

**Becoming An
Effective Disciple Maker**
*A 9 stage guide to making disciples
Who Make More Disciples!*

By

Matt Dabbs

A Quick Word of Appreciation

The information in this e-book has been compiled from a number of different influences that I would like to recognize and point you to their work. Here are some of the people who have had an influence on what you will find in this book: Bobby Harrington, Curtis Sergeant, Shodankeh Johnson, Pam Arlund, Roy Moran, Damien Gerke, Wolfgang Simson, Ying Kai and David Watson. You can see the list of additional resources at the end of the book to find out more about their ministries and get sharpened up even more! These are things we are putting into practice in our ministry and it has been a real blessing. We hope and pray these ideas and practices bless you and those you disciple as well.

Thanks to all of those who have gone before us in courage and boldness. We are thankful for their successes and also their failures in coming to understand the principles and practices that we are blessed to understand and practice today. I don't take credit for anything in this book. Use it. Share it. But most importantly...follow the lead of Jesus!

It goes without mention that Jesus was the master disciple maker who set all of this in motion!

Becoming a Disciple Maker Introduction

We have been praying for you. You reading this booklet is the answer to many hours of prayer by many people. We have been praying for movement. We have been praying for the harvest. We have been praying what Jesus told us to pray in Matthew 9:38 – that the Lord of the harvest would send out workers into the harvest field because the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. We pray that God would see fit that we are part of those workers!

We want to be faithful to what God told us to do in the Great Commission,

“¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” – Matthew 28:16-20

The resurrected Jesus told his disciples to go and make disciples and to do this by baptizing them and teaching them to be obedient to King Jesus. When we say “Jesus Christ” we are saying “Jesus the anointed one” or “King Jesus.”

Jesus not only told us to go and make disciples, he showed us how to go and make disciples by the example of how he intentionally disciplined his followers. We teach what Jesus taught and train up new disciple makers through Jesus’ methods.

Jesus didn’t just make disciples. Jesus made disciple makers. If Jesus had just made disciples, it would have ended with the apostles. But he taught them in a way that was reproducible (through imitation and instruction toward obedience).

That means we need to be disciples who make disciple makers. Why disciple makers and not disciples? Because when we teach those we disciple to obey all Jesus commanded, they too will obey the Great Commission and make disciples. Jesus modeled for us what we model for them so that they can model it for others.

Paul talked about this in 2 Tim 2:2,

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

Four generations!

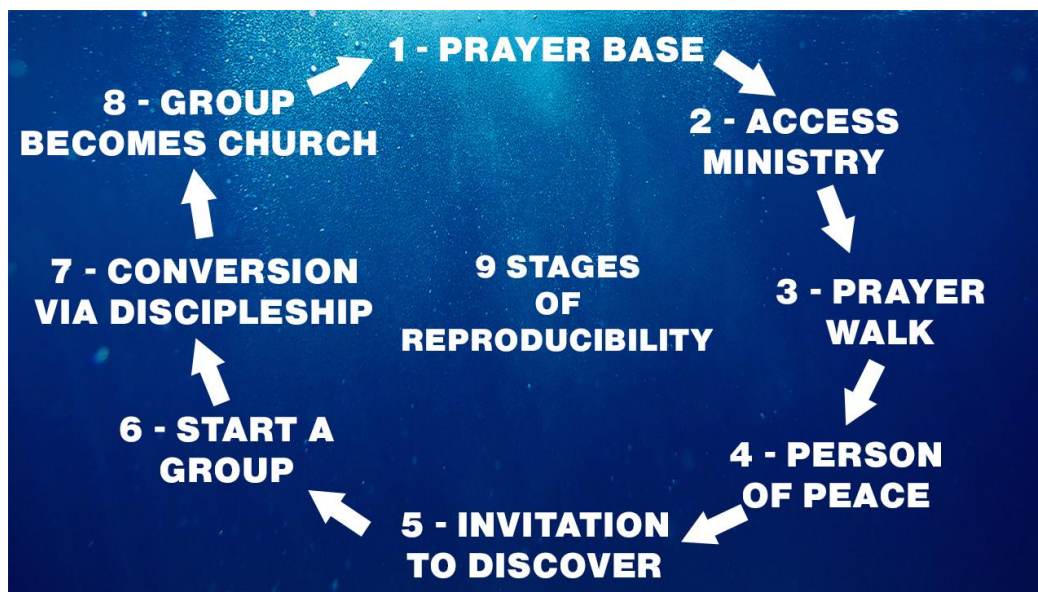
Paul, Timothy, reliable people who teach others.

