

DISCIPLESHIP

A Guide to Growing Followers of Jesus



 CHRISTIAN CHURCH
IN THE WILDWOOD

NEXT STEP

DISCIPLESHIP

OVERVIEW

Discipleship is a commitment to follow another, adopting the teachings, behaviors, and attitudes in such a way that you become like the one that you are following. For a Christ-follower, discipleship means that we have committed to following Jesus, as Lord, and are becoming like Him. For this to happen, we need to be transformed.

Transformation is the product of the Spirit of God working in our lives; but rarely does the Spirit work completely on His own. He works alongside:

God's Word: The Bible introduces us to both the work and the words of Jesus. It is useful for 'training, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16)'. It acts as the guidebook for what a disciple of Christ truly looks like.

God's People: If we follow the model of Jesus throughout the New Testament, we see that discipleship is meant to happen in the context of relationship. Every follower of Jesus should be connected to a community of other believers (a Church) but also to a person who is intentionally helping them to grow and mature into the likeness of Christ. We call this person a disciple-maker.

Our Personal Self-Discipline: Each of us also brings our own self-will to discipleship. We need to make the choice to grow new life-habits, change behaviors, and make a serious effort if we hope to see the transformation of the Spirit in our lives.

Our path to becoming like Jesus includes each of these pieces. Discipleship happens at the intersection of Spirit, Word, relationships, and personal effort. But you have been called to not only be transformed, but to be part of the transformation of others. You have been called to be a disciple-maker:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, 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 28:18 - 20

This guide is designed to introduce you to a simple process for making disciples of Jesus. Over the next few pages, you will be introduced to three key steps in discipleship:

Engage: Knowing who to disciple and where to start.

Equip: Using resources and tools to help someone start the lifelong process of becoming like Jesus.

Empower: Releasing the disciple you're working with to engage others and make disciples.

Read on to discover how you can take the first step towards living out God's mission for your life.

ENGAGE

Discipleship begins with engaging another person for the express purpose of helping them to grow to be more like Jesus. This starts with discovering a pond of potential disciples, narrowing the list down through **qualifying** the right person, and then **inviting** that person into a discipleship relationship by **casting a vision**.

DISCOVERING DISCIPLES

Potential disciples are all around you. They live with you, work with you, are a part of a church community with you, and play with you. If you are going to engage another person in discipleship, it starts with opening your eyes to the incredible potential and need right around you. When Jesus called His first disciples, His words were:

*"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."
Matthew 4:19*

We continue on this legacy of 'fishing for people.' As a result, each of us has a variety of **Ponds**: the environments, locations, and groups that we regularly traverse (e.g. a workplace, hobby area, store, park). At Christian Church in the Wildwood (CCW), we have a variety of ponds that you can also discover potential disciples in: Sunday morning worship, ministry teams, discipleship groups, care groups and study groups.

Create a list of ponds that are in your life:

Create a list of potential disciples that may be found in those ponds:

FIND THE RIGHT PERSON: QUALIFY

Now that you have your list of potential disciples, it's time to narrow down the focus. The two things that help us narrow that focus are (1) praying and (2) qualifying.

- **Pray:** Pray over the list of potential disciples that you've created and ask God to clearly indicate who you should be investing in. Come back to those names again and again. You never know what God is doing to prepare someone for transformation!
- **Qualify:** Discipleship is a big investment of time and energy. For that reason, it's important to qualify these potential disciples by looking for three key qualities:

Faithful: Is this person faithfully committed to those things they are involved in? Are they showing up to those things they've committed to or do they regularly cancel? If they aren't faithful in those things, then they won't follow through with discipleship either.

Available: Do they have the time and availability to meet with you on a regular basis? Do they have

time to complete the study materials that you'll be working through together? If not, then you'll become increasingly frustrated with conflicting schedules.

Trainable: Is this person hungry for transformation? Are they willing to learn, change, and follow your lead? As the disciple-maker, you'll be providing spiritual leadership in this individual's life for a period of time. If they do not have a willingness to follow and grow, you will continually find yourself in conflict and debate.

Take some time to go back to the list of potential disciples that you listed and evaluate which of those individuals have these qualities in their lives.

