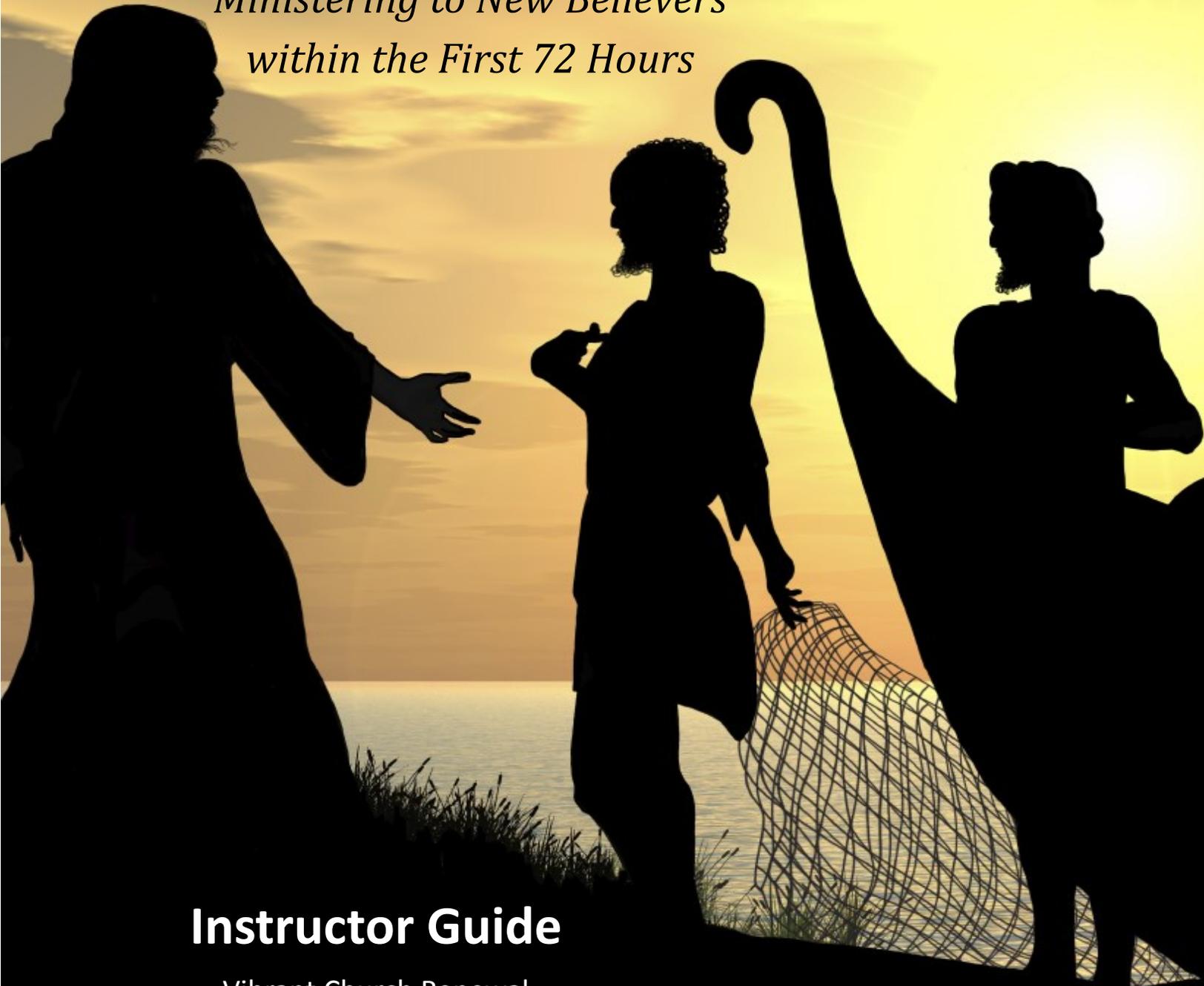


Developing Devoted Disciples

*Ministering to New Believers
within the First 72 Hours*

Instructor Guide

Vibrant Church Renewal
Evangelism Ministries USA/Canada Region
Church of the Nazarene



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PREPARATION CHECKLIST

The following information will help you prepare to instruct this module.