We want those we disciple to disciple others who disciple others. That means it needs to reproduce. Jesus disciplined in a way that reproduced. The disciples made disciples who made disciples so that the church grew in the early years exponentially. That makes Jesus our example for how to make disciples who make disciples.

Jesus' teachings are of utmost importance. It is not just that we hear what he said but that we **obey** what he said (Matthew 7:24-27 and Matthew 28:29). Obedience is key and we teach those we disciple to obey Jesus as well. We obey Jesus because He is the Christ (anointed King) and He has a Kingdom that He has invited us (and the whole world) into. When we live for Jesus by obeying Jesus we spread His glory all over creation!

Not only is obedience to King Jesus key, so is **sharing** Jesus with others. Making disciples involves helping others discover Jesus so that they can follow Jesus, trust Jesus, live for Jesus, obey Jesus and share Jesus with others. We share with others and show them how to share with others.

This guide will help you become a disciple who makes disciples. It starts with you and Jesus. We are all growing and developing and it is hard to make disciples who are more faithful than we are because we are setting the example. This guide will give you some biblical insight and practical things to live out that will develop you as a follower of Jesus. It will then give you biblical instruction and practices to help others discover Jesus for themselves.



What's Next?

In Stage 1 you will learn how to put the foundation of prayer under the entire approach. We cannot pray enough!

Stage 1: Forming a Prayer Foundation

Everything starts with prayer

God knows everything and he can do anything, so we don't take a step forward until we seek God's guidance (he knows everything) and his help (he can do anything) so that we go about things in the right direction, the right way. Paul started all his letters in prayer. Paul instructed us in 1 Thess 5:16-18 to "pray continually." Prayer is front and center to all we do in making disciples and planting churches.

We sow and water but only God can make it grow. Here is what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, "6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."

We cannot make a disciple. Only God can do that. We can connect people with God and with the scriptures and give them guidance on how to discover God. Only God can help someone change their heart.

The moment we rely more on expertise than on the power of God, we have already lost the fight. We must learn to trust God in all things. Those we disciple need to see this in us. If people see in us that it requires years of formal training to do the work, the work will not reproduce because it is relying more on us than on God.

There are four components to forming a prayer foundation

- 1 – Your daily prayers (30-60 minutes a day)
 - It is essential that you are growing in your prayer life (conversation with God) and consistently praying for the mission
- 2 – Establishing a fasting rhythm
 - Fasting teaches us to surrender our control to God.
- 3 – Forming a prayer team
 - Do not do this alone. You need a team of people supporting the mission through prayer
- 4- Weekly prayer meeting (in person or zoom)
 - Pray together for God to move on a weekly basis

Daily Prayer Prompts (30-60 minutes/day)

Shodankeh Johnson's Daily Prayer Prompts for Mission

Pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out workers
Pray for open doors to engage the lost
Pray that God will show us people of peace
Pray for gate keepers
Pray for protection
Pray for miracles
Pray for the movement of God
Pray for movements around the world
Pray for more partners
Pray for more boldness
Pray for deliverance
Pray for provision, because the commission is greater than my resources
Pray for spiritual breakthroughs as it relates to strongholds of the enemy
Pray against my personal strongholds
Pray for the disciples in my care

7 barriers to Disciple Making Movements

As we look at movements around the world, there are typically seven areas that can prevent or stop a movement from happening. These prayer prompts are for God to help us overcome these 7 barriers:

- 1 – The barrier of time and money
- 2 – The barrier of our resistance to prayer and fasting
- 3 – The barrier of our valuing knowledge over obedience (knowing is not enough)
- 4 – The barrier of isolation and our need for community and relationships
- 5 – The barrier of hesitancy to be transparent and accountable
- 6 – The barrier of pride – prayers for humility and supernatural faith
- 7 – The barrier of resistance and cost – prayers for perseverance and sacrifice

Additional prayer prompts

Pray for my family
Pray for local leaders
Pray for my community
Pray for area churches
Pray for area pastors
Pray for my neighbors and neighborhood
Pray for movements in my state
Pray for movements in my nation
Pray for movements around the world

Establishing a fasting rhythm

The Biblical basis for fasting

Jesus never commanded us to fast. But it is clear from the Gospels that Jesus wants His followers today to fast. Jesus taught on fasting on a few occasions. He taught on fasting in the sermon on the mount in **Matthew 6:16-18**,

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Jesus has a clear expectation that His people will fast. He didn't say “If you fast” but “When you fast.”

