

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Current Discipleship Strategies

How to lead the entire congregation
to a deeper commitment to Jesus
Christ, his people and his mission

MÓNICA
MASTRONARDI

Current Discipleship Strategies
A book in the School of Leadership series
Christian Discipleship Speciality

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NAZARENE DISCIPLESHIP
INTERNATIONAL
MESOAMERICA REGION

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Presentation

The book series: Leadership School, has been designed with the purpose of providing a tool to the church for the formation, qualification and training of its members in order to integrate them actively in Christian service, according to the gifts and calling (vocation) they have received from their Lord.

Each book provides the study material for a course in the Leadership School program sponsored by the Spanish-speaking Theological Institutions of the Mesoamerica Region of the Church of the Nazarene. These are: NBI (Nazarene Bible Institute) (Coban, Guatemala); NTS (Nazarene Theological Seminary) (Guatemala City); SENAMEX (Mexico City, Mexico); SENDAS (Nazarene Seminary of the Americas), (San Jose, Costa Rica); SND (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) and SETENAC (Havana, Cuba). A good number of the leaders of these institutions (rectors, directors, vice-rectors and directors of decentralized studies) actively participated in the design of the program.

The Leadership School has five Basic Courses, common to all ministries, and six Specialized Courses for each ministry, at the end of which the Theological Institution grants the student a certificate (or diploma) in Specialized Ministry.

The general objective of the Leadership School is: “To collaborate with the local church in the equipping of the “saints for the work of the ministry”, strengthening in them a solid biblical theological knowledge and developing them in the exercise of their gifts for service in their local congregation and in society”. The specific objectives of this program are threefold:

- To develop the ministry gifts of the local congregation.
- To multiply ministries of service in the church and community.
- To awaken the vocation to diversified professional ministry.

The objective of this Specialty entitled “Christian Discipleship” is to train those who have gifts for discipleship and the desire to participate in the Great Commission, but do not currently have a professional ministerial education. The lessons in these six books have been written by missionaries, pastors and lay people throughout the Mesoamerica Region and it is the desire of the authors that each student will receive an enriched vision of the Great Commission and the training to disciple others for Christ. We desire that God will be glorified through these courses and that each student will grow in their preparation and service as an effective worker in His work.

We thank Dr. Mónica Mastronardi de Fernández for her dedication as General Editor of the project, the Regional Ministry Coordinators and the team of writers and designers who collaborated in the publication of these books. We also thank the teachers who will share these materials. They will make a difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout Mesoamerica.

Finally, we cannot fail to thank Dr. Rubén Fernández, Coordinator of Education and Pastoral Development for the impetus given to the publication of these materials, and Dr. L. Carlos Sáenz, MAR Regional Director, for his ongoing support in this task, the fruit of his conviction of the priority need for a church that is integrally equipped.

We pray for God’s blessing on all the disciples whose lives and Christian service will be enriched by these books.

Rev. Monte Cyr

Discipleship Ministries Coordinator

Mesoamerica Region

What Is the School of Leadership?

