



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.’ ”

From that point on, courageous followers of Christ have valiantly participated in this world-changing mission. Today the world we face could use a little upheaval.

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 will bring certain joy, these voices of the past encourage us to plunge into the deep water, to be disciples who make a difference in observable ways.

Most contemporary Christians probably like the thought of making a difference. Many hunger to take 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!” should stir the hearts of Jesus' followers. A vast army of world changers fills the churches of America Sunday after Sunday. When they hear the truth of God's Word, their hearts burn for the moment. 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 one answer or at least provides some pretty good hints:

1. 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?" The Holy Spirit spoke through Paul to give an answer to the Corinthian, Ephesian, Philippian, and Colossian disciples:

"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).

"... 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).

"... 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).

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

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, and 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 on *our work for Him*. Peter, one of those early shining-star world changers explained:

"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).

2. 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 of people, 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).

"We must pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another" (Rom. 14:19).



“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).

“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).

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

“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” (Jas. 1:25).

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

3. 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 each disciple who follows Him to “deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mark 8:34). He expects followship to be demonstrated by obedience: “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). He commissions all disciples to reproduce themselves in others: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19).

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 **comprehensive** in church practice. 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. Also, every stage of discipleship should be given intentional focus. How does the church help a new disciple begin the journey of discipleship? How does the church help all disciples grow spiritually, develop skills for ministry, and learn to disciple others? In addition, every age disciple is included in the strategy: adult, student, and child. This planning guide helps organize the closed-group component of a comprehensive strategy to make disciples.





- 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 that can be described with three simple words: *be*, *know*, and *do*.
 - Be** *Be* refers to who the disciple becomes at conversion as a child of God and who he is becoming through the indwelling Spirit's work of ongoing renewal. 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?
 - Know** *Know* focuses on 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 ongoing transformation.
 - Do** *Do* describes 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 are interdependent actions. In isolation none has the ability to produce a Christlike reflection in a disciple. Together they serve as catalysts for a work of God 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 become ineffective and unproductive. Iron *does* sharpen iron (see Prov. 27:17).
 - 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" than 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, online 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: *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 suggestions for consideration. Start now setting your church's course for a discipleship strategy that produces world changers through the power of God.





Development Steps

The following steps guide the development of the closed-groups component of a comprehensive disciple-making strategy. These small groups provide opportunities for disciples to experience accountability, deeper study, and covenant relationships. If this is your initial attempt, accomplishing every step may be difficult. Review the list and choose steps best suited to your situation. Establish the goal of getting started rather than getting it all completed. 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 that need discipleship/ministry.	
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 the 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 small-group studies.	
15	Launch the strategy.	
16	Regularly evaluate the plan 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 the discipleship director 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 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* (center pullout).

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. 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 from a common vision with which all associated people 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 ensure a greater sense of ownership in the statement. As you think 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 statement on page 1 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner* (center pullout).

Step 4: Determine the specific spiritual disciplines that will form the foundation for the discipleship strategy. Do you remember that **focused** is one characteristic of effective discipleship? Deciding on specific spiritual disciplines provides the consistent focus needed. 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. The discipleship experiences that are presented later use these disciplines as the framework.



Adult Spiritual Disciplines

- 1. Abide in Christ
- 2. Live in the Word
- 3. Pray in faith
- 4. Fellowship with believers
- 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 and grow as Christians
- 3. Prepare to lead in the next generation

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

Our adult spiritual disciplines: _____

Our student spiritual disciplines: _____

Our childhood spiritual disciplines: _____



Step 5: Determine the people groups in your church and community that need discipleship/ministry. One way to approach 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 he or she shares many of the same needs with others in the group. The most basic people groups are adults, youth, children, and preschoolers. Married couples are 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 with 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 nonmembers through the many support groups it offers. TeamKID Clubs, DiscipleNow youth events, parenting courses, marriage-enrichment events, and support groups are just a few ways churches can minister to people outside the church.

