

Discipling Group Curriculum

First Semester (101)

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Primer on Discipling Groups

In Philippians 3:17, Paul writes, “Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.” This is one of the clearer verses in the New Testament that shows that more mature believers should *model* the Christian life for other Christians.

There are many approaches to discipling others, but the main vehicle for discipling others in the ACSC will be our Discipling Groups.

A Discipling Group will be led by one person, should ideally include 2-4 people being disciplined, should meet every 1-2 weeks, and should be single-sex (guys disciple guys; girls disciple girls). The specific location and time of the meeting will be determined by the specific schedules of each group.

(Why not disciple one-on-one? First, Jesus didn't. Second, having more than one person being disciplined gives the people being disciplined the opportunity to hear others process the teachings of the Bible. This is both encouraging to them and will help prepare them for discipling others.)

The foundation of the Discipling Groups should be relationships. The leader should be investing time in the people he or she is discipling. The leader needs to be involved in their lives.

We will have curriculum written for two semesters' worth of meeting. Please use this curriculum as a guide for your DG meetings. I know that you might have other material you want to use in your discipling groups, but please use the curriculum the ministry has provided. It is helpful for our ministry leadership to know that our students are covering the material in the DG curriculum. This helps us plan teaching series and further improve the discipling groups.

Some Advice on Leading a Discipling Group

- Pray regularly for the people you are discipling.
- Begin and end each meeting with prayer.
- Before each meeting, read and study the passages you will be studying.
- When asking questions, give them time to think and answer. If you want thoughtful answers, you have to give them time to think.
- Meet in a place where you have at least some privacy. A restaurant or coffeeshop is okay as long as you have enough privacy for the participants to feel comfortable talking about problems and struggles.
- Keep a small notebook where you can keep notes on your meetings and write down thoughts. For example, a question might arise in a discussion which you need to study before you are prepared to answer. Write it down so that you can answer it.
- Be gracious and gentle. You're not in control of their lives. You are a brother or sister walking alongside them in faith.
- Don't be the spiritual guru. Let the other members share their thoughts or answer another person's question. You don't have to dominate the discussions to disciple them.

The First Meeting

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.

Explaining Discipling Groups

If you haven't already, explain the following:

- A. DGs are an organized way to make disciples — to help each person grow into more mature Christians.
- B. They have high commitment levels; that is, each person should be committed to the group and to each other. Make a strong effort to be involved in each other's lives.

Explain these three rules:

- A. No sharing outside of the group what was discussed in the group
- B. Matt. 18: No criticizing each other behind each other's backs. Confront one another; no gossip.
- C. High commitment to this group. Make it one of your top priority.

Getting Familiar

1. Starting with yourself, each person should explain the following:
 - a. where you are as a disciple of Jesus (How mature would you say you are? Gifts? Struggles?)
 - b. spend a few minutes explaining your faith background (Did you grow up in a church? Important experiences? How were you converted?)

Discipleship-Specific Discussions

1. How have you been discipled in the past? (Start by answering this question yourself.)
2. Ask each person why they want to be discipled. (The leader doesn't need to answer this.)

Challenge

1. Ask each person to spend time praying and thinking about whether they want to commit to being discipled. It's OK if they don't.

Closing Prayer

Second Meeting: Three Key Questions for Discipling

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.

Mark 4:35-41

1. Read the text.
2. Notice that the disciples see something spectacular — the calming of the storm.
3. God was teaching them something through it, namely, the authority and power of Jesus.
4. The disciples were faced with an opportunity to **ignore** it and move on with their day.
5. Instead, they reflected on it (“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him.”) and tried to learn from it.
6. Furthermore, as they learned more about Jesus, they were faced with the question: *What were they going to do with this information?*
 - a. (You can reference Mark 8:27-36 here; after the confession that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus tells them that his disciples had to carry their crosses.)

Key Questions

- Spiritual growth comes from cycling through two questions:
 - What is God teaching me?
 - What am I going to do about it?
- Our DG sessions are structured to study the Word of God and ask those two questions.
 - Each session will end with these two questions.
 - There will be gracious accountability involved also. Each meeting we’ll share if we did any follow-up with the previous week’s answer to “What am I going to do about it?”
- Outreach Focus
 - We are called to be lights to the world. Every Christian should aim to work to help a nonbeliever (or a “non-practicing Christian”) come to faith. *Spend time each group praying for the person(s) your members are reaching out to.*

(Optional) Answering the Key Questions

If time permits, you can ask each person to share something that God has been teaching them recently. Then, if you have enough time, you can ask what they are going to do about it.