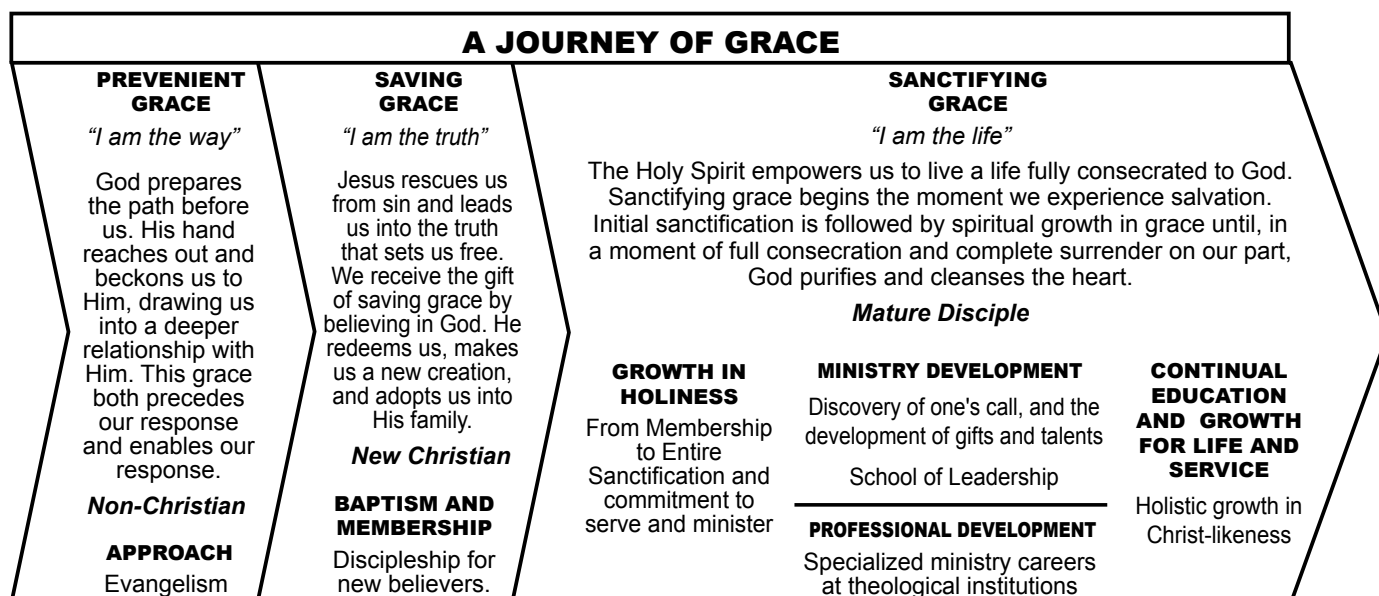
The **School of Leadership** is an educational program for lay ministry in different specialties to engage in the mission of the local church. This program is administered by the Theological Institutions of the Church of the Nazarene in the Mesoamerica Region and taught both at these institutions and in the local churches enrolled in the program.

Who Can Benefit from the School of Leadership?

It is for all the members of the Church of the Nazarene who have participated in the Saving Grace and Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness parts of A Journey of Grace discipleship program, and who, with all their heart, wish to discover their gifts and serve God in His work.

The Plan - A Journey of Grace

In the Church of the Nazarene, we believe that making disciples in the image of Christ in the nations is the foundation of the missionary work of the church and the responsibility of its leadership (Ephesians 4:7-16). For this, at all levels of the church, the implementation of progressive discipleship is promoted as “A Journey of Grace” (John 14: 6), a lifestyle of discipleship. The School of Leadership is part of the “Sanctifying Grace - Ministry Development” section, and is designed for those who have gone through the “Prevenient Grace,” “Saving Grace,” and “Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness” sections of the discipleship path.



The work of discipleship is continuous and dynamic; therefore, the disciple never stops growing in the likeness of his Lord. This growth, when healthy, occurs in all dimensions: the individual dimension (spiritual growth), the corporate dimension (joining the congregation), the holiness in life dimension (progressive transformation of our being and doing according to the model of Jesus Christ) and the service dimension (investing our lives in ministry).

For more information about A Journey of Grace, visit: www.mesonaz.org/journey

Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez
Managing Editor, The School of Leadership Book Series



How Do I Use This Book?

This book contains eight lessons of the School of Leadership program, along with activities and final evaluation of the course.

How are the contents of this book organized?