Because of its foundational discipleship function, an effective connecting point for these people groups can be Sunday School. Guiding them to a small group in which needs are met, relationships are built, and God's Word is taught is the key for reaching people for the long term. Churches with an outward focus constantly seek to meet the needs of all people. 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 discovering people groups will help you determine where to put your time and energy.

People Groups Inside the Church Who Need to Be Discipled

Adults

Caregivers
Church leadership
College students
Divorcés/divorceés
Expectant mothers
Grandparents
Married couples
Median adults
Men

Mothers working outside
the home
Newly married couples
Parents of children
Parents of preschoolers
Parents of students
Retirees
Senior adults

Shift workers
Single adults
Single parents
Stay-at-home moms
Young adults
Widows/widowers
Women



Students

Middle-school youth
High-school youth
Teen girls
Teen guys

Children/Preschool

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

Multigenerational

Abused
AIDS patients
Alcoholic
Battered
Bereaved
Blended families
Children of divorced parents
Codependent
Dysfunctional families
Ethnic
Families of people with AIDS

Gifted
Handicapped
Hearing impaired
Homebound
Homeless
Homosexuals
Inactive church members
Internationals
Learning disabled
New believers

New church members
Nonmembers who attend
Overweight
Substance/drug abusers
Terminally ill
Underweight
Unemployed
Visually impaired

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
Families of nursing-home residents
Gang members
Juvenile offenders

Nursing-home residents
Group-home residents
Prisoners
Transient workers

After you have identified your people groups, you can begin looking at specific discipleship and 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? That's 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, or become a more supportive parent or a more loving spouse? Could your devotional life use a boost? Think of your own needs and then multiply them a hundredfold 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 fact 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/ministry 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 most often used 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** that are formed to help people deal with personal or emotional needs in a confidential, supportive setting.
- **Individual study**, which is chosen 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 who want to learn a lot in a short period of time.
- **Events**, both training and enrichment.

Most discipleship experiences today are not locked in to any particular time in the weekly schedule. These experiences can be as effective on Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday night as on 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 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, which is accomplished in many ways, 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 become 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. For example, when Bill came to Christ as a young adult, his pastor asked 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 the years to come. The following resources help new disciples begin their journey of faith and other new members begin a lasting connection with the church.

Growing Disciples: The Call to Follow Christ	001303666
Basic Student Discipleship	001180606
Basics for Baptists (adults)	001115995
The BodyLife Journey for Students	001050990
The BodyLife Journey: Guiding Believers into Ministry	001114624
I’m a Christian Now (leader resources)	001209904
I’m a Christian Now (older child)	001209905
I’m a Christian Now (younger child)	001209906
Living Your Christian Values (adults)	001116697
Redefining Church Membership (adults)	001114328
Survival Kit: Five Keys to Effective Spiritual Growth	001117191
Survival Kit for Youth	001117175
Taking the Next Step: A Guide for New Church Members (adults)	001117162
Welcome to God’s Family (tract)	001147418
Your Life and Your Church (adults)	001114629

Record your plans for new disciples on pages 3, 6, and 7 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner* (center pullout). 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 are important to a church that seeks to carry out the Great Commission. Servant leaders use their spiritual gifts to teach people, coordinate ministries, and equip others for ministry. A church’s discipleship strategy can equip Christians to become strong, biblical servant leaders. Recommended resources to accomplish this goal are:

Basic Training for Mission Teams	001313418
The BodyLife Journey: Guiding Believers into Ministry	001114624
Drawing Men to God: Men’s Ministry Manual	001116617
Every Christian a Minister: Finding Joy and Fulfillment in Serving God	001116719
Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader	001116804
Paul on Leadership: Servant Leadership in a Ministry of Transition	001238298
Spiritual Gifts: A Practical Guide to How God Works Through You	001220730
To the Ends of the Earth: Churches Fulfilling the Great Commission	001313418
Transformed Lives: Taking Women’s Ministry to the Next Level	001116498
Woman-to-Woman Mentoring: How to Start, Grow, and Maintain a Mentoring Ministry Coordinator’s Guide	001114643
Women Reaching Women: Beginning and Building a Growing Women’s Enrichment Ministry	001116296

