermon on the Mount (7)
MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross (6)
Men's Fraternity: The Quest for Authentic Manhood (24)
The Patriarchs: Encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
The Purity Principle (4 or 5)
Step by Step Through the New Testament (13)
Step by Step Through the Old Testament (13)
To Live Is Christ: The Life and Ministry of Paul (11)
The Treasure Principle (4)
We Believe: Living in the Light of God's Truth (8)
Whispers of Hope (Personal Resource)

Pray in Faith – Studies that help disciples learn about biblical prayer, develop an effective prayer life, build a ministry of prayer

Baptist Adults Curriculum (13)
Disciple's Prayer Life: Walking in Fellowship with God (13)
A House of Prayer: Prayer Ministries in Your Church (Leader resource)
The Incredible Power of Kingdom Authority: Achieving Victory Through Surrender (7)
In God's Presence: Your Daily Guide to a Meaningful Prayer Life (6)
The Life-Changing Power of Prayer (6)
Living Free: Learning to Pray God's Word (6)
MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory (6)
The Prayer of Jesus: Living the Lord's Prayer (6)
Spiritual Warfare: Biblical Truth for Victory (8)
Watchman Prayer Ministry (Leader resource)



Build Godly Relationships – Studies that help disciples understand the nature of the church as the body of Christ, build effective relationships, and understanding themselves and others

- Baptist Adults Curriculum (13)
- The BodyLife Journey: Guiding Believers into Ministry (Leader resource)
- Choosing to Live the Blessing: Bringing the Gift of Light and Life to Every Relationship (6)
- Christ-Empowered Living: Reflecting God’s Design (8)
- Come Home to the Heart of God: Building Life on the Seven Pillars of God’s Kingdom Family (7)
- Conversation Peace: The Power of Transformed Speech (7)
- Covenant Marriage: Communication and Intimacy (12)
- Covenant Marriage: Partnership and Commitment (12)
- Effective Parenting in a Defective World (9)
- Empowered Parenting (8)
- Experiencing God as Couples (8)
- Experiencing God in Your Workplace (7)
- Extraordinary Marriage: God’s Plan for Your Journey (7)
- Making Peace With Your Past
- Moving Beyond Your Past
- The Five Love Languages (2)
- The Five Love Languages of Children (6)
- The Five Love Languages of Singles (6)
- The Five Love Languages of Teenagers (6)
- Life @ Full Capacity: Building Matthew 5 Relationships (6)
- The Love Languages of God (8)
- Making Love Last Forever (12)
- MasterLife 4: The Disciple’s Mission (6)
- Men’s Fraternity: The Great Adventure (20)
- Men’s Fraternity: The Quest for Authentic Manhood (24)
- New Faces in the Frame: A Guide to Marriage and Parenting in the Blended Family (Two 6 session)
- Parenting by Grace: Discipline and Spiritual Growth (10)
- Redefining Church Membership (Leader resource)
- The Seven Seasons of a Man’s Life (6)
- Shaping the Next Generation (8)
- Survival Kit (6)
- Taking the Next Step: A Guide for New Church Members (4 or 5)
- The Virtuous Woman: Shattering the Superwoman Myth (6)
- Women Making a Difference in Marriage: Building Love, Joy, and Contentment (8)
- Your Church Experiencing God Together (9)
- Your Life and Your Church (7)



Minister to Others – Studies that help disciples identify personal spiritual gifts, interests, and natural abilities, grow in leadership ability, build effective skills for ministry, facilitate small groups for ministry care, and learn to disciple others