Each of the eight lessons of this book contains the following:

- ▶ **Objectives:** These are the learning objectives the student is expected to understand at the end of the lesson.
- ▶ **Main Ideas:** A summary of the key teachings of the lesson.
- ▶ **Development of Lesson:** This is the largest section because it is the development of the contents of the lesson. The lessons have been written so that the book can be the teacher, and for that reason the contents have been written in a dynamic form and in simple language with contemporary ideas.
- ▶ **Notes and Comments:** The information in the margins is intended to clarify terms and provide notes that complement or extend the content of the lesson.
- ▶ **Questions:** Sometimes questions are included in the margin that the teacher can use to introduce or reinforce a lesson topic.
- ▶ **What did we learn?:** The box at the end of the lesson development section provides a brief summary of the lesson.
- ▶ **Activities:** This is a page at the end of each lesson that contains learning activities, for individuals or groups, on the subject studied. The estimated time for implementation in class is 20 minutes.
- ▶ **Final evaluation of the course:** This is the last page of the book and once completed the student must remove it from the book and hand it in to a course instructor. The final evaluation should take about 15 minutes.

How long is each course?

The courses are designed for 12 hours of class over 8 ninety-minute sessions. Each institution and each church or local theological study center will coordinate days and times of the classes. Within this hour and a half the teacher or the teachers should include time for the activities contained in the book.

What is the role of the student?

The student is responsible for the following:

1. Enroll on time for the course.
2. Buy the book and study each lesson before class time.
3. Arrive for class on time.
4. Participate in class activities.
5. Participate in practical ministry in the local church outside of class.
6. Complete and submit the final evaluation to the teacher.

What is the role of the teacher of the course?

The professors and teachers for the School of Leadership courses are pastors and laity committed to the mission and ministry of the church and preferably have experience in the ministry they teach. The Director and/or the School of Leadership at the local church (or theological institution) invites their participation and their functions are the following:

1. Be well prepared by studying the book's content and scheduling the use of class time. When studying the lesson, you should have on hand the Bible and a dictionary. Although the lessons are written using simple language, it is recommended that you "translate" what you consider difficult in order to help the students understand. In other words, use terms that they can better understand.
2. Ensure that the students are studying the material in the book and achieving the learning objectives.
3. Plan and accompany students in the activities of ministerial practice. The local pastor and the director of the respective ministry must schedule these activities. These activities should not take away from class time.
4. Take daily attendance and grades in the class report form. The final average will be the result demonstrated by the student in the following activities:
 - a. Class work
 - b. Participation in ministerial practice outside of class
 - c. Final evaluation
5. At the end of the course, collect the evaluation sheets and hand them in with the form "Class Report" to the local School of Leadership director. Do this after totaling the averages and verifying that all data is complete on the form.
6. Professors and teachers should not add tasks or reading assignments apart from the contents of the book. They should be creative in the design of the learning activities and in planning ministry activities outside the classroom according to the reality of their local church and its context.

How do I teach a class?

We recommend using a 90-minute class session as follows:

- **5 minutes:** Review the topic of the previous lesson and pray together.
- **30 minutes:** Review and discuss the lesson. We recommend using an outline, chalkboard, cardboard or other available materials, using dynamic learning activities and visual media such as graphics, drawings, objects, pictures, questions, assigning students to submit parts of the lesson, and so on. We do not recommend lecturing or having the teacher reread the lesson content.
- **5 minutes:** Break either in the middle of class or when it is convenient.

- **20 minutes:** Work on activities in the book. This can be done at the beginning, middle or end of the review, or you can complete the activities as you proceed in accordance with the issues as it relates to them.
- **20 minutes:** Discussion about the students' ministry practice that they currently do and that they will do. At the beginning of the course you will need to present the schedule to the students so that they can make arrangements to attend the ministry practice. In the classes when the students discuss their ministry practice, the conversation should be focused on what they learned, including their successes and their errors, as well as the difficulties they encountered.
- **10 minutes:** Prayer for the issues arising from the practice (challenges, people, problems, goals, gratitude for the results, among others).

How do I implement the final course evaluation?

Allocate 15 minutes of time during the last class meeting for the course evaluation. If necessary, students may consult their books and Bibles. Final evaluations are designed to be an activity to reinforce what was learned in class and not a repetition of the contents of the book. The purpose of this assessment is to measure the understanding and evaluation of the student concerning the class topics, their spiritual growth, their progress in the commitment to the mission of the church and their progress in ministerial experience.