CAST THE VISION

After you've pinpointed a potential disciple, it's time to invite them to join in the adventure of discipleship with you. To do this:

- 1. Start with an Ask:** Ask them if they've ever considered entering into a discipleship relationship before.
- 2. Cast a Vision:** Clarify the goal of the relationship by explaining the goal of discipleship. It might sound something like this:

As Christ-followers, it's our goal to follow Jesus and become more and more like Him. The best place to do that is through a mentor - someone who will help you navigate the words of Jesus, assist you in setting spiritual growth goals, encourage you when the going gets rough and provide accountability for the tough things in life. That's what discipleship is all about. Would you like to spend time with me over the next year doing this journey together?

- 3. Set the Expectations:** Discipleship and the resulting transformation can be challenging work. Be clear about the expectations that you place on this sort of relationship. Some helpful expectations include:

We will meet once per week (or every other week) for 1 - 1.5 hours.

Discipleship includes daily reading, journaling and challenges.

Authenticity, transparency, open communication and a willingness to grow are all necessary.

- 4. Give them Space:** Don't expect an answer right away. Ask them to pray about their decision and to get back to you in the next couple of weeks.

If it's a 'yes', you're ready to move on and begin discipling. If not, return to your list of potential disciples and start again.

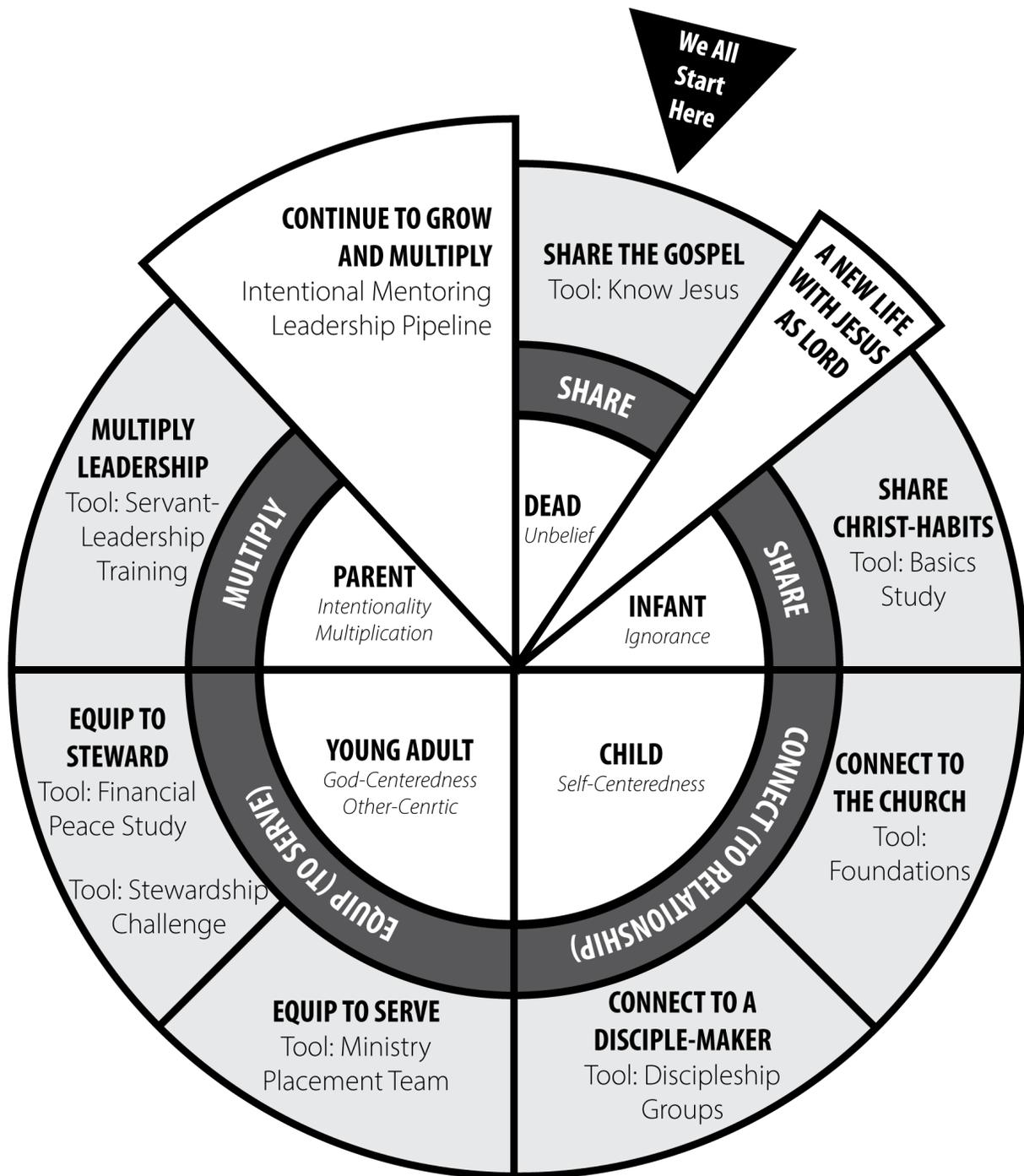
KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN

The Discipleship Wheel is our tool for understanding what stage of growth a person is at what their Next Step might look like. To determine where to begin with a potential disciple, you must (1) identify the stage and (2) know their Next Step.

Identify the Stage: The first step in discipleship is identifying the spiritual stage at which each person is operating (see the inner circle of the wheel). Each spiritual stage corresponds to a comparable **physical growth stage** and can be identified by **common language** and **habits**.

To help in identifying the stage:

- Walk through each stage and then ask the person you are working with what stage they believe they are currently at. Emphasize that there is no shame in being at any particular stage, it simply helps in



discovering the best possible path towards spiritual growth.

- Most people tend to overestimate how spiritually mature they are. If this person identifies themselves as a 'spiritual young adult', ask questions that pertain to that stages identifying markers (e.g. Do you know your spiritual gifting? Where are you currently serving? How are you being a wise steward and investing God's resources?). If they don't have good answers to these questions, chances are they aren't actually operating at this stage of spiritual maturity.
- Together, work your way back through the list until you have identified their current stage.

What stage is the person that you're discipling operating at:

Know the Next Step: After you have identified the stage, you can then determine what the Next Step a person should take as they grow to be more like Jesus (see the outer, light-grey wheel). Each Next Step is a spiritual milestone that is common to all believers. At CCW, we've created a **tool** or **environment** to assist in achieving this spiritual milestone.

As an example, a spiritual infant needs to learn Christ-habits (e.g. reading God's Word, praying). CCW has a tool called the Basics Study which helps participants to begin developing these habits in their lives.

To choose a Next Step:

- Together, walk through what each Next Step consists of. Emphasize that while these steps are often taken in a different order, there is a natural progression to them.
- Choose several goals or milestones that the person you're discipling would like to work towards.

What are some Next Steps that the person you're discipling should take?

For more information on the Discipleship Wheel and the Next Steps, consider completing the Foundations 2 course or talking to a Next Step Coach.

IMPORTANT: It is critical that you determine if your disciple has actually submitted to the Lordship of Jesus in their life, placed their confidence in His saving work, and have been baptized into His name. We regularly encounter people in the Church who claim to be Christ-followers but have never actually started down this path. Ask these questions:

When did you submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ? What did that look like?

How have you seen the Spirit of God actively transforming you into something different and new?

What would you say to a person if they asked you about the difference that Jesus has made in your life?

If they have not yet taken this step, use the **Know Jesus Guide** to walk them through what a relationship with Jesus looks like (Find this guide at ccw.church/next-steps/).

Do not go on to Step Two: Equip until you are confident that this individual is a Christ-follower.

STEP TWO

EQUIP

Once you've engaged a person in a relationship, it's time to equip them to be a disciple of Jesus. This step describes what you will do with your time together. It starts with setting ground rule for how you will grow and then following a growth path.

GETTING STARTED

To get your discipleship relationship going, set a time and date to meet together. If you are committing to a reoccurring meeting, make sure you both have cleared that spot in your calendar and committed it to this time.

When you first meet together, be sure to reinforce these key ideas:

- The goal of discipleship is to grow and mature into the likeness of Jesus Christ. As a result, they will become a disciple-maker and take part in the multiplying mission of Jesus. God's Spirit is at work transforming and empowering them so that they might someday do this with another person. They should be praying that God places someone on their heart whom they can take part in a discipleship relationship with.
- Transparency and authenticity are critical to growth. It's important to get past the surface and allow real conversation to be a part of the time together.
- Growth as a disciple happens through prayer and intentional effort. In the context of a discipleship relationship, this means that (1) they should be praying daily, (2) completing all challenges, and that (3) while reading the Bible on their own they should be actively jotting down insights and questions that can be discussed during your time together.

These ideas should become central to your time together. Come back to them again and again while meeting together.