Leadership Magazines

Consult LifeWay’s current Dated Resources Order Form for ordering information, visit www.lifeway.com, or call toll free (800) 458-2772. To speak with a Spanish-speaking customer-service representative, call (800) 257-7744, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (CT).

in mINistry with Kids: A Childhood Ministry Magazine

Let’s Worship

Special Education Today

The Deacon

Record your leadership and ministry skills training plans on page 2 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, closed-group studies provide an accountability 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 17–24 to chart age-group choices for the year. Place those choices on pages 3, 6, and 7 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner*. Save the planner each year to help determine 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 3, 6, and 7 of the *Intentional Discipleship Planner* (center pullout).

Adults	Students	Children
<i>BabyLife</i>	<i>ec: essential connection</i>	<i>More (1st–2nd grades)</i>
<i>Christian Single</i>	<i>Vital Truth</i>	<i>Adventure (3rd–4th grades)</i>
<i>Collegiate</i>	<i>Vital Skills</i>	<i>Bible Express (5th–6th grades)</i>
<i>HomeLife</i>	<i>Vital Character</i>	
<i>Journey</i>		
<i>Living with Teenagers</i>		
<i>Mature Living</i>		
<i>Open Windows</i>		
<i>ParentLife</i>		
<i>Stand Firm</i>		

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 a tool for assessing spiritual health and developing a growth plan. A free assessment tool can be downloaded at www.lifeway.com/discipleship. 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 the complete strategy to the church. Set a date to launch the study element of the strategy and begin promotion. Discipleship can be promoted and publicized in numerous ways, but none are 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 Cs when it—

- captures people’s attention;
- communicates value;
- convinces people to participate.



A key element of a discipleship strategy is 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, cards, phone calls, personal encouragement, e-mail, and Web pages. 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 study experiences it offers. A copy of the catalog is given to each church family along with encouragement to participate. Some churches use their own Web site. 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 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 you feel would make good leaders. As you begin enlisting, make an appointment to meet with each person. Avoid enlisting someone through a casual contact 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 want the person to take. Be open and honest. Provide a copy of the resource to be used and describe the leadership training to 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* (item 001116804) is an excellent five-week study that helps believers become true servant leaders. An excellent video-driven course for training leaders is *Teaching the Jesus Way: Building a Transformational Teaching Ministry* (item 001114246). Another resource, *Paul on Leadership: Servant Leadership in a Ministry of Transition* (item 001238298), provides help for understanding effective leadership qualities.



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

Training conferences for discipleship leaders are held each summer at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center in Glorieta, New Mexico, and at LifeWay 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, youth, and women. For registration information call toll free (800) 797-4222 for LifeWay Glorieta and (800) 588-7222 for LifeWay Ridgecrest.

Step 15: Launch the strategy. When trained leaders are in place, promotional emphases are completed, and resources ordered, launch this component of your disciple-making 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 that requires consistent, focused, and patient leaders.

Step 16: Regularly evaluate the plan 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—

- 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 that is implemented in months 5–16.

Month 1

- Pastor communicates to the church through a series of sermons the biblical relevance of the church's 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, 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 to the church's 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 at 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, it must keep the plan focused. A focused plan helps participants understand expectations and directions. Knowing where the plan leads brings satisfaction to the disciples who join 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 leaders with the resources needed to lead 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 promoting a DiscipleAll Showcase that will help people know how they can be involved in the church's discipleship strategy.

Month 4

- Conduct a DiscipleAll Showcase for new and growing Christians that highlights the discipleship studies being offered, introduces leaders of the studies, and communicates additional ways to grow in Christlikeness.

