

Discipleship Implementation Phases



**A Helpful Resource to Implementing
Discipleship in Your Church**

© Making Disciples Who Are...

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This document is designed to assist Pastors and Church Leaders to implement the discipleship curriculum Making Disciples Who Are... in your church. The Making Disciples Who Are... curriculum is not intended to be yet another program for your church, but more of a lifestyle, applicable to everyone in your church. Because the Making Disciples Who Are... curriculum was designed to be used primarily in a One-to-One context, it can be done informally, inexpensively, and with minimal staffing resources.

Most church ministries revolve around a weekly worship service, group Bible studies, and small group activities. As a result, one of the most common questions we get is: “Why One-to-One?”

For this reason, this resource starts by addressing that question, then dives into the specific steps that other churches have found valuable to implementing Making Disciples Who Are... in their body. As such, this resource is intended to contain lessons learned and best practices to implementing Making Disciples Who Are....

Note that Making Disciples Who Are... has trained Discipleship Coaches ready to help you at any point in this process. Discipleship Coaches are familiar with 1) The process of discipleship, 2) The Making Disciples Who Are... curriculum, and 3) The steps to implementing discipleship in churches. They have years of experience that you will no doubt find helpful. Simply drop a note at the website:

MakingDisciplesWhoAre.info



Why One-to-One?

Transparency & Vulnerability

Two believers have the highest level of trust in each other. Even adding a third person can diminish the level of honesty and sincerity, especially when talking about intensely personal subjects. A developing personal relationship with God is intensely personal, and the Holy Spirit's working in the believer's heart will likely bring forth both joy and conviction of sin. As such trust is crucial in discipleship and One-to-One provides the highest level of trust.



Accountability

For life transformation to occur, the disciplee must be committed to completing the assignments. For example just learning why and how to have Times With God, has in itself only minimal value. The real value is in actually having consistent Times With God. Classes and small groups



cover a subject and then go on, whether the assignment was completed or not. One-to-One on the other hand allows people the option of pausing until the assignment is completed and then going on without holding up a group of people.

Why One-to-One?

Ease of Implementation

Starting a Making Disciples Who Are... discipleship ministry requires very little organizing and managing. There are no groups to form or leaders to recruit and train. Instead, the next generation of Disciplers are trained as they are being discipled providing an ever-increasing number of trained Disciplers.



Meeting Flexibility

Because only two people participate in each meeting, this provides an extremely high level of flexibility. If the two want to switch to another day of the week or change the start time, it can be easily done. One-to-One also provides a high degree of flexibility as to when they start the curriculum, as not everyone is ready to start right away. That's OK.



Because only two people participate in each meeting, they can start at any time.

Phases to Implementing

Phase 1 – Take It For A Test Drive

If you are like many pastors, you would feel more comfortable checking the curriculum out before introducing it to your church. If you would like to do this, first read the Discipleship Guide.

The Discipleship Guide is a short read and will give you a good overview of what the curriculum is about and how to go about taking another person through it. It also provides some helpful suggestions about approaching the person you would like to take through the curriculum.



Phases to Implementing

A recommendation commonly made is that you choose the person you see leading this in the long term and go through the curriculum with them. This accomplishes several things:

- It gives you both familiarity with what the members of your church will be experiencing.
- It builds a stronger bond between you and your future discipleship leader.
- As the two of you are going through the curriculum together, it gives you many opportunities to discuss your plans going forward. In a sense the two of you are developing the plans together.

The Discipleship Guide, and all the resources, are available from the “Ordering” page of the Making Disciples Who Are... website.

To order, scan here:

Or visit <https://makingdiscipleswhoare.info/ordering>



After going through the curriculum yourself, you will be well equipped for the next phase of implementation.

Phases to Implementing

Phase 2 – Church Leaders

Implementing Making Disciples Who Are... in churches has taught the importance of involving the church leadership (staff and lay leaders) first. Once the leadership is engaged in discipleship, the rest of the church is then also welcomed to participate in discipleship. Experience has shown that if you initially introduce discipleship to the entire congregation, the leadership tends to feel they don't need discipleship because they're already in leadership. They tend to feel that discipleship is for everyone else, and they give themselves a pass.