If that isn't direct enough, here is what Jesus taught in **Matthew 9:14-15**.

“Then John's disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?”

Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

The bridegroom being taken is a reference to Jesus' ascension back to the father. Jesus has ascended to the father. Now we fast.

They fasted in Acts – it is clear that Jesus' early followers knew to do this. We see this in **Acts 13:1-3**. They were trying to determine who God wanted to send on mission. They fasted and prayed to ask God for an answer and God responded by the Holy Spirit telling them what to do.

Then in **Acts 14:23** Paul and Barnabas fasted in order to have direction from God to appoint elders. We see in these two passages as well as in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 (Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the wilderness to begin his ministry) that it is entirely appropriate to begin new things seeking God through fasting and prayer. As you begin your disciple making journey, it is important to make fasting part of your weekly discipline and later to teach this to others to reproduce these practices.

The reason for fasting

Fasting isn't about our physical health (weight loss), it is for our spiritual health and connection with God. We fast because God is the supreme ruler of the universe. He is the Creator, Redeemer and our Sustainer. He supplies everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

Because God is all of these things, we rely on God in all things and demonstrate this by setting aside food for a limited amount of time and turn our focus to God through prayer and listening.

Biblical fasting is about food and not other things (TV, social media, etc). We are saying to God that He comes first and everything else (even food) comes after God.

How to fast

Shodankeh Johnson has said many times, “Start small to end big!” Fasting is a commitment. And we are committing to fast on a rhythm (the same set time each week). Because we are making a commitment to God we want to fulfill our commitment. In order to do that it has to be kept small enough to maintain for the long run.

Health Disclaimer – If you have reason to believe fasting might not be good for your health, please consult your doctor before moving forward.

You might start by not having breakfast on Tuesday. Eat dinner Monday and lunch and dinner on Tuesday. Repeat that for at least a month. During your fasting times, when you get hungry, pray and listen. You might read Matthew 4 (Man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God). Express to God your trust in Him and your reliance on Him. Ask Him to help you grow in your faith, trust and reliance.

You will have other things on your schedule. You will have to live your life, work your job, etc. Just take some mental focus where you can and turn it to God during your fasting time.

After a month or more of this rhythm (same commitment every week) you might remove lunch that same day. So now you are going from dinner Monday, skipping breakfast and lunch on Tuesday and eating dinner on Tuesday. Some people might be able to stretch further than that. I would not recommend a 24 hour fasting commitment every week because you are going to compromise that at some point. We want to make good on our commitments to God.

The result

There is no guaranteed result but I can speak from my experience. As I turn over this time to God each week and learn to trust God with more and more of my week and focus, I begin to find more peace in my life. As you begin to grow in your focus on God and trust in God, you begin to understand and experience that He is working on your behalf all the time. It all doesn't depend on you. That can give you the “peace that passes understanding” (Phil 4:6).

As your fasting rhythm grows out to (possibly) two meals one day a week you might begin to notice as time goes by (6 months+ out) that the peace you experience begins to run further and further into your week. What was at first peace with God one day a week might grow into two, three four days and beyond as the effects of this focused attention on God in total surrender during part of your week begins to affect more and more of your life.

Fasting is essential to being a disciple who makes disciples

Establishing and faithfully executing a consistent fasting rhythm puts us in the proper mindset to make disciples who plant new churches because we are learning to trust God in all things and rely on Him because only God can make our mission successful. We cannot rely on ourselves or feel self-sufficient to this task. Fasting humbles us and helps us learn to make a habit out of relying on God in all situations. Those we disciple will also see this and learn this and this will help them make disciples who also learn to lean on God!

Forming a Prayer Team

Making disciples is not something we do alone. We do it in community with support from other disciples. The primary means of support is prayer. Like everything else, we start in prayer. Here are the steps:

- 1 – Ask God to help you find/select the right team.
- 2 – Make a list of potential people.
- 3 – Pray over the list.
- 4 – Invite anyone you believe needs to be on the team, anyone you think the Spirit might be prompting you to ask.
- 5 – Set an expectation. The group will be there to pray for specific needs as they arise and that they will be committed to praying for the mission daily (this can include 30 minutes a day on the prayer prompts on the second page of this guide).
- 6 – Establish a means of communication. WhatsApp is a great way to communicate. You might use a text group. Whatever works best for your group.
- 7 – Be consistent in utilizing the group. If you are going into a Discovery Bible study with someone, you can message the group and ask them to pray God would open hearts.
- 8 – Set ground rules for replies. You don't want people replying to 10, 50 or 100 people at midnight.