Months 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

	Item Number	Sessions
Growing Disciples: Abide in Christ	001316387	6
Growing Disciples: The Call to Follow Christ	001303666	6
Attending the Bride of Christ: Preparing for His Return	001274665	6
Baptist Adults curriculum*	005075170	13
Believing God: Experiencing a Fresh Explosion of Faith	001227729	10
Breaking Free: Making Liberty in Christ a Reality in Life	001116630	11
By Faith: Living in the Certainty of God’s Reality	001303669	6
Come to the Lord’s Table	001315091	4
Day by Day in God’s Kingdom: A Discipleship Journal	001116283	N/A
Discerning the Voice of God: How to Recognize When God Speaks	001315096	6
Discovering the Biblical Jesus	001227582	6
Downpour: He Will Come to Us like the Rain	001303830	12
The Exchange	005035511	6
Experiencing God as Couples	001116621	8
Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God	001117275	12
Fingerprints of God: Recognizing God’s Touch on Your Life	001266229	6
A 40-Day Experience: EKG, The Heartbeat of God	001244596	7
A 40-Day Experience: Extreme Love	001230866	7
A 40-Day Experience: Know Fear	001234652	7
A 40-Day Experience: Reality, Seven Truths from Experiencing God	001261085	7
The Frazzled Female	001238297	6
Freedom from Busyness	001299310	5
Fresh Encounter: Seeking God Together for Revival in the Land	001305293	4
God’s Story: Finding Meaning in Your Life Through Knowing God	001114549	5
Gripped by the Greatness of God	001288990	8
He Speaks to Me: Preparing to Hear from God	001269686	6
A Hunger for the Holy: Nurturing Intimacy with Christ	001227734	7
In My Father’s House: Women Relating to God as Father	001116577	6
Jesus, the One and Only	001116514	11
Life in the Spirit	001116290	12
The Love Languages of God	001227735	8
Made to Count Life Planner	001266221	10
MasterLife 2: The Disciple’s Personality	001116285	6
The Mind of Christ	001117244	12
My Identity in Christ	001116684	6
The Search for Significance Workbook: Building Your Self-Worth on God’s Truth	001244374	8
Vertically Inclined: Climbing Higher with God	001238290	7
Victoriously Frazzled: The Frazzled Female’s Guide to Restoring Her Sanity	001303868	6
The Vision of His Glory: Finding Hope Through the Revelation of Jesus Christ	001116634	7
Walking by Faith: Lessons Learned in the Dark	001220714	7
The Ways of God: How God Reveals Himself Before a Watching World	001114509	6
When God Speaks: How to Recognize God’s Voice and Respond in Obedience	001117214	7
A Woman’s Heart: God’s Dwelling Place	001117221	11

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Live in the Word: Studies that help disciples learn to study God’s Word, understand how the Bible came to be, explore biblical truth for life issues, and apply biblical truth to daily life

	Item Number	Sessions
Baptist Adults curriculum*	005075170	13
Basics for Baptists	001115995	8
Beloved Disciple: The Life and Ministry of John	001879317	11
Bible Studies by Demand for Adults, Volume 1	005081527	6
Bible Studies by Demand for Women, Volume 1	001301870	6
Bible Studies by Demand for Women, Volume 2	001303670	6
Daniel: Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy	001299013	12
Enjoy: A Thirst-Quenching Look at Philippians	001256631	6
Fear No Evil	001274635	6
Foundations of the Faith: The Doctrines Baptists Believe	001116516	6
God’s Transforming Word: How to Study Your Bible	001114641	9
A Heart like His: Seeking the Heart of God Through a Study of David	001116297	11
Heaven	001316384	6
InTransit: What Do You Do with Your Wait?	005035539	6
Jesus on Money: Charting a New Course (Book 1)	001114431	6
Jesus on Money: Making Midcourse Corrections (Book 2)	001114432	6
Jesus on Money: Crossing the Finish Line (Book 3)	001114440	6
Life Lessons from Women in the Bible	001116578	6
LifeWay In-Depth Bible Study: Ephesians: God’s Spiritual People	001307534	N/A
Living Beyond Yourself: Exploring the Fruit of the Spirit	001243968	10
Living God’s Word: Practical Lessons for Applying Scripture to Life	001116299	6
Living Your Life as a Beautiful Offering: A Bible Study Based on the Sermon on the Mount	001260511	7
Making Change	005077020	7
The Man I Want to Be	001304161	6
MasterLife 1: The Disciple’s Cross	001116284	6
Men’s Fraternity: The Quest for Authentic Manhood	001260520	24
The Patriarchs: Encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob	001271837	11
The Purity Principle: God’s Safeguards for Life’s Dangerous Trails	001260510	4 or 5
Step by Step Through the New Testament	001117273	13
Step by Step Through the Old Testament	001116311	13
To Live Is Christ: The Life and Ministry of Paul	001116528	11
The Tough Sayings of Jesus	005035516	4
The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving	001274393	4
We Believe: Living in the Light of God’s Truth	001234650	8
Whispers of Hope	001116688	N/A