Then it doesn't take long for those in the congregation who did sign up, to realize that the leadership is not doing it. Causing them to question their own involvement.

It is important to note that it is not your responsibility to disciple everyone in leadership in your church. Instead it is your responsibility to be sure everyone in your leadership is being discipled or at least has the



opportunity. As such you should be sure that everyone is paired with another person for discipleship.

This provides an opportunity for you the pastor—you get to choose first with whom you will meet. We generally recommend that this not be the neediest leader in your church. Instead choose someone you respect, would like to spend more time with and grow with.

Phases to Implementing

Obviously, men should only be paired with men and women should only be paired with women. Also, we highly recommend not pairing a husband and wife. Experience has shown that instead of choosing a purposeful time to get together for discipleship, couples tend to blend it into life's activities, which can also distract them from meeting. One of the nice things about a close relationship outside of marriage is the freedom to talk about personal struggles, which may be difficult to talk about with a spouse.

On the Making Disciples Who Are... website, there is a free flyer, in pdf format, which can be downloaded and printed. Many find this helpful to explain the approach to your leadership. This flyer can be found at:

MakingDisciplesWhoAre.info



There are several approaches to pairing people. Here are some of the approaches other churches have taken:

1. Each of the elders discipled a non-elder, except for a couple of elders who didn't feel ready to do that and so they were paired with each other.
2. The pastor invited a Discipleship Coach to speak at an elder board meeting. The pastor and elders then decided how they would pair up with each other and they went through in those pairings.

Phases to Implementing

3. The pastor chose the pairings of elders and staff. He did this by making a list of the most mature leader to the least mature leader. Then assuming the least mature would need the most assistance, he paired the least mature leader with the most mature leader. Then second least mature with second most mature, etc. He then informed them, and the pairs went through together.
4. Some of the board members were interested but several didn't want to do it. So, the pastor focused on those who were willing to be discipled, paired them with each other, and they went through discipleship together. Those who were not willing to go through discipleship were given some time to see the benefits and change their minds. If they didn't, they were slowly eased out of leadership.
5. The pastor wanted to check it out first, so he picked one person from his staff (or could be from the board) and went through the curriculum with that person.
6. The pastor wanted to experience it first-hand. So, he spent a year going through all the lessons one week at a time with a Discipleship Coach. He is now in the process of planting a new church based upon discipleship.
7. The pastor wanted to experience it first-hand, so he started going through all the lessons with a Discipleship Coach. But without completing (after about 12 lessons) he saw the benefit and started rolling it out to his entire leadership.

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8. The pastor asked the Discipleship Coach for a detailed walk-through of the curriculum, which took about an hour. He then started rolling it out to his leadership.

Whatever method you use from the above, or a plan of your own, the principle is the same; start by pairing off your church leadership.

Once you have the pairings determined you will want to provide them with the material. All of the material can be ordered from the “Ordering” page of the Making Disciples Who Are... website:

MakingDisciplesWhoAre.Info/Ordering



It is recommended that each participant initially receive:

- The Discipleship Guide – This orients the students to the curriculum and provides some helpful guidance
- Book 1 of the Making Disciples Who Are... curriculum

Going through the curriculum is extremely easy for the first time discipler because the curriculum teaches itself.



Phases to Implementing

Lastly, you need to determine what follow-up needs to look like. You can do this yourself or select someone who is particularly enthusiastic about discipleship. Whoever does it, they should make it a point to follow up with the pairs occasionally to be sure they are on track and to address any issues should they arise. This is often done simply via email.



Phases to Implementing

Phase 3 – Your Congregation

Once your leadership is on board, you will want to turn your attention to the rest of the people in your church. In most churches this means making it available to everyone else in the church, but in larger churches this can sometimes mean doing another leadership group such as deacons and other lay leaders. Use your judgement here.

Chances are you have already started preparing your people for discipleship through sermons and such. If you haven't, you should start now purposely including an emphasis on discipleship in your messages, pointing out the importance of discipleship.



As you are rolling discipleship out, consider using the testimonies of your leaders who have been through or are going through Making Disciples Who Are.... Continue making announcements and presenting testimonies from the leaders as well as a sermon emphasis.