Closing Prayer

Third Meeting: Ephesians 2:1-10

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.
3. Check in with last week's "Three Key Questions" answers.

Read the Passage

1. Have someone read the passage out loud.
2. Give the participants an opportunity to read it to themselves.
3. Ask if anyone has any questions about the passage or if there are any words/phrases they do not understand.
4. Ask each person (yourself included) to share one insight/question about the passage.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Paul call non-Christians "dead"? Why does he use this word in particular?
2. What does v. 3 mean by "children of wrath"/"deserving of wrath"?
3. Do you feel that vv. 1-3 describes your non-Christian life? Why or why not?
4. How would you describe the work of God in our salvation as explained in Ephesians 2:1-10?
5. What does Ephesians 2:10 say about the purpose of your new life after salvation?
6. What does Eph. 2:10 mean by "good works" (or "good deeds")?
7. What does this passage teach on grace? Have you ever struggled to accept the grace taught by this passage?
8. Do you think you are living out God's purpose for your life (Ephesians 2:10)?

Two Key Questions

Each person should answer the following questions:

1. What is God teaching me through this passage and/or our discussion?
2. What am I going to do about it?

Closing Prayer

- Be sure to pray for the person(s) to whom your group members are reaching out. (If someone doesn't have someone he/she is reaching out to, then pray that God will put someone in his/her path.)

Fourth Meeting: Philippians 2:1-11

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.
3. Check in with last week's "Three Key Questions" answers.

Read the Passage

1. Have someone read the passage out loud.
2. Give the participants an opportunity to read it to themselves.
3. Ask if anyone has any questions about the passage or if there are any words/phrases they do not understand.
4. Ask each person (yourself included) to share one insight/question about the passage.

Discussion Questions

1. Why would Paul say that the unity of the church would make his joy "complete"? What does this tell us about where we should find our joy?
2. What do you think "being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind" (v. 2) means practically for you? What are some specific ways that would look in your life?
3. How does "selfish ambition or vain conceit" (v. 3) show up in your life?
4. What are some practical ways you can "value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others"?
5. What does verse 6 tell us about the identity of Jesus?
6. What is vv. 6-11 supposed to illustrate about the mindset of Christ? Why does that matter for our daily lives?

Two Key Questions

Each person should answer the following questions:

1. What is God teaching me through this passage and/or our discussion?
2. What am I going to do about it?

Closing Prayer

- Be sure to pray for the person(s) to whom your group members are reaching out. (If someone doesn't have someone he/she is reaching out to, then pray that God will put someone in his/her path.)

Fifth Meeting: Luke 14:25-33

Counting the Costs of Discipleship

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.
3. Check in with last week's "Three Key Questions" answers.

Read the Passage

1. Have someone read the passage out loud.
2. Give the participants an opportunity to read it to themselves.
3. Ask if anyone has any questions about the passage or if there are any words/phrases they do not understand.
4. Ask each person (yourself included) to share one insight/question about the passage.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus says this to the crowds? What is it about the crowds that leads Jesus to make these statements to them?
2. What does Jesus mean by having to "hate" your father and mother (and so on) to be a disciple?
3. Why does Jesus say that his disciples have to "carry their cross" *and* "follow" him? Why does he say "carry their cross"? Isn't it enough for Jesus just to tell his disciples to follow him?
4. What are the two examples (about the builders and the king going to war) in vv. 28-30 and vv. 31-32 supposed to show about being a disciple of Jesus?
5. What are the costs *in your life* of following Jesus?
6. Have you ever gone through a period of "counting the costs" of being a disciple of Jesus? If so, what was it like? If not, why not?

Two Key Questions

Each person should answer the following questions:

1. What is God teaching me through this passage and/or our discussion?
2. What am I going to do about it?

Closing Prayer

- Be sure to pray for the person(s) to whom your group members are reaching out. (If someone doesn't have someone he/she is reaching out to, then pray that God will put someone in his/her path.)