Weekly Prayer Meeting

This can be with your prayer team or with another group of people. It can be in person or online (zoom, etc). This is a weekly time of prayer. We do ours on Saturday evening at 8pm in order to pray for what God is going to the next day in our worship gathering.

Here are some guidelines to consider:

1 – Make it brief. An hour a week can be too much. They might not be consistent or might not ever start if you (as the leader) allow it to go on past 20 minutes a week on a consistent basis. If that happens on an occasion that is okay. It just needs to have an effort to keep it around 20 minutes or less.

2 – Keep it focused. You don't want to talk about all kinds of other things during this time. It is a time to welcome people and pray. You can message people afterward if there are other things to discuss.

3 – Keep it fairly small. A huge group won't allow everyone to pray. A small group of devoted prayer partners can be powerful. What can be large is your prayer team. That can be a dozen, one hundred or beyond.

Stage 2: Developing Access Ministries

Jesus told us to go into all the world and make disciples. We cannot buy our piece of property, put out a sign and expect them to come to us. Jesus didn't say "**Wait** for them to come to you." He said, "**Go** and make disciples." (Matt 28:19-20). Jesus was constantly on the move. If we follow Jesus' model of ministry (which we should follow) we will be on the move. We will go where the people are who need Jesus and engage them.

One way to find open doors to help people discover Jesus are access ministries. These are things you do to purposefully put yourself in contact with non-Christians in order to show them the genuine love of Christ and invite them to discover Jesus through studying His Word.

How do you find or develop an access ministry?

The most important thing you can do is to pray about it. Ask God to make clear the areas in your life that already exist where you can interact with non-Christians and whether or not God wants you to add new areas to your life to interact with non-Christians.

Access ministries are either to be found (existing entities or opportunities) or developed (something new is created or initiated).

Access ministries that already exist. There are probably arenas in your life where you interact with non-Christians on a regular basis. How can you prayerfully leverage those spaces to reach people? There are most likely para-church ministries around you that already have established relationships with schools, jails, etc that you could volunteer at with the specific purpose of mentoring non-Christians and studying the Bible with them.

Access ministries that you can develop. Go around your community and talk with people. You might do this as a prayer walk (see Stage 3). Ask them the needs they see in the community. Pay attention for the common things that get shared. Look for a way to meet those needs in a way that would get you in conversations with new people. Maybe there is a poverty issue and there is a need for financial education. Hold a free seminar on how to manage your money (obviously, the person who leads this needs to know what they are talking about!). If marriages are struggling and the divorce rate is high, hold a workshop on marriage. When people come, show them the love of Jesus. Connect with them. Build a relationship with them. Invite them into a Discovery Bible Study (see Stage 6).

Pray about what to do all along the way. Ask God to open the doors, to bring the right people, to help you have the right ideas, and that God would give you boldness to carry it through to see Kingdom fruit! Finding and involving ourselves in access ministries is us being intentional about positioning ourselves (going) where the people are who need Jesus.

What is an access ministry you think God might be calling you to leverage?

What's Next?

In Stage 3 you will learn about prayer walking as a way to follow God's lead and engage new people with the good news about Jesus.

Stage 3: How to Prayer Walk

What is a prayer walk?

Walking around a community, neighborhood, downtown, etc praying for the community and for people you meet along the way. Activating Christians to see and experience the movement of God in real time.

Where to pray walk?

Your neighborhood, around your church, community centers, shopping areas, downtown, city hall, or wherever God leads you through praying and asking God to guide your decision on where to prayer walk.

10 Things to do on a prayer walk

1 – Gather at least one other person

Jesus said in Luke 10:1 to go out two by two. You can prayer walk alone but there are some added benefits of taking others with you that will be explained below.

2 – Start with a prayer

When everyone arrives together, before you walk, start with prayer. Prayer suggestions:

- God would guide us to the right people (See stage 4 – Finding a person of peace).
- God would open doors in the community
- God would send outside the people we need to meet.
- Boldness
- God to guide your steps

3 – Start walking, talking, and praying

The group starts walking. You can pray in your mind while you walk, take time to talk with each other, but don't get distracted from why you are out.

If you get to an intersection you might stop to pray and ask God which way to go. You can stop in various places to pray as a group for the surrounding area and people.

4 – Pay attention to who is around you

As you asked for God to connect you with the right people (those open to the message) it is important that you tune into God's lead. There may be people or places that stand out to you. Move in those directions.

5 – Pray over the area & people

As you walk you can pray for businesses (those who own them, work in them and shop in them), homes (those who live in them) and the people you see. You might see a kid's bike in the yard and pray for the kids who live there, that they might grow up to know the Lord.