People will be ready for discipleship at different rates and that's OK. As people reach the place where they are ready, pair them with others. Again, pair men only with men and women only with women, and do not pair spouses.

Phases to Implementing

As people get into God's Word you will begin to hear stories of true-life transformation, from the inside out. You will want to capture these and consider sharing them in a service, or videos, or both. It won't be long before the enthusiasm builds and those who resisted earlier will want to be involved. Just repeat the process of getting them paired with someone else to get them started.

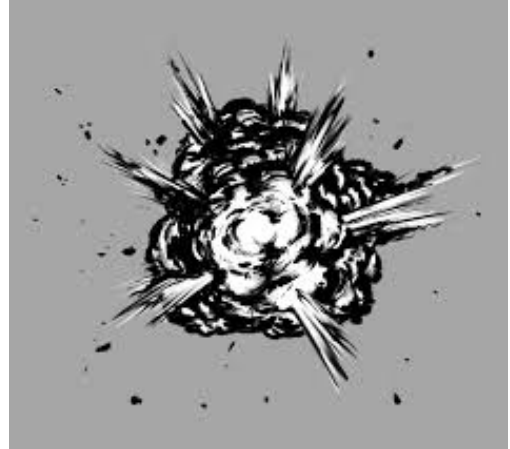


After you have had discipleship going for a while you will want to grow it into a multifaceted ministry involving sermons, vision setting, and other aspects. However, remember that the Making Disciples Who Are... curriculum is not intended to be yet another program for your church, but more of a lifestyle, applicable to everyone in your church.

Phases to Implementing

Phase 4 – Other Activities

As your church becomes more and more solidly involved in discipleship, eventually you will start to develop more disciplers that you can use. This may seem like an impossible scenario right now, but if you stay on track it will occur.



This phase then focuses on utilizing your disciplers in ways other than what you have been. Your disciplers have had hundreds of personal daily Times With God, had Extended Times With God, done hours of Bible study, memorized dozens of verses and are now teaching others to do the same.

As you are probably already aware Lesson 34 of the Making Disciples Who Are... curriculum recommends forming a Team Of Co-Laborers. This is a team of disciplers who meet for mutual encouragement, accountability, and ideas. If you haven't already, you should take



personal charge of this meeting. This group of disciplers will be one of your most powerful resources of ministry in your church.

Phases to Implementing

Three areas of ministry in which you could consider steering your Team Of Co-Laborers into are:

1. Youth Ministry – this is the next generation of your church, and many young people leave the faith shortly after graduating from High School. This is a group of young believers almost screaming to be discipled. Focus your team here.



2. Non-Believers – There is much training available to help people do this. But the toughest part, building an interest in people to reach out to the lost has already been done as they were being discipled. Disciplers are uniquely trained and equipped to build the close relationship with Non-Believers that is sorely needed, answering their questions, and loving them to the Lord.



3. New Believers - After a person comes to Christ, they are far too often just given a Bible and told to tie into the church. Instead your disciplers can meet with them One-to-One and patiently get them started down a path that will grow them into growing disciples and eventually disciplers themselves.

Phases to Implementing

Phase 5 – Church Outreach

This phase is about outreach to other churches and mission fields. There are quite a few ways to approach this, so be creative. But one exceptionally good way is to encourage your more experienced disciplers to become discipleship coaches; there is more information about this on the Making Disciples Who Are... website. Another excellent way is for you to personally encourage missionaries and other pastors toward discipleship, steering them to the website and Discipleship Coaches.



When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Matthew 9:36-38

Your Church Will Never Be The Same

As people grow more solid in their relationship to Christ, they will fall more in love with their Savior. Then as John 14:21 says, their love for their Savior is demonstrated by their commitment to obedience of our Lord. This shows up in many areas, including commitment to serving, giving, unity in the body, and discipling others.

So, are you ready to lead your church on this journey? Are you ready to help them discover what it really means to have a close personal relationship with God and be willing to obey him in anything?

If so, there is no better time to get started than right now.

Your church will never be the same!

For More Information

If you would like more information, go to:

MakingDisciplesWhoAre.info

There you will find a wealth of information to help you, and if you would like, use that page to send us a message and we will have one of our Discipleship Coaches contact you to answer any questions you may have.