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

Growing Disciples: Pray in Faith (available July 2007)	005035525	6
Baptist Adults curriculum*	005075170	13
By Faith: Living in the Certainty of God’s Reality	001303669	6
Disciple’s Prayer Life: Walking in Fellowship with God	001116569	13
A House of Prayer: Prayer Ministries in Your Church	001116723	N/A
The Incredible Power of Kingdom Authority: Achieving Victory Through Surrender	001206333	7
The Life-Changing Power of Prayer	001114610	6
Living Free: Learning to Pray God’s Word	001114609	6
Lord, Teach Me to Pray	005035558	5
MasterLife 3: The Disciple’s Victory	001116286	6
The Power of a Praying Woman	001304417	10
The Prayer of Jesus: Living the Lord’s Prayer	001157318	6
Putting on the Armor: Equipped and Deployed for Spiritual Warfare	001316390	8
Spiritual Warfare: Biblical Truth for Victory	001114630	8

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Fellowship with Believers: Studies that help disciples understand the nature of the church as the body of Christ, build effective relationships, and understand themselves and others

	Item Number	Sessions
Baptist Adults curriculum*	005075170	13
The BodyLife Journey: Guiding Believers into Ministry	001114624	N/A
Conversation Peace: The Power of Transformed Speech	001114551	7
Creative Correction	001288168	7
Effective Parenting in a Defective World	001266217	9
Experiencing God as Couples	001116621	8
Experiencing God in Your Workplace: The Kingdom Agenda	001116525	7
Extraordinary Marriage: God’s Plan for Your Journey	001256628	7
The Family’s Heart: 10 Actions That Will Make Your Family and Church Stronger	001316389	10
The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate	001117236	2
The Five Love Languages of Children	001052539	6
The Five Love Languages of Singles	001274720	6
The Five Love Languages of Teenagers	001209397	6
For Women Only: The Bible Study	001303673	7
Free to Forgive	001114263	6
The Love Languages of God	001227735	8
Loving Well	001310905	4
Making Love Last Forever	001117205	12
Making Peace with Your Past	001117295	12
MasterLife 4: The Disciple’s Mission	001116287	6
Men Are like Waffles; Women Are like Spaghetti	005035493	7
Men’s Fraternity: The Great Adventure	001260515	20
Men’s Fraternity: The Quest for Authentic Manhood	001260520	24
Men’s Fraternity: Winning at Work and Home	001274718	16
Mom to Mom: Heart Talk on What Really Matters	001301874	12
Mom to Mom: Growing Together	005035495	16
Moving Beyond Your Past	001117270	13
Parenting by Grace: Discipline and Spiritual Growth	001117272	10
Raising a Modern-Day Knight	001304162	6
Redefining Church Membership	001114328	N/A
Survival Kit: Five Keys to Effective Spiritual Growth	001117191	6
Taking the Next Step: A Guide for New Church Members	001117162	4 or 5
The Virtuous Woman: Shattering the Superwoman Myth	001114550	6
Women Making a Difference in Marriage: Building Love, Joy, and Contentment	001116717	8
Your Church Experiencing God Together	001203266	9
Your Life and Your Church	001114629	7

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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*	005075170	13
Deacons: Growing in Character and Commitment	001114617	6
DecisionTime: Commitment Counseling	001116671	6
Drawing Men to God: Men’s Ministry Manual	001116617	N/A
Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills	001116124	N/A
Every Christian a Minister: Finding Joy and Fulfillment in Serving God	001116719	4
Faithful and True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World (two 6-session studies)	001117213	12
Free to Forgive	001114263	6
Heart Friends: Beginning and Maintaining a Small Accountability Group	001269683	4