- Baptist Adults Curriculum (13)
- Deacons: Growing in Character and Commitment (6)
- DecisionTime: Commitment Counseling (6)
- Drawing Men to God: Men's Ministry Manual (Leader resource)
- Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills (Leader resource)
- Every Christian a Minister: Finding Joy and Fulfillment in Serving God (4)
- Faithful and True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World (Two 6 session)
- Forward Together: A New Vision for Senior-Adult Ministry (Leader resource)
- Free to Forgive (6)
- Heart Friends: Beginning and Maintaining a Small Accountability Group
- How to Minister to Families in Your Church (Leader resource)
- Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders (6)
- Making Peace with Your Past (12)
- MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission (6)
- Moving Beyond Your Past (12)
- Paul on Leadership: Leadership in a Ministry of Transition (6)
- Quitting for Good: A Christ-Centered Approach to Nicotine Dependency (9)
- Recovering from the Losses of Life (6, plus 3 optional)
- The Search for Significance Workbook: Build Your Self-Worth on God's Truth (8)
- Spiritual Gifts: A Practical Guide to How God Works Through You (6)
- Strength for the Journey: A Biblical Perspective on Discouragement and Depression (9)
- Teaching the Jesus Way: Building a Transformational Teaching Ministry (Leader resource)
- Transformed Lives: Taking Women's Ministry to the Next Level (Leader resource)
- Unleashing the Power of Deacon-Led Ministry Teams (Leader resource)
- Woman-to-Woman Mentoring: How to Start, Grow, and Maintain a Mentoring Ministry (6 months)
- Women Reaching Women: Beginning and Building a Growing Women's Enrichment Ministry (Leader resource)



Witness to the World – Studies that help disciples share a personal testimony, witness in a variety of situations, develop a mission worldview, and lead others to share the good news

The Acts 1:8 Challenge: Empowering the Church to Be on Mission
Baptist Adults Curriculum (13)
Evangelism Through the Sunday School (Leader resource)
The Ever-Loving Truth (8)
Experiencing God in Your Workplace: The Kingdom Agenda (7)
FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy
A 40-Day Experience: The Choice, Believe, Belong, and Bless (7)
The Grace and Truth Paradox (4)
How Now Shall We Live? (8 plus 4 optional)
Learning to Share My Faith (6)
Living Your Christian Values (7)
Made to Count Life Planner (10)
The Man God Uses: Moved from the Ordinary to the Extraordinary (7)
MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission (6)
Men's Fraternity: The Great Adventure (20)
On Mission with God: Living God's Purpose for His Glory (8)
Outreach Teams That Win—GROW (Leader resource)
Share Jesus Without Fear (4)
When Worldviews Collide
Your Church Experiencing God Together (9)

Student Discipleship Studies

Introduce students to a discipleship process

Basic Student Discipleship: Essential Tools for Spiritual Growth –
This resource provides an overview for each spiritual discipline in student discipleship
The Pursuit – Collegiate foundational discipleship resource

Understand the cost of discipleship/Personal Obedience

My Identity in Christ, Student Edition (7)
MasterLife Student Edition (12)
Souled Out: Allowing Christ to Live Through You (6)
Vital Truth: Lordship (4)
Vital Character: Holiness (4)
When God Speaks, Youth Edition (6)

Collegiate Resources

Crossseekers - Transforming Your World Through Covenant Living (6)
Crossseekers - Spiritual Intimacy: Drawing Closer to God (6)



Build accountable relationships

- Designed by God (6)
- Vital Character: Encouragement (4)
- Vital Truth: Fellowship (4)
- Vital Skills: How to Have Accountable Relationships (4)
- One Heart (5)
- The Relationship Revolution (6)

Set godly priorities

- Experiencing God, Youth Edition (9)
- Setting You Free to Make Right Choices (8)
- Vital Skills: How to Have a Balanced Life (4)

Collegiate Resources

- God's Invitation: Experiencing God Collegiate Edition (7)

Dig into God's Word

- David: Seeking God's Heart (6)
- John: The Beloved Disciple Student Edition (6)
- A Student's Guide to Studying the Bible (6)
- Vital Skills: How to Study My Bible (4)
- Vital Truth: Scripture (4)

Collegiate Resources

- Collegiate Learners Guide quarterly subscription

Develop deeper prayer lives

- In God's Presence, Youth Edition
- Circle Your World with Prayer (5)
- An Awesome Way to Pray (individual study)
- Vital Skills: How to Pray Using Scripture (4)
- Vital Truth: Prayer- How Do I Know God Is Listening (4)