6 – If you feel drawn to particular people, initiate a conversation

You might say something like, “Good morning...how are you today? We love this community and the people here. We want to see this community/neighborhood thrive and are walking, praying God’s blessings over this place. Is there anything we can pray for you about?”

While one person is talking with them, the rest of the group can pray silently for God to open their hearts and have success in either leading them to Christ or growing them to maturity in Christ.

7 – Share

In addition to praying for them, you might share:

- A story from the Bible
- A testimony of how God has worked in your life and ask them if they have ever experienced anything like that
- The gospel of King Jesus

If they are receptive you can invite them to a Discovery group (see Stages 5 &6).

If you can get contact info for followup that is helpful. You just have to feel out how things are going in the conversation.

8 – Finish with a prayer

Ask God to produce fruit from what has been sown and watered. Followup with anyone who you got contact info on and invite them to study or church. Commit to pray for them on a regular basis.

If you would like a video explanation of prayer walking you can find that here – [How to do a Prayer Walk](#).

What’s Next?

Stage 4 will help you understand that some of those you meet will be people of peace. Who are you looking for and how will you know when you find them? Why are they important? See Stage 4 – People of Peace to find out more.

Stage 4: Finding a Person of Peace

“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.” – Luke 10:5-7

When Jesus sent out the 72, he gave his disciples very specific instructions. He told them to look for a particular kind of person. A person of peace. The person of peace is critical to the success of your mission to make inroads into a community or neighborhood.

Who is a person of peace?

Jesus defined this person – someone you greet with peace (shalom) and who returns peace back to you. They are comfortable with you. They are hospitable to you. This is a person who will be open to you and your message. That is about all we know from the passage itself.

How do you find a person of peace?

You go out looking for them or you may already know them. You either find them (you don’t already know them) or identify them (you do already know them). In addition to looking for them, sometimes they find you.

They find you

Sometimes God will send the person to you. Be the kind of person who is easy to find and live the kind of life where you might be someone God would send a person of peace to. Why would God send us a person of peace if we are unprepared or unwilling to receive them?

How to find a person of peace from those you already know:

Begin praying that God would open your eyes to the people of peace you already know. Ask God would bring them to mind or help you have a conversation with them that would clearly show they are a person of peace. Stage 5 will tell you what to do with them.

How to find a person of peace from those you don’t already know:

This is why we started access ministries in Stage 2 and started prayer walking in Stage 3. We are looking for opportunity to find who God is trying to connect us with.

Prayer is central to identifying people of peace. Ask God to connect you with them. You need to know their characteristics (see above “Who is a person of peace?”) in order to know when you have found them.

Whether it is through a [prayer walk](#) (see Stage 3) or through a conversation with a stranger, it is important to know the characteristics of a person of peace so you can spot them when they show up.

The only way you will go out looking for them is if you believe they exist. Do you believe that God has prepared people ahead of you, for you to encounter, who can accelerate the success of the mission, purpose and vision God has given you? If you don't then I just ask you pray about that...maybe even go looking for them and see if they don't show up. Sometimes the best evidence for something is the person or thing you don't believe in showing up right in front of you!

Pray daily that God will help you find them (see Stage 1 for daily prayer prompts). It isn't just one person. This will be multiple people, across your mission and across your lifetime. Stage 5 will tell you what to do with them once you identify them.

What happens when you find a person of peace?

There is no set answer to this biblically but from experience we see that people of peace may be some of your first converts. Not only that but they can get you into their networks of relationships and add credibility to your message. They can multiply the effectiveness of your ministry in terms of scale and they can expedite your message, helping get it in front of more people more quickly and with built in trust.

People of peace in the Bible

Lydia and the Philippian jailer in Acts 16 both serve as people of peace. They were open to the message. They got other people into the conversation that accelerated the success of the mission. Imagine how much more slowly the mission in Philippi would have gone had God not led Paul and Silas to these two people? People of peace are critical to the success of your mission. Some ministries will not move forward in a neighborhood or community until they have prayed for and located a person of peace.

Zacchaeus in Luke 19 brings Jesus into a meal with his friends.

Samaritan woman of John 4 – she has an encounter with Jesus and then brings the whole town to meet him.

God has prepared people in advance of your arrival. Pray for them for God to send them and pray for God to open your eyes to recognize them.

What's Next?

Once you find your person of peace, who can get you into new networks and who is personally receptive to the gospel, you are ready to prayerfully prepare to invite people in Stage 5!

