

Developing Devoted Disciples

Participant Handout

Disciple-making Process

Christians who minister to new believers profit from knowing how they can contribute to the development of new believers.

- Through our relationship we can move new believers into the body of Christ.
- We as Christians can introduce new converts to a lifetime of learning and discipleship.
- Disciplers help new believers get started in their spiritual lives.
- The role of disciplers is to help new believers see they have been invited into a relationship with the Christ.

The Feelings of a New Believer

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

Fears, concerns and second thoughts

Some of their questions may include:

- “What do I do?”
- “Am I really forgiven?”
- “Do I have to right all the wrongs that I committed?”
- “What about smoking and/or drinking?”

Building Relationships

Relationships are the starting point for Christian growth. We have a responsibility to _____ new relationships.

- The first contact should provide a positive memory.
- Make your first contact in person or by phone.
- Remember whom 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.

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 _____.

Defining Needs

Learning about the needs of new believers may come naturally from initial conversations, but disciples will intentionally express a _____ to help them .

A desire to help, models the love and _____ of Christ.

This love also draws them to the body of Christ. Look for statements that indicate that new believers realize a change in their actions, _____, or perspective.

In assessing their spiritual needs, we cannot neglect other physical and _____ needs.

Some new believers will be in _____ and harmful circumstances. We should determine what other types of assistance they may need.

Encouragement and Affirmation

The new believers needs _____ that many of the feelings, fear and concerns they may experience are natural.

An important element of assuring new believers is to develop the _____ they are not alone.

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

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

Case Study

Judy

Judy is a divorced single in her early 30's. 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 church again. Judy has spent much of her life searching for 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 life applicable messages. After attending church for six months Judy participated in a beginner's 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 looking for. Judy has many questions that concern her. "What is she supposed to do now?" "Is she really forgiven?" "Did she have to make right for all the wrongs she had ever committed?" Many of her questions about the next steps had to do with the baggage that she had carried for most of her life regarding the negative church experience her family had when Judy was a young child.

Judy also is 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 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 has happened in their lives. Mark visits his sister's church and begins meeting with the pastor shortly thereafter. Mark struggles with his wife's condition and wonders where God is and what role God plays in life and in death. Mark and his wife accepted Christ as their savior.

Mark testifies that he feels peace as a result of his decision. Mark is 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.

Mark is now a widower in his late 20's, 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 40's. 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 leads 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 that 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 begins to change. This church is friendly and the God that 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?

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?