Minister to/Evangelize others

- Share Jesus Without Fear Student Edition (5)
- The Student God Uses: Transformed For His Purpose (6)
- Vital Skills: How to Do Servant Evangelism (4)
- Vital Skills: How to Be a Campus Missionary (4)

Collegiate Resources

- How Shall We Live? Collegiate (6)
- Crossseekers - Fearless: Sharing an Authentic Witness (6)

Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit

- Vital Truth: Holy Spirit (4 plus bonus session)
- Vital Truth: Spiritual Warfare (4 plus bonus session)
- Vital Character: Self-Control (4 plus bonus session)
- Standing Tall When Tempted (6)

Collegiate Resources

- Crossseekers - The Highest Education: Becoming A Godly Man (6)
- Crossseekers - Virtuous Reality: Becoming the Ideal Woman (6)



Demonstrate godly character

The Search (8)

Vital Character: Courage (4)

How Now Shall We Live Student Edition (8)

The Mind of Christ, Youth Edition (12)

Collegiate Resources

Crossseekers - Holy and Acceptable (6)

Crossseekers- Transparent Living: Living a Life of Integrity (6)

Childhood Discipleship Studies

Because preschoolers and children are at different levels of spiritual maturity, an effective discipleship strategy must not only provide specific studies for children who are believers, but also lay the necessary foundations for faith in the lives of those who have yet to receive Christ as Savior. Preschoolers and children experience foundational discipleship as they regularly participate in Sunday School. Other short-term studies can reinforce and build on those learning experiences. Both the ongoing and short-term opportunities help lay a spiritual foundation in the lives of preschoolers and children as they continue to grow in Christlikeness. Of primary importance, discipling preschoolers and children lays spiritual foundations for conversion and guides each child on an individual journey toward becoming a mature believer. Because each situation is unique, leaders will need to provide plans that are comprehensive and versatile so that every child is disciplined according to God's plan for their life. Consider planning studies from the following resources to help accomplish your discipleship objective for children.

Learn and Love God's Word

Family Bible Study for Preschoolers and Children

Bible Foundations for Preschoolers

G-Force: Experience God Full Blast (Children)

Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teenager (Grade 6)

Preschool TeamKID

Children's TeamKID

Club VBS

When I Go to Church (Preschool)

January Bible Studies (Preschool) available free online

E-Anytime, Anywhere (Preschool and Children) available online

Bible Skills, Drills and Thrills (Children)

Experience God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God (Preteen Edition)

I'm A Christian Now (Children)

Jesus, The One and Only, Part 1 & 2 (Children)

Beloved Disciple (Children)

Prime Time with God (Children)

Get the Picture: A Study of the Book of 1 Corinthians (Children)

From the start: A Creative Look at Genesis (Children)

Secret Mission 001 (Children)



Secret Mission 002 (Children)
Life It Out! A Study of the Book of James (Children)
From Time to Time (Grades 4-6)
Character Chronicles (Children)

Live godly lives

Family Bible Study for Preschoolers and Children
Bible Foundations for Preschoolers
G-Force: Experience God Full Blast (Children)
Club VBS
Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teenager (Grade 6)
Preschool TeamKID
Children's TeamKID
I'm a Christian Now (Children)
Survival Kit for New Christians (Children)
My Good New Journal (Children)
Truth Works (Children)
Stuff: Using All God Has Given Me (Children)
Get the Picture: A Study of the Book of 1 Corinthians (Children)
The Character Chronicles (Children)
Prime Time with God (Children)
Experience God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God (Preteen edition)
When I Get Mad: Steps to Controlling Anger in a Godly Way (Children)
Live it out! A Study of the Book of James

Prepare to lead in the next generation

I'm A Christian Now, bonus sessions (Children)
Stuff: Using All God Has Given Me (Children)
Prime Time with God (Children)
Talent Search (Grades 4-6)
When I Get Mad: Steps to Controlling Anger in a Godly Way (Children)