



Discipleship TRAINING GUIDE

Grace Community Church

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WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

When Jesus called His first disciples in Matthew 4:19, He said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus' call affected the disciples' head, heart, and hands.

Choosing to follow someone involves a conscious choice that engages one's mind. When someone chooses to follow Jesus, it means that have learned about who He is and have made a conscious choice to follow Him and trust Him with their life. As they begin a relationship with, they continue to learn about Him and get to know Him. When someone makes a decision to follow Jesus, He also changes their heart. They are born again, adopted into God's family, and made alive in Christ. Not only does their heart change, but so does their mission. They are no longer living for their own pursuits. God invites them to participate in His mission to redeem all things and to draw all people to Himself. They become the hands and feet of Jesus, carrying on the work that He began. They "fish" for people so that others can know and follow Jesus.

A disciple is someone who knows Christ, is changed by Christ, and is committed to the mission of Christ. A disciple is a follower of Jesus.



HOW DO I DISCIPLE SOMEONE?

We often make discipleship more complicated than it needs to be. When the word “disciple” changes from a noun to a verb, we get confused. It’s easy for us to understand what a disciple is, but we get intimidated when we realize that it is also something that we should do. How do we or how should we disciple someone else?

Answering this question or creating a plan for doing this does not begin with a written-out method or a step-by-step process. It begins with simply getting to know the person that you are going to be discipling.

Discipleship is about relationship. You should first seek to develop or build a relationship with the person that you want to disciple. This is also crucial because every believer is unique and at a different stage in their walk with Jesus. It is important that you know how they learn best, what their past experience with the church has been, when they came to know and follow Jesus, and where they are at in their spiritual maturity.





When it comes to discipleship relationships, more is “caught” than taught. Spending intentional and quality time with the person you are discipling is just as vital as studying Scripture together. While Bible study is necessary and should eventually be a part of your time together, intentional relationships can go a long way in discipleship.

We want to equip you (the “discipler”) with a few tools and ideas to help you begin and continue to disciple another believer (the “disciplee”).

JESUS’ EXAMPLE

Jesus has modeled for us in Scripture what it looks like to disciple someone else. Greg Ogden, the author of *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, highlights Jesus’ example and explains it in stages:

Pre-Disciple Stage

This stage looks like general connection and “getting to know you interactions.”

Stage 1: I do, you watch

Jesus’ followers were quiet observers of the ministry that He was doing, and they were continuing to develop a relationship with Him.

Stage 2: I do, you help

This stage can be described as “class was always in session,” because Jesus would invite the disciples to participate in what He was doing as He would guide, teach, and instruct them.

Stage 3: You do, I help

Jesus envisioned the disciples doing the ministry that He was doing. He prepared them for this by providing opportunities for them to do what He was teaching them to do and by emotionally preparing them for what they might encounter. He was still there to coach them, but they were fully participating.

Stage 4: You do, I watch

Jesus would eventually leave the disciples as He had a divine appointment with the cross. The disciples would continue to do the ministry that Jesus prepared them to do after His departure.

WHAT MIGHT THESE STAGES LOOK LIKE PRACTICALLY?

I'm just getting started...

Start with something simple like inviting your disciplee to grab a cup of coffee! Spend time getting to know them just as you would get to know a new friend. Learn their interests and hobbies.

You can also consider what it could look like to invite them to do “normal” things with you. What do we mean by this? We said earlier that more is often “caught” than taught. Your disciplee can learn so much about what it looks like to follow Jesus by observing you in normal, everyday situations. For example, you might have a free afternoon, but you also have a few errands to run. Invite them to join you! You can enjoy casual conversation with them and spend time with them while also going about your normal, everyday life. Discipleship does not always need to be as complicated as the picture that we have formed in our minds. It can be simple!

This is going well and we seem to get along...now what?

It's important for you to evaluate your personality and how it interacts with your disciple's personality. Not all pairs are a good match and that's okay!

Once you have determined that your pair is a good fit, you can start to engage in conversations about their faith and relationship with Jesus. Consider asking them:

- When did you come to know Jesus as your Savior?
- When did you begin a relationship with Jesus?
- What churches have you been a part of?
- When you think about your relationship with Jesus, what moments stand out? What moments seem significant?



We know each other well and have been meeting regularly...how can we dive deeper?

Now is the time to start considering how you will structure your regular or routine meetings together! The first step in answering this question is to talk about each of your expectations and desires. Here are some questions to help you do this:

- How often are you hoping to meet?
- How do you learn best?
- When and how do you feel close to God?
- What are you hoping to gain from this discipleship relationship?

You can structure your time together based on their answers to these questions! If your disciplee connects to God through drawing, consider painting or crafting together as you talk about their relationship with Jesus. If your disciplee is an academic, choose a Bible study to work through together. Feel free to bring a commentary and dive into the text! If your disciplee is a new believer, consider reading the Gospels together. This is why it is so important to get to know your disciplee at the beginning!

If you're stuck, need some ideas for structuring your time, or are looking to work through a Bible study or curriculum together, consider checking our Digital Resource Library. Scan the QR code below to access the library:



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

There are a few things that we would encourage you to keep in mind as you disciple someone else. We invite you to read and consider the list of general discipleship principles below:

DO NOT GO INTO EVERY MEETING WITH AN AGENDA

One of the most beneficial practices for a discipleship relationship is when the discipler listens to the disciplee. They will most likely have things weighing on their heart and mind and will want to talk to you about it. Do not approach your meetings with a task list or with an immediate goal that you hope to accomplish. Remember the value of relationship, and listen to them or respond when appropriate.

SEEK THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DIRECTION

God has providentially placed this person in your life, and He won't just leave you to navigate it or figure it out alone. He will continue to guide and direct your steps as you seek to help them know and follow Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and seek His guidance through prayer.

YOU CANNOT SAVE ANYONE

God does the saving work in someone's life, and you cannot save anyone. We can be faithful to do our part to plant seeds of the gospel, but the Holy Spirit is solely capable of transforming someone's heart.

CONSIDER YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL HEALTH

An effective discipler must remember that he or she is also a disciple of Jesus. A discipler must be intentional about abiding in Christ, practicing their own spiritual disciplines, and seeking to grow in their own relationship with Jesus.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO LEARN

Maintain a posture of humility as you engage with your disciplee. Be open to the possibility that you can learn from them too!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE ALL OF THE ANSWERS

They might ask you a question and you won't know the answer to it...and that's okay! Your job as a disciple is not to perfectly answer every question that they have. Your job is to point them back to the One who does.

When you don't know an answer to one of their questions, do some research or reach out to us! You can respond with something like this: "I'm not going to have all of the answers, but I can promise to try to find an answer if I don't know it."

YOU ARE NOT DISCIPLING THEM BY YOURSELF

Just as you can reach out to us about finding an answer to a question, you can reach out to us for support and encouragement! We are here to support you as you help someone else know and follow Jesus.

It is also important to recognize that some issues or topics might be too big for you to deal with or care for. Your disciplee might need to seek counseling or meet with a pastor for pastoral care. If this is the case, let us know and we will help to coordinate care for them!



Still have questions? CONTACT US



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