CHOOSE A PATH

There is no single correct way to disciple (provided that it's pointing them towards becoming more like Jesus). At CCW, we have a variety of resources you might use as you equip someone to become a disciple-maker. Here are three great paths to discipleship. Choose the path that best fits your gifting and personality:

- Chapter-Per-Day Method
- Person-to-Person (P2P) Talk Sheets
- Core 52

Chapter-Per Day

This method involves reading a chapter of the Bible every day and using the notes and questions as a springboard for discussion during your time together. Follow these steps:

1. Starting in the book of John and then going through the book of Jude, you will individually read one chapter of the Bible per day (Note: Moving Romans to the back of the list may be wise due to its complex-

ity). Before starting each book, take some of your time together to give an overview of the book - who wrote it and why. The Bible Project has videos available on their website and Youtube that do this extremely well (www.bibleproject.com).

2. For each chapter, write down any insights or questions that may come to mind.
3. During your time together, allow your discipleship partner to lead the conversation by asking many questions. Encourage them to feel free to ask you anything. Be transparent during this time, always focusing on how God's Word should shape both our head and our heart. Share your sin struggles, the temptations that you've faced along the way, and the ways in which the Spirit has transformed you.
4. Keep a running list of the topics that arise (e.g. the Church, leadership, Holy Spirit). After completing the current book study, each of these issues needs to be addressed Biblically. This will give you the opportunity to do your own research and be prepared for each topic.

You can find an in-depth guide to the Chapter-per Day method at: ccw.church/one-on-one-discipleship/

Person-to-Person (P2P) Talk Sheets

P2P Talk-Sheets are designed to help you have a conversation with another person about the Core Values of Jesus: Biblical Truth, Real Relationships, Inspired Worship, Selfless Service, and Spirit-Led Living. These pages are designed to be used anywhere, whether you're sitting in your home or meeting in a coffee shop. In addition, you can move through this conversation at whatever pace you think is best, spending as much time as you need on developing the associated habit.

Each P2P sheet is packed with resources that help you move from conversation to action: key scripture to read, discussion questions, and application activities.

You can find these Talk Sheets at: ccw.church/one-on-one-discipleship/

Core 52 (Mark Moore)

Core 52 is a fifty-two week guide to growing disciples and developing a Biblical I.Q. created by professor Mark Moore. Each week features a brief essay, memory verse, Bible story, and practical ways to put what you've learned into practice.

Find this resource online or in the CCW Resource Center.

SHARE LIFE TOGETHER

Another key component of your weekly time together is to share life. When you meet, you should:

- Share the victories and challenges of the previous week. A great question to get this conversation started is: How have you seen God show up this week?
- Spend time in accountability. It might be helpful to set some accountability questions to ask weekly during your first session. These questions can touch on sin issues and spiritual goals that you need to regularly address.
- Share new prayer requests and be praying with one another.

EMPOWER

Your discipleship of this individual is for a season. Once you have spent time equipping them to follow Jesus, it will be time to empower them to become a disciple-maker with another person. Empowering a Christ-follower starts with training them how to approach another person for the purposes of discipleship and then making changes in your time together to allow you to both shift your focus elsewhere.

EMPOWER A DISCIPLE-MAKER

Once you've made it well into your discipleship path and addressed most of the key issues, it will be time to encourage your discipleship partner to begin prayerfully seeking out someone to approach for the purposes of discipleship. Encourage them to use the same model that you have used now that they've seen it in action. Walk through this packet with them and have them take those first steps towards discipleship.

CHANGING THE RELATIONSHIP

Your relationship with one another is changing, not ending. A few key things to keep in mind as this relationship changes:

- It would still be helpful to meet together, just less often. Consider meeting once a month for the time being. This time can be used for encouragement, accountability, prayer, and to address any challenges that this new disciple-maker has encountered.
- Now that you have the availability, it's time to find another person to begin the discipleship adventure with! This is a responsibility and mission that never ceases.

REASONS TO STOP

At times, you may need to end a discipleship relationship. Some key reasons to end the relationship:

Lack of Commitment: They have failed to consistently show up or they are showing up unprepared to your times together.

Lack of Change: They have failed to make any of the changes that you have talked about in your time together.

Lack of Christ: They have fully stepped away from Christ and have chosen sin over salvation.

Before ending the relationship, you should attempt to encourage your discipleship partner towards change. Let them know the reason you're considering ending the relationship and the change that needs to happen. If the issue still persists, then it is time to end this commitment with them and shift your time and energy towards someone else. Continue to pray for them: who knows what the Spirit might do in their life in the future?