Sixth Meeting: Matt. 18:21-35

Disciples forgive others as God has forgiven them.

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.
3. Check in with last week's "Three Key Questions" answers.

Read the Passage

1. Have someone read the passage out loud.
2. Give the participants an opportunity to read it to themselves.
3. Ask if anyone has any questions about the passage or if there are any words/phrases they do not understand.
4. Ask each person (yourself included) to share one insight/question about the passage.

Discussion Questions

1. In the parable, the central character, the king's servant, begged for forgiveness for his debts but refuses to forgive another's debts. What makes us capable of begging for forgiveness from someone but refusing to forgive someone else?
2. What is the nature of God's forgiveness of our sins?
3. Based on the way God has given us, what should we *require* from others *before* we forgive them?
4. Do you consider yourself a forgiving person? Why or why not?
5. What are some practical ways that we can bring ourselves to forgive people whom we struggle to forgive?
6. Is there anyone in your life whom you should forgive but have not forgiven?

Two Key Questions

Each person should answer the following questions:

1. What is God teaching me through this passage and/or our discussion?
2. What am I going to do about it?

Closing Prayer

- Be sure to pray for the person(s) to whom your group members are reaching out. (If someone doesn't have someone he/she is reaching out to, then pray that God will put someone in his/her path.)

Seventh Meeting: Romans 6:1-14

Baptism unites us to Christ, and so we should live Christ-like lives.

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.
3. Check in with last week's "Three Key Questions" answers.

Read the Passage

1. Have someone read the passage out loud.
2. Give the participants an opportunity to read it to themselves.
3. Ask if anyone has any questions about the passage or if there are any words/phrases they do not understand.
4. Ask each person (yourself included) to share one insight/question about the passage.

Discussion Questions

1. What is baptism?
2. In verse three, what does Paul assume about Christians and baptism?
3. In v. 4, to what does Paul compare baptism?
4. What does Paul say happens in a person's life when baptized?
5. The main point about this passage is about the lifestyle of a Christian. How would you summarize Paul's message to a baptized believer about their lifestyle?
6. What would be wrong with someone thinking, "Great, I can be saved by God's grace and then do anything I want to do?"
7. What does it mean to "not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires" (v. 12) and "Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness" (v. 13)?
8. What does it mean to count yourselves "alive to God" (v. 11) and to "offer yourselves to God...as an instrument of righteousness" (v. 13)?
9. Are you currently living as an instrument for righteousness or sin? Why or why not?

Two Key Questions

Each person should answer the following questions:

1. What is God teaching me through this passage and/or our discussion?
2. What am I going to do about it?

Closing Prayer

- Be sure to pray for the person(s) to whom your group members are reaching out. (If someone doesn't have someone he/she is reaching out to, then pray that God will put someone in his/her path.)

Eight Meeting: Matthew 5:43-48

Love your enemies.

Beginning the Meeting

1. Ask everyone for one prayer request.
2. Pray for every person and pray for the beginning of the DG.
3. Check in with last week's "Three Key Questions" answers.

Read the Passage

1. Have someone read the passage out loud.
2. Give the participants an opportunity to read it to themselves.
3. Ask if anyone has any questions about the passage or if there are any words/phrases they do not understand.
4. Ask each person (yourself included) to share one insight/question about the passage.

Discussion Questions

1. How does loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you show you to "be children of your Father in heaven" (v. 43)?
2. What is Jesus's comment about the sun and the rain in verse 45 supposed to illustrate about God's love and our love?
3. We aren't physically persecuted like early Christians, so how do we apply verse 44 to our lives?
4. Do you consider yourself to have enemies?
5. How do Christians deceive themselves into thinking they have loved their enemies when they really haven't?
6. What does it look like (in your day-to-day life) to love your enemies?
7. Without necessarily revealing identities of the individual, is there anyone in your life (an "enemy" or someone who treats you poorly) who you are struggling to love? Why is it such a struggle?

Two Key Questions

Each person should answer the following questions:

1. What is God teaching me through this passage and/or our discussion?
2. What am I going to do about it?

Closing Prayer

- Be sure to pray for the person(s) to whom your group members are reaching out. (If someone doesn't have someone he/she is reaching out to, then pray that God will put someone in his/her path.)