	Item Number	Sessions
How to Minister to Families in Your Church	001114628	N/A
Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders	001116804	6
Making Peace with Your Past	001117295	12
MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission	001116287	6
Moving Beyond Your Past	001117270	12
Paul on Leadership: Servant Leadership in a Ministry of Transition	001238298	6
Recovering from the Losses of Life (6 sessions plus 3 optional)	001117248	9
The Search for Significance Workbook: Building Your Self-Worth on God's Truth	001244374	8
Spiritual Gifts: A Practical Guide to How God Works Through You	001220730	6
Strength for the Journey: A Biblical Perspective on Discouragement and Depression	001116624	9
Success to Significance	001303667	6
Teaching the Jesus Way: Building a Transformational Teaching Ministry	001114246	N/A
Transformed Lives: Taking Women's Ministry to the Next Level	001116498	N/A
Unleashing the Power of Deacon-Led Ministry Teams	001244313	N/A
Woman to Woman Mentoring: How to Start, Grow, and Maintain a Mentoring Ministry (6 months)	001114643	N/A
Women Reaching Women: Beginning and Building a Growing Women's Enrichment Ministry	001293365	N/A

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	001244609	6
Baptist Adults curriculum*	005075170	13
Basic Training for Mission Teams	001313418	7
Evangelism Through the Sunday School: A Journey of FAITH	001116570	N/A
The Ever-Loving Truth	001238296	8
Experiencing God in Your Workplace: The Kingdom Agenda	001116525	7
A 40-Day Experience: The Choice, Life's Most Important Decision	001274534	7
The Grace and Truth Paradox	001256630	4
How Now Shall We Live? (8 sessions plus 4 optional)	001116506	12
Learning to Share My Faith	001117238	6
Living Your Christian Values	001116004	7
Made to Count Life Planner	001266221	10
The Man God Uses: Moved from the Ordinary to the Extraordinary	001116501	7
MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission	001116287	6
Men's Fraternity: The Great Adventure	001260515	20
On Mission with God: Living God's Purpose for His Glory	001114351	8
Outreach Teams That Win: G.R.O.W. Kit	001116557	N/A
Share Jesus Without Fear	001116470	4
When Worldviews Collide	001274629	8
To the Ends of the Earth: Churches Fulfilling the Great Commission	001307533	9
Your Church Experiencing God Together	001203266	9

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Student Discipleship Studies

Introduce Students to a Discipleship Process

	Item Number	Sessions
Basic Student Discipleship: Essential Tools for Spiritual Growth	001180606	

Understand the Cost of Discipleship/Personal Obedience

MasterLife, Student Edition	001052530	12
My Identity in Christ, Student Edition	001051020	7
Souled Out: Allowing Christ to Live Through You	001244959	6
Vital Truth: Lordship: Why Can't I Just Do What I Feel like Doing?	001050980	4
Vital Character: Holiness	001274834	4
When God Speaks, Youth Edition	001052495	6

Build Accountable Relationships

Designed by God: Answers to Questions About Homosexuality	001249440	6
One Heart	001052561	5
True Love Waits: A Student's Guide to the Five Love Languages	001227727	5
Vital Character: Encouragement	001274839	4
Vital Skills: How to Have Accountable Relationships	001209402	4
Vital Truth: Fellowship: How Can I Make Friends That Last?	001050951	4

Set Godly Priorities

Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Youth Edition	001274723	9
Setting You Free to Make Right Choices	001054270	8
Vital Skills: How to Have a Balanced Life	001222597	4

Dig into God's Word

David: Seeking God's Heart	001050978	6
John: The Beloved Disciple, Student Edition	001201095	6
A Student's Guide to Studying the Bible	001050931	6
Vital Skills: How to Study the Bible	001222598	4
Vital Truth: Scripture: Where Do I Find the Answers?	001050950	4