Ministry Practice Activities

The following are suggested activities for out-of-class ministry practice. Included in the following list are several ideas to help teachers, pastors, local School of Leadership director and local ministry directors. From these, you can choose the ones that best fit the contextual reality and ministry of the local church or they can be replaced by others according to your needs and possibilities.

It is recommended to have no less than three ministry activities per course. You can have the entire class work on the same project or assign tasks in groups according to their interests, gifts and abilities. Involve students in a variety of ministry experiences that are new to them.

Suggested ministry activities for the Current Discipleship Strategies course

1. Arrange a coffee time with church leaders to talk and answer questions about how they discovered and confirmed their calling.
2. Make a diagnosis of the congregation to determine how many target groups it comprises and the list of people who belong to each of them (Lesson 3).
3. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the Journey of Grace Discipleship plan for the leaders and volunteers of the congregation, in order to involve them in the implementation of the plan in the local church.
4. Lead a cell group to reach unsaved people (Prevenient Grace) for at least 6 weeks (lesson 4).
5. Disciple a new convert using the lessons from the Saving Grace: New Life in Christ level (Lesson 5).
6. Lead a study group for new members with a book from the series: Filled with the Spirit (Sanctifying Grace) (Lesson 6).
7. Make a digital library, downloading the available books from the Journey of Grace discipleship plan, to give on a USB memory (Pen Drive) to the leaders and teachers of the church. (All books downloadable at: www.DniResources.MesoamericaRegion.org)
8. Organize a weekend workshop for those who wish to join work in a ministry, to inform them about training options in the local church, district and theological institutions. (If possible, invite a representative of the theological institution to share about the formal training options offered by the Church of the Nazarene in our region).



LESSON 1

Reaching Out Is Making Disciples

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Understand that the church exists to make disciples.
- Identify misconceptions about discipleship.
- Evaluate our discipleship strategy.

Main Ideas

- All Christians are called to get involved in the Great Commission of making disciples.
- We must discard the errors of the past and begin to be a church responsible for discipling new brothers and sisters in the faith.

Introduction

Making disciples of Christ is the central mission of the Church and the purpose of its existence. However, we observe that many churches do not grow, or what is worse, each year they see their attendance and membership decrease. What is the problem? Why don't all churches grow naturally? One of the common causes that we can find is that they do not have an intentional plan or strategy to multiply disciples. These churches are confused about the purpose of their existence, and many of them invest a lot of time, effort and money into activities that are not producing disciples for Christ.

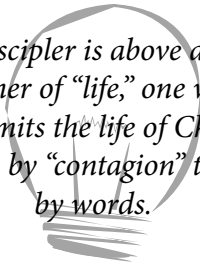
The characteristics of a church that is not discipling or making disciples are the following:

1. Decreasing, stagnating, or slow growth in membership.
2. Lack of growth, maturity and holiness of life of the members.
3. Little involvement of the congregation in ministries inside and outside the local church.
4. Teachers and leaders teach the Word, but have little involvement in the lives of their students during the rest of the week. This practice is very different from the times of the Early Church: teacher and disciple were inseparable. A discipler was above all a "teacher of life," one who transmitted the life of Christ.
5. There is little connection between the biblical teaching given and the daily lives of members. The teachers understand that their responsibility is to teach the Bible lesson as it comes in the study book, but there is little reflection, application to life, little relationship with the questions and concerns of the attendees.

We need to take up the principles of the biblical and Wesleyan model of making disciples and apply them to the missional strategy of our churches. Addressing these issues is the purpose of this course. To do this, we will answer the following questions: What is discipleship? What is a disciple? How is a disciple formed? What are the stages of growth of a disciple? What should a discipler be, know and do? How does one develop a discipleship strategy for the entire congregation?

We will begin by analyzing the biblical passages that support the mission, delegated by Jesus Christ, to the Church as a producer of disciples.