Stage 5: Invitation to Discover

Jesus was great at invitations. Sometimes he would invite people to follow him (Mark 1:16-20) and other times Jesus would invite himself over (Luke 19:5). But the greatest invitation is the invitation to come and follow Jesus (Matt 4:19-20),

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of people.”²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.”

Embedded in that simple invitation is the definition of a disciple. Jim Putman may have been the first to point this out in his book DiscipleShift, that a disciple is someone who is:

- 1 – Invited by Jesus (Come, follow me)
- 2 – To be changed by Jesus (I will make you)
- 3 – To be on the mission of Jesus (fishers of people)

We are called to invite people to follow Jesus. This is the first step to making disciples. People don't follow us, they follow Jesus. We point people to Jesus and we walk together on that journey.

It is imperative that we invite people on this journey if they are ever going to be reached. Here is one way to do this. There are others but you have to start somewhere!

1 - As in all things – pray.

Ask God to make clear who to invite. Ask God to put them on your mind and in your heart.

2 - Make a list of who is coming to mind

This list might be 10 people or it might be 100 people. You might make a note if you believe they are a Christian or not already. It might be someone you met on a prayer walk, a neighbor, friend, family member, or co-worker.

3 - Pray over the list and ask God to make clear who to invite into a Discovery Group

You might pray over the list for several days, asking for clarity (let's be reminded of Luke 6 where Jesus prayed all night the night before he selected the 12). We are asking God to make clear who to invite into a Discovery Group. This group may later become a house church.

4 - Invite those into the group who you believe God is calling you to invite.

Often this doesn't exceed 5 people but there is no rule on this.

5 – Once you know who to invite, now you need to pray about inviting them and ask God to give you opportunity and the words to say when the time comes.

Don't wait really long to make this invitation. And don't worry about failure. Failure is not trying. Roy Moran once wrote, “Make friends with failure” in his helpful book “Spent Matches.”

How do you invite someone?

You ask them if they would like to join you in a study to discover what Jesus had to say about life and how to live it through his teachings in the Bible. These are called Discovery Groups rather than Bible studies.

If they turn you down, go back to your list. Pray some more. See if other people might be open to joining.

I am proud of you for walking through this and I am praying for you to have boldness for Jesus! You may well change eternity for some people and there are few greater joys in life than knowing you helped make that happen!

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What's Next?

The discovery process you will use will be covered in Stage 6. Discovery Groups will use a method called Discovery Bible Study. More on that in the next guide!

List of 100

Name	Christian	Non-Christian	Unknown
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____	_____
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The List of 100 is from Curtis Sergeant's work at <https://zume.training>

Stage 6: Start Discovery Groups

We want people to discover Jesus through studying God's Word, living what we learn and sharing it with others. According to Curtis Sergeant, there are the three marks of a spiritually maturing person: growing in knowledge, growing in faithfulness/obedience and growing in sharing.

Discovery Groups emphasizes these three things in a way that is simple and effective. Discovery Groups use Discovery Bible study to get people in the Word, to hear the Word, to understand the Word, to live/obey the Word, and to share the Word.

Discovery Bible study is a simple, reproducible way to study the Bible with anyone, anywhere. The goal is to teach people to be self-feeding on the word of God so that they can grow to maturity.

The Purpose of Discovery Groups

As stated above, we are helping people discover Jesus in order to live for Jesus and commit to the Jesus way of life so that they can help others do the same. This is a continuous process that doesn't stop at conversion.

Define your scriptures:

- You will study one passage with each DBS.
- There are two ways to define the scriptures you will study: 1) you can get a list from the internet or 2) you can create your own list with your audience/people in mind

Making Your Own Scripture List:

- With your group in mind begin praying. Ask God to make clear the scriptures to cover in DBS
- Open your Bible and begin searching the scriptures for the book or passages that stand out.
- Take notes of what you find, what you believe the Holy Spirit is leading you to select.
- Make a scripture list of the specific verses you are going to cover each week

Example:

Study 1: Matthew 13:31-35

Study 2: Mark 3:23-27

Study 3...

The number of studies is the number of weeks you will meet. You need one scripture per week. You can set these all in advance (often groups meet for years, this will make sense in Stages 8 & 9) or you can set the scriptures on a week to week or other timeframe basis.

Delegate/Train:

You lead the first few studies. After a few studies you can delegate items to them until they are able to do the entire study. Or you can encourage them to do DBS on their own starting week 1 to accelerate their readiness to self-feed and teach this to others.

Discovery Bible Study follows the same list of questions and activities every time.