- Review the material and make notes of specific areas for special emphasis.
- Check to ensure the following materials are available:
 - ◆ PowerPoint presentations
 - ◆ Participant handout (copy as needed)
- Gather the following materials:
 - ◆ Pens and/or pencils
 - ◆ Other material you want to use
- Check the classroom for:
 - ◆ Projector
 - ◆ Sufficient number of tables and chairs for the participants
- Arrange the room so each team sits around an individual table and you have ample room to move among the teams.

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DEVELOPING DEVOTED DISCIPLES

MINISTERING TO NEW BELIEVERS WITHIN THE FIRST 72 HOURS

The table below identifies each module section, the time allotted for each section, and a brief description of the section's objective. When you are familiar with this module, you may want to teach from this page rather than the detailed information.

MODULE AT A GLANCE

Section	Time	Page	Brief Description
I. Introduction	5 Minutes	5	Introduce module, purpose, and objectives.
II. Bible Study	10 Minutes	5	Facilitator will provide the biblical basis for this module.
III. Lecture	25 Minutes	7	Facilitator presents an overview of the disciple-making process and the feelings of new believers. Participants will be informed on how to be relational, define needs, and encourage the new believer.
IV. Small Group Exercise	25 Minutes	10	Participants use the case studies provided to diagnose how to build relationships with and define the needs of the individuals in the case studies.
V. Discussion	10 Minutes	13	Participants share thoughts about the information presented and insights about how the information will assist in their leadership.
VI. Action Planning	10 Minutes	13	Participants can develop a ministry/action plan for ministry to new converts.
VII. Wrap-Up	5 Minutes	13	Close the module with final comments regarding the topic.
TOTAL	90 Minutes		

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I. MODULE INTRODUCTION

(5 Minutes)

Distribute participant material. Let the participants know the material is theirs to keep and encourage them to take notes. The participant material includes:

- Purpose
- Objectives
- “Fill in the blanks” for the lecture
- Application exercise

The purpose for this module is to **teach the discipler how to address the needs of a new believer within the first 72 hours after his or her decision for Christ.**

The objectives for this module are to:

- **Articulate the biblical basis for follow-up after conversion as seen in John 9**
- **Identify the possible concerns and needs of the new believer**
- **Establish a framework for discipling which is relational instead of task-oriented**
- **Move beyond the problems of discipling to developing relationships**

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II. BIBLE STUDY

(10 minutes)

(The **UNDERLINED** text represents the blanks in the participant booklet.)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: John 9:35, “Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

Read John 9:1-39

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Ask: What struggles will the recently healed man face?

Allow two to three minutes for answers; then say the following:

The healed man encountered completely different circumstances from what he experienced before he met Jesus. His whole world had changed. Everything was new to him. Though the things around him did not change, he did. As a blind man, he was an outcast because he was unable to provide productive labor. He was a beggar by trade. Now that he could see, he would be no different from his family and neighbors. Instead of rejoicing with him, the people closest to him became hostile.

Jesus healed the blind man and his neighbors became skeptical. They did not recognize their blind neighbor. They took him before the Pharisees, who questioned him. The seeing man spoke the truth as he knew it. He gave testimony.

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But he was caught in the middle of a controversy between religious people who rejected Jesus and the reality of his healing.

The healed man made an interesting statement (verse 27), “You do not want to be his disciples too, do you?” The religious men reacted in anger, rebuking the healed man. In telling the story of what had happened to him, he was rejected by the community, by his fearful parents and was thrown out of the synagogue. He was alone.

Ask: What does this scripture say to us about Jesus?

What does Jesus do?

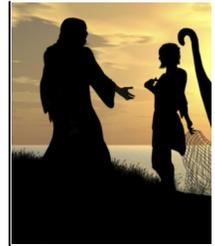
Allow some time for responses and then say:

- Jesus went looking for the blind man.
- Jesus made certain the healed man discovered new life.
- Jesus revealed who he was to the formerly blind man.
- Jesus intentionally found the man and addressed his questions.
- Jesus gave purpose to the healed man; that purpose was to worship Christ.