A discipler is above all a teacher of "life," one who transmits the life of Christ, more by "contagion" than by words.



Making Disciples is our commission

In this section we will analyze the mandate of the Great Commission.



The biblical passages that are considered of greatest importance regarding the function delegated by Jesus Christ to his Church as the trainer and reproducer of disciples are three:

1. The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20.
2. The Great Commandment: Matthew 22:37-39.
3. Mission as “bearing fruit”: John 15:1-17.

We will now analyze the teachings of these passages, beginning with the text of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20: “Then Jesus came to them and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I assure you that I will be with you always, until the end of the world.’”

A “commission” is “an order or capacity that a person grants to another person or others to carry out some task or participate in some activity” (WordReference.com). In this case, Jesus commissioned his disciples to do the work that he himself had done with them, that is, to make more disciples.

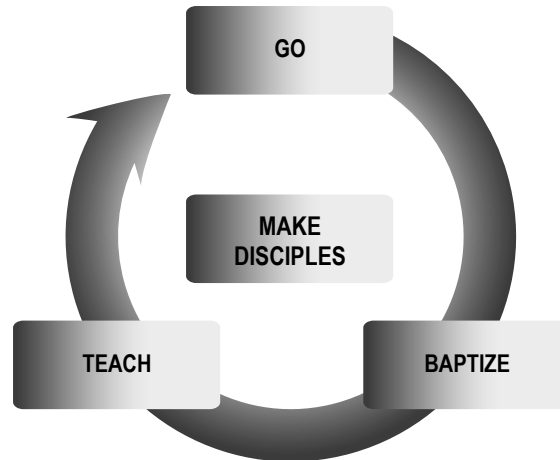
This commission is preceded by the Lord’s statement in verse 18: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” It is clear that the source of authority that will support and sustain this mission is Christ. The statement “therefore” tells us that the commissioned activity is not only possible and achievable, but also that nothing and no one can stop or impede it since no one has greater authority on earth or in heaven than Christ.

But then, what is this authority for? What should his disciples use it for? What is this supremely important activity that Jesus entrusted to all of his followers? We find the answer in the verbs of verses 19 and 20.

Jesus uses four verbs to describe these actions or tasks that he delegates to his disciples. Three of these verbs are participles, that is, they are actions that emerge from the main verb that is in the imperative mood. These four verbs and their meaning are best appreciated when we analyze them in the original Greek (the language in which the New Testament was written). We can see these verbs in the following graph:

Making disciples is Jesus Christ’s Great Commission to his followers. The verb “disciple” appears four times in the New Testament in Matthew 13:52; 27:57; 28:20 and in Acts 14:21.

The Mandate of the Great Commission



“Disciple” is the imperative and main verb of the passage, in Greek *matheteusate*, which translates: Make disciples!

The remaining three verbs are participles of the main verb:

- ***Poreuthentes*** (“Going”): A better translation would be “as they go,” describes mobilization. It refers to taking advantage of the normal circumstances of each day to make disciples, in conversations, with our testimony of life, during trips, in visits to others, at meals, while we walk, work or study, among others. It describes a lifestyle rather than something you do occasionally.

- ***Baptizontes*** (“Baptizing”): Describes the rite of incorporation of new disciples into the Christian community. Baptism was the initial sign, a testimony given publicly to communicate that a person had made the decision to follow Christ as a disciple. Baptism was not the sign of a mature Christian, but of one who was beginning the process of discipleship. Pedro Larson explains that the two important facets of baptism for the first Christians were “Identification and incorporation”: “Baptism would be an important part of discipleship, signaling the inclusion of the new believer in the Lord’s church through the cleansing of sins. It is noteworthy that there is no establishment of any form of baptism. For the first Christians... Baptism was a major break with their society and a definitive declaration of their identification with the Master” (1989: 59-60).