Develop Deeper Prayer Lives

An Awesome Way to Pray, Student Edition	001052547	
Circle Your World with Prayer	001052560	
Vital Skills: How to Pray Using Scripture	001244815	4
Vital Truth: Prayer: How Do I Know God Is Listening?	001051018	4



Minister to/Evangelize Others

	Item Number	Sessions
Share Jesus Without Fear: Students Reaching Students	001052535	5
The Student God Uses: Transformed for His Purpose	001052564	6
Vital Skills: How to Be a Campus Missionary	001244818	4
Vital Skills: How to Do Servant Evangelism	001222602	4
Vital Truth: Witnessing (4 sessions plus bonus)	001050956	5
Vital Truth: Worldwide Mission (4 sessions plus bonus)	001050985	5

Follow the Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Standing Tall When Tempted	001050932	6
Vital Character: Self-Control (4 sessions plus bonus)	001274841	5
Vital Truth: The Holy Spirit (4 sessions plus bonus)	001050981	5
Vital Truth: Spiritual Warfare (4 sessions plus bonus)	001050977	5

Demonstrate Godly Character

How Now Shall We Live? Student Edition	001050930	8
The Mind of Christ, Youth Edition	001052444	12
The Search, Revised	001244829	8
Vital Character: Courage	001274835	4



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 his or her life. Consider planning studies from the following resources to help accomplish your discipleship objective for children.

Every LifeWay Kids resource is based on Level of Biblical Learning, a ministry tool that provides milestones for guiding boys and girls to grow spiritually. Download this free ministry tool at www.lifeway.com/kids.

Learn and Love God’s Word

	Item Number
Family Bible Study for Preschoolers and Children*	
Bible Foundations for Preschoolers*	
G-Force: Experience God Full Blast+	
Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teenager+	
Preschool TeamKID+	
Children’s TeamKID+	
Club VBS+	
When I Go to Church	001052463
January Bible Study (available free online at www.lifeway.com)	
E-Anytime, Anywhere (available online at www.lifeway.com)	
Bible Skills, Drills, & Thrills+	
Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Preteen Edition+	
I’m a Christian Now (older child)	001209905
I’m a Christian Now (younger child)	001209906
FUNDamentals: Jesus, the One and Only, Parts 1 & 2+	
FUNDamentals: Beloved Disciple+	
FUNDamentals: Prime Time with God	001116691
FUNDamentals: Get the Picture—A Study of the Book of 1 Corinthians+	
FUNDamentals: Live It Out! A Study of the Book of James+	
FUNDamentals: From Time to Time—Creation to Judges+	
FUNDamentals: From Time to Time—The Life of Jesus+	
FUNDamentals: From Time to Time—Kings to Prophets+	
FUNDamentals: From Time to Time—The New Testament Church+	
FUNDamentals: The Character Chronicles+	

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Live Godly Lives and Grow as Christians

Item Number

Bible Foundations for Preschoolers*	
Children's TeamKID+	
Club VBS+	
Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teenager+	
Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Preteen Edition+	
Family Bible Study for Preschoolers and Children*	
FUNDamentals: The Character Chronicles+	
FUNDamentals: Get the Picture: A Study of the Book of 1 Corinthians+	
FUNDamentals: Live It Out! A Study of the Book of James+	
FUNDamentals: Prime Time with God	001116691
FUNDamentals: When I Get Mad: Helping Children Control Anger in a Godly Way	001114321
G-Force: Experience God Full Blast+	
I'm a Christian Now (older child)	001209905
I'm a Christian Now (younger child)	001209906
My Good New Journal: A Journal for Kids Who Are New Christians	001054237
Preschool TeamKID+	
Stuff: Using All God Has Given Me+	
Truth Works+	

Prepare to Lead in the Next Generation

FUNDamentals: Prime Time with God	001116691
FUNDamentals: Talent Search+	
FUNDamentals: When I Get Mad: Helping Children Control Anger in a Godly Way	001114321
I'm a Christian Now (older child)	001209905
I'm a Christian Now (younger child)	001209906
Stuff: Using All God Has Given Me+	

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