The Pharisees put the healed man out of the temple. The healed man was in the depth of confusion about what happened to him. He did not understand why the people were reacting to him. He did not know how to deal with this conflict. This was a completely new experience for him.

The man healed of his blindness was not able to fully understand what happened.

The man knew something happened, but he could not understand the significance of it without further explanation. He was left alone with his questions. After Christ sought him out, the healed man declared his belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. That moment began the lifetime experience of worship for the healed man.



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III. LECTURE (25 minutes)

Overview of Disciple Making Process:

Christians who minister to new believers must understand the significance of what they are doing and how their involvement contributes to the development of new believers. Relationships are key in contributing to new believers' lives.

Jesus models relationship building. New believers will give Christians permission to be a part of their lives.

Through our relationships, we can move toward incorporating new believers into the body of Christ. We are introducing the convert to a lifetime of learning and discipleship. Disciplers are not attempting to put a great burden on new believers, but are attempting to help get them started.

The first 72 hours of new believers' lives will shape the direction of their future.

Jesus invites people into relationship with him. Our role is to help new believers see they have been invited into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.

The Feelings of New Believers

New believers experience a variety of **EMOTIONS**. Some are positive, some are negative. Some are caused by internal conflicts and assumptions. Some emotions are triggered by **EXTERNAL** pressures.

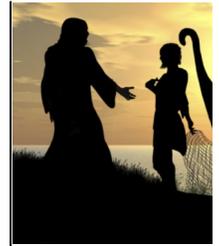
Excitement of Life

New believers will be excited about what has happened to them. This excitement may be observed in many ways (wanting to talk about the love of Jesus, how amazing God is, how wonderfully different they feel). We should encourage the joy of new discoveries.

Fears, Concerns and Second Thoughts.

At the same time, negative thoughts and uncertainties may tear at new believers. Some of their questions may include:

- "What do I do?"
- "Am I really forgiven?"
- "Do I have to right the wrongs I committed?"
- "What about my smoking and/or drinking?"



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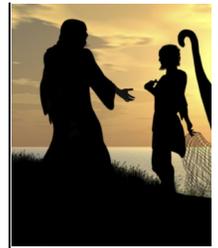
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Caught Between Two Worlds

The blind man found himself caught between what had happened to him and what the community was willing to accept. Like the blind man, new believers may have similar feelings of being caught between two worlds.

How Do We Address the Feelings of New Believers?

- Explain this tension is to be expected when there is change.
- Coach them to keep their focus on Christ.
- Direct them to look to other Christians for support.

Building Relationships

Friendship is the starting point for Christian growth and assisting new believers with their emotions. We have a responsibility to **INITIATE** new relationships. For some Christians, making contacts may be new territory and scary. Remember, Jesus intentionally sought the healed man. We have an opportunity to be like Christ.

- The first contact should be a positive memory.
- Make your first contact in person or by phone.
- Remember who you represent. Show an appropriate level of care and concern.
- Schedule a time to get together.
- Find a time and location where conversation can progress without significant interruption.
- Respecting a person's time is extremely important.

Conversation starters (*see asterisk below for ideas*) are a way to begin the relationship and determine the best methods for continuing the conversation.

Take time to get to know something about the person and his/her background and current situation.

Open-ended questions* are essential to good conversation. Here are some sample questions:

- Tell me about your job. What do you like about it?
What in your job is satisfying?
- What does the perfect day off look like for you?
- What was your family like growing up?
- What is your life motto?

Be open to acknowledge common **INTERESTS**.

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Defining Needs

Learning about the needs of new believers may come naturally from initial conversations, but disciples must be intentional about expressing concern for new believers and expressing a **DESIRE** to help them. A desire to help models the love and **CONCERN** of Christ. This also draws them to the body of Christ. Look for statements which indicate that new believers realize a change in their actions, **MOTIVATION** or perspective. It may be necessary to ask questions such as: “In the last few days what has been the most significant moment in your spiritual life?” How has that moment changed your perspective?”