Question List

What are you thankful for from the past week?

What challenges are you facing?

How did you live out your “I will” statement from the last DBS? (you won’t cover this Study 1)

Read the passage (get people involved)

Re-read the passage

Tell the passage in your own words (get people involved)

Re-tell the passage in your own words

What do we learn about God from this passage?

What do we learn about people (including ourselves) from this passage?

What is something you can do to obey what you have learned from this passage (come up with an “I will...” statement that will be reviewed next week. Keep it simple and concrete.

Who is someone you can share part of this lesson with this week?

How can we help you with any of the challenges you are facing?

Explanation:

You start with catching up and sharing. The “I will” is not about accountability and guilt. It is an opportunity to tell how you lived out the word and how God worked through what happened. This is a great time for non-Christians to pair up the Word of God, their participation and the work of God. If someone didn’t do it, have them try again. It is important we follow through on our commitment to live in obedience to God’s word.

Next, you get in the word – this is the most important part. We need to hear the word to understand the word to live the word. So we read, re-read, tell and re-tell. This allows the word to really be heard. It must be heard before it can be interpreted/understood and then applied and shared. Stick with the passage, don’t cross references other verses or bring in outside study resources (keep it simple so it is reproducible).

Then we interpret the word to understand it – what does it tell us about God/people?

Then we make a commitment. We are learning that every time we read the word, we need to make an effort to live out what we are learning. This is one simple, concrete item (nothing abstract and hard to know if you did it).

Last, we need to share what we are learning and living with others so they too can hear, learn and grow!

Disciples who grow are disciples who are regularly in the Word to live/obey the Word and share it with others. This needs to be a normal part of the life of the disciple from day 1.

What's Next?

In stage 7 you will learn about how discipleship from day 1 helps make new disciples who take discipleship seriously rather than trying to convert someone and then trying to teach them to follow Jesus.

Stage 7: Conversion Via Discipleship

The tradition mindset for evangelism is that you study with someone until they agree on the identity of Christ and commit their life to Him through confession, repentance, baptism, etc.

There is another way that has proven effective all over the world. It is discipling them to and through conversion. Get them to start following Jesus now even if they don't know who Jesus is. Get them to start obeying Jesus now and sharing what they know of Jesus now until it sinks in and they give their life to Christ. This is beginning with the end in mind. The same process used to bring them to Christ is the same process used to mature them after they commit!

As you started Discovery Bible Study in Stage 6 you have engaged those in your group in:

- Reading the Word
- Understanding the Word
- Obeying the Word
- Sharing the Word

As they do this, their life will begin to change. If they are not a Christian, they have not yet made a commitment to give their life to Christ, be baptized, etc. But you do have them making weekly commitments to obeying Jesus/the Bible. As they obey the Word, they will begin to see God working as they begin doing what God said. This isn't saying we are working our way to God's favor. It is a principle, that when we do what God said, often we can more clearly see God working. As they obey Jesus in loving their enemies (Matt 5:43) they may notice they begin to have less enemies. They can attribute these results to the working of God.

This builds faith!

As they see things changing, relationships improving, etc they may begin to realize that God is active in their life in a way they have never experienced before. Coming to faith in Christ is more than a head thing. It is also a heart thing – a commitment that comes from a relationship. As they experience God's work in their lives, they are building trust in God that can ultimately result in them coming to full faith commitment to Christ and living a life of maturation in Christ.

Keep up the Discovery Bible Studies with this in mind. And don't be shy about encouraging people to do the "I will" and sharing items each week because this is where they will begin to see faith emerge. We also want understanding, obedience to the scriptures and sharing to be normal from day 1.

What's Next?

The next stage will discuss what happens when those in your group come to faith in Christ.

Stage 8: When a Discovery Group becomes a Church!

As the people in your group work through DBS together on a weekly basis and as some in the group begin committing their lives to Christ, there comes a point in time when your group is basically a church. You are meeting, they are committed disciples (at this point). You are praying and studying. If you meet on a Sunday and add communion and singing, what is to keep you from being a church?

Church isn't a building. Church is the assembly of God's people. When we gather in Jesus' name on Sunday and worship Him, we are church. Your group can become a house church. This is how movements plant churches all over the world and we can do that here as well.

When you have walked through the discovery process with your group members and have baptized them into Christ, it is a great joy to be a church together. There is a closeness that you can experience in that environment that can be life changing.