In assessing their spiritual needs, we cannot neglect other physical and **EMOTIONAL** needs. Some new believers will be in **UNDESIRABLE** and harmful circumstances. We should determine what other types of assistance they may need.

Encouragement and Affirmation

The new believers need **ASSURANCE** that many of the feelings, fears and concerns they may experience are natural.

An important element of assuring new believers is to encourage the **UNDERSTANDING** they are not alone. They have become part of the family of God.

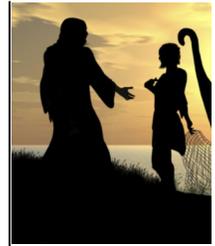
Remind them they can rely on the resources available to them. Help them see how important the following things are:

- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Fellowship with other believers
- Sunday School/Small Group
- Worship

Encourage Testifying

Provide an opportunity for people to share. Testifying to God’s work in their lives accomplishes four things:

1. Testifying solidifies new believers’ decisions to follow Christ. “To teach is to learn twice.”
2. Testifying increases the likelihood people will follow through on what they say (accountability).
3. Sharing encourages the church to celebrate new life in Christ.
4. Confessing God’s saving grace provides encouragement for others to accept Christ.



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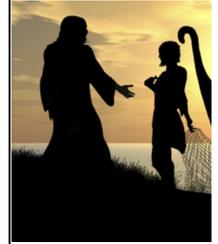
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In rare cases, new Christians may not be interested in discipleship or building friendships with other believers. In this situation, we should attempt to build trust, to befriend and to pray for them.

1. In preparation for the small group activity, tell participants what happens next. They will form groups of four to five people and read the case studies together. Participants will have five minutes to do the reading. (Case Studies: Pages 11-13 of this guide)
2. After about five minutes, instruct the groups to:
 - Discuss ways to build friendships with new believers.
 - Define the needs of the characters in the case studies.
 - Describe ways to affirm and encourage new believers.
3. Give the groups about 10 minutes to discuss and then instruct the groups to:
 - Break your small group into pairs. Make sure each pair in the groups are assigned different cases.
 - Have one person in the pair assume a character from the case.
 - The other person will take the role of developing the disciple and will engage in conversation with the case character. The objective of the discipler (in the case study) is to define the needs of the case character and identify ways to meet the identified needs. The participant will want to relate to the character, enabling the character to share openly. Now is the time for participants to put their thoughts and plans into action by defining and meeting the needs of the case study character.
4. After about ten minutes, bring the pairs back into the small groups.

In groups, discussion will focus on the identified needs in the cases which were studied.

Participants will have about five minutes to discuss.

IV. SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

(25 minutes)

Three case studies are available below for your small groups. Upon reading the case studies, determine the needs of Judy, Mark, and Keith. Answer the question: how can we best help these new converts?

JUDY

Judy is a divorced single in her early 30s. She grew up in a family that had a Pentecostal church background. When Judy was a young child, her family left the church with some deep wounds and never attended again. Judy has spent much of her life searching for

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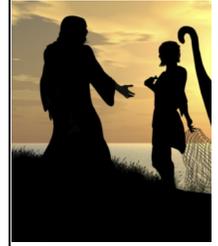
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spiritual truth and been disappointed with her lack of certainty regarding spiritual things.

Judy's sister invited her to attend church. Judy experienced heartfelt worship, genuine hospitality, and messages she could apply to her life. After attending church for six months Judy participated in a beginners' Bible study. After the second study, the small group leader shared the gospel message with Judy and invited her to begin a relationship with Christ. Judy responded positively and asked Jesus to become the leader of her life.

Judy experiences great joy and excitement as a result of her decision. She feels as if she found what she had always been seeking. Judy has many questions which concern her. "What is she supposed to do now?" "Is she really forgiven?" "Does she have to make amends for the wrongs she has done?" Many of her questions about the next steps had to do with the baggage she carried for most of her life regarding the negative church experience her family had when Judy was a young child.