If you read the book of Acts, you will see that churches met in homes (Acts 2:46). We also see this in Paul's letters (Col 4:15). The church expanded at a rapid pace through house churches. This went on until the 300s when Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman empire. That's when church buildings become more prevalent and that is also when roots of institutionalization entered the picture for churches – church as an institution rather than a spiritual family.

Rather than grow the house church into 40 or 50 or 100 people and need a building start new Discovery groups for new people. Instead of inviting them to your house church (and making it grow to be too large to fit in your home) help others in your group walk through this same (reproducible) process to start more house churches. New people need new churches.

There is a meeting format you might consider for your Sunday gatherings. It is similar to Discovery Bible Study. It is called Three thirds groups. You can read more about it [here](#).

It is important to be in prayer on every stage of the journey! God might direct you on a different path than what is laid out in these stages. Follow God rather than the stages!

What's next?

Stage 9 will be the final stage. It is about how to reproduce what God has done through you, through others.

Stage 9: Reproducing Disciples

If we are going to have maximum impact we need to make disciples in a way that those we disciple can readily pick it up and disciple others. This is what makes movements happen. Well, God makes movements happen not us! But you know what I mean. This idea is often core to movements because one person cannot reach all the people.

In order to be reproducible, it must be simple so that anyone can do it.

How to reproduce disciples who start new churches

As you watch those you disciple mature they will quickly be ready to start a discipleship group of their own. The process is simple. You already know it because you just did it! You have already modeled for them everything they are going to do for others.

You walk them through what you did:

1. You started with a prayer foundation – you will pray with them and teach them Stage 1.
2. You looked for access point to people – you will pray with them and teach them Stage 2.
3. You go on prayer walks – take them with you and show them how – Stage 3
4. You knew what to look for in a person of peace and found one – teach them and pray with them on Stage 4.
5. Remind them of how you invited them – pray with them and teach them Stage 5 (pray, make their list, pray again, invite)
6. They have been in Discovery Group doing Discovery Bible Studies for months – they will now launch their own group with those they invited – Stage 6
7. Explain to them how their conversion started with learning what Jesus said to obey what He said and share what He said – so they will know how to develop others with the same approach.
8. You started a church from your Discovery Group. Here is the key, they will now be in two churches at the same time. The church that sprung out of your Discovery group and the new church they are starting with those they invited who later committed to Jesus.
9. Now you are at three generations. The ultimate goal is to get to 4+ generations (2 Tim 2:2).

What's Next?

Continue meeting with your group/church. You typically don't grow it into a large church. You typically start more house churches via this method – new churches reach new people. But the main thing is, follow where God leads you. You could start the process again and be in 2 groups/churches at the same time where you train someone in the group to take on leadership of the new church (once the new Discovery Group is at Stage 8).

Thank you for your following Jesus and taking the mission to make disciples who make disciples! You are a blessing. Feel free to share these resources with anyone you like. No permission needed!

If you need any further assistance you can find more information at “Revolution of Ordinaries” - www.mattداببس.com or you can reach out to me – Matt Dabbs (334-750-9919). God bless you on this journey! At Revolution of Ordinaries we offer articles, YouTube videos, free tools, webinars, eBooks, coaching (individual and group) and more to help equip disciple makers around the world. Let me know if we can be of help to you!

Additional Resources

Books

We have a tendency to resource ourselves to death and never get moving. Everything in this list is incredibly helpful but at some point you have to start moving forward. Remember, simple is reproducible so resist the urge to make it complicated!

[Spent Matches](#) By Roy Moran

A book for those dissatisfied with traditional church and looking for a way to make disciples.

[Contagious Disciple Making](#) By Watson

This book sparked many of the principles in this booklet and has many great stories of what God is doing around the world that will truly inspire you.

[The Father Glorified](#) By Robertson & Watson

Truly inspiring stories of movements around the world and the miracles God did to kick them off.

[Church Planting Movements](#) By Garrison

A walk around the world of various movements of tens to hundreds of thousands of new believers and what God did to make it happen.

Websites

[Discipleship.org](#)

A site that hosts content to help us become more effective disciple makers (blogs, articles, videos and a [national forum](#)).

[Zume](#)

20 hours of free online training to make disciples who start churches. Amazing material in dozens of languages. This is the work of Curtis Sergeant. Curtis also does in person training via [Meta Camp](#). [Curtis' YouTube channel](#) is an absolute gold mine of training.

[2414 Now](#)

A website about disciple making movements around the world

[Revolution of Ordinaries](#)

My blog and a place for practical resources on making disciple makers and planting churches

[All Nations](#)

This is the ministry Pam Arlund works with and they do discipleship and church planting training that is really outstanding.