Judy is also living with a man to whom she is not married. She feels as if she is "in love" with him. They recently became engaged. Judy's fiancé does not attend church with her and she isn't sure he approves of her recent life changes.

How should the church respond to Judy's spiritual needs as a new believer? What about her relationship with her fiancé?

MARK

Mark grew up in the Catholic Church until his parents got divorced. Mark never attended church again after his parents' divorce. Mark married young. He and his wife began a family early in their marriage. They struggled in their marriage relationship. They were often separated and many times considered divorce. Mark's search for God began when his wife was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer.

Mark's sister and brother-in-law recently "found" God and began to share with Mark what happened in their lives. Mark visited his sister's church and began meeting with the pastor shortly thereafter. Mark struggled with his wife's condition and wondered where God was and what role God plays in life and death. Mark and his wife accepted Christ as their Savior.

Mark testified he felt peace as a result of his decision. Mark was still facing a great deal of pain and confusion. "Could God heal his wife?" "Would God heal her?" "What would life be like without his wife and with the sole responsibility for his three small children?" Mark didn't know anyone in the church except for his sister's family and the pastor.

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Mark is now a widower in his late 20s with three small children. What does Mark "need?" How does the church respond to a new believer who is asking, "Where is God in all of this pain and suffering?"

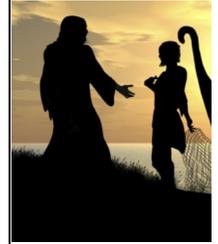
KEITH

Keith is in his 40s. He is married for the second time and has two young children and two grown children from his previous marriage. Keith grew up in the church as a child. Keith's pastor portrayed God as an angry God, always displeased with our sinful lives. Keith had a very negative image of God as a result. He left church as soon as he left home. Keith has led a hard life. He developed an addiction to alcohol and had many destructive relationships. His first marriage ended badly. Keith desires to be a better person, but never seems to live a consistent life. He did give up drinking, but life didn't seem to get any better. He and his second wife, Mary, were having difficulty in their marriage. Mary, a Christian, started going to a new church after having been inconsistent in her church attendance for many years. She liked her new church and wanted to get her two young sons to go. They argued they wouldn't go unless Dad went. Keith started going to church because of his wife's desire for their sons to attend. Keith was skeptical about church as a result of his childhood experience.

Keith's attitude towards church and God began to change. This church is friendly and the God this pastor talks about doesn't hate people; he loves them. Keith begins to feel the call of God on his life. After a message one Sunday, he was convinced he needed to give his life to Christ and make things right.

Keith experienced relief. He became very emotional when he made a decision and couldn't identify what his emotions were and where they were coming from. Keith had remained aloof when he attended church. He sat in the back most every Sunday and didn't enter into conversation beyond the surface level. Immediately after his decision, he felt a need to become deeper friends with people in the church, but expressed a nervous concern towards opening up his life with others. He felt as if he needed support to live his life as a Christian.

Even after Keith made a commitment to Christ, his marriage was still on the rocks. How could people in the church build bridges to create a relationship of encouragement in Keith's life?



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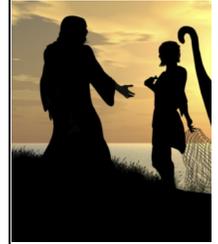
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V. DISCUSSION

(10 minutes)

Discuss the following questions.

1. What questions could we ask to help a new believer open up?
2. If we encounter resistance from a new Christian, what might we do?
3. What did you learn from this exercise?
4. What new ideas or methods might help you in your particular ministry situation?
5. How can we help new believers feel safe?
6. How can we build a trusting relationship with new converts?
7. How would we go about addressing addiction?

VI. ACTION PLANNING

(10 minutes)

What new methods will you use as you think about new converts who attend your church?

Write a plan for ministry to new converts discussing how, who, when and expected results of the encounter.

VII. MODULE WRAP-UP

(5 minutes)

This section provides an opportunity to close the module.

Use this time to address any final thoughts you have about how to minister to new believers within the first 72 hours following their conversion.

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