- ***Didaskontes*** (“teaching”): The main objective of this teaching is to reveal Jesus. The manual for the teacher and the disciple is the Bible, whose main purpose is to reveal Christ. The content of the teaching is not a set of rules or doctrines but a person: Jesus. The result of this teaching must be a life reoriented according to Christ’s model of life, through obedience. It is not enough for a person to hear, memorize and understand the words of Jesus, but during the process of discipleship, his whole life must be restored and transformed so that Jesus becomes Lord of his entire life.

At the end of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus promised to be with those who are investing their lives in making disciples of Jesus each day.

Making disciples should be our lifestyle

What do the Great Commandment and the Great Commission have in common?



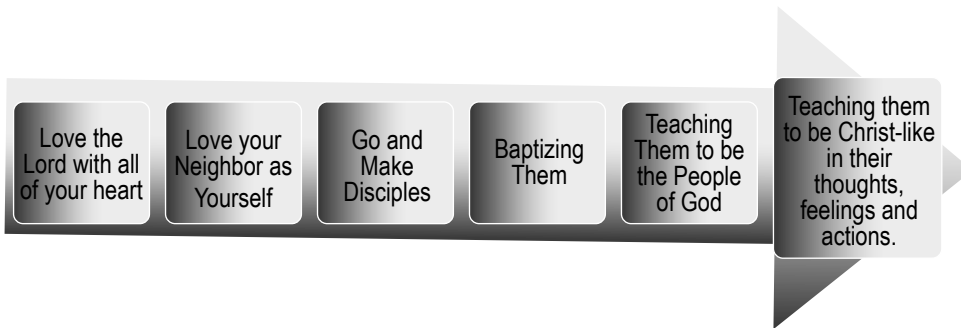
Another important passage regarding Jesus' commission to his Church is the Great Commandment. It says in Matthew 22:37-39: "Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Gene Getz highlights the importance of this commandment, which was given by Jesus to his disciples shortly before his death and resurrection. This author observes that the objective that the Lord was pursuing is found in John 13:35: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." It was essential that the disciples were perfect in love and unity so that the world would believe the message they had to transmit (1982: 37-38). This concern is also expressed by the Lord in his prayer in Gethsemane (John 17: 21-23).

Pastor Rick Warren is one of the many authors who highlights how both passages complement each other.

The Great Commission points out the lifestyle of Jesus' disciples.

The Great Commandment and the Great Commission



Rick Warren states that the Great Commandment and the Great Commission summarize God's five purposes for the lives of his sons and daughters, which are widely reinforced in the rest of the Bible. He points out that when the members of a church practice these five commands of the Lord, the growth of the church and of each member is guaranteed. These five purposes are:

The Five Purposes of God for the members of your Church

1 WORSHIP

You were created to please God

FELLOWSHIP 2

You were formed to join the family of God

3 DISCIPLESHIP

You were created to be like Christ.

MINISTRY 4

You were formed to serve God.

5 EVANGELISM

You were made for a mission.

Making disciples transforms the world

Now we will analyze John 15:1-17.



The third passage we will analyze is the mission of bearing fruit found in John 15:1-17. There Jesus transmits to his disciples the mission of bearing much fruit, both in quality and quantity: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” (John 15:16). In John chapters 17 and 20, five outcomes are described that naturally occur when the church embraces this commission and makes disciple-making a priority on its agenda:

For John Wesley, the Great Commission was to be understood as a guide for the mission of each generation of Christians, until all the peoples of the earth are reached.

- The church prays and intercedes for the needs of the people in its community.
- We are bearers and channels of the Word of God to the people.
- The people of the world have the opportunity to know God.
- We allow God to reveal his glory through us.
- God is glorified in Christ.

Making disciples is the strategy that Jesus has taught us to transform the world. With each person we win to Christ and are discipled, the kingdom of God spreads on this earth. Each will be one less person in whom the power of sin and death dominates. Each will be a person transformed by the Holy Spirit, who will be trained by God’s people to invest their life to bless others. God has made us his partners in this wonderful work of restoration, the fruits of which are universal and eternal, not only for human beings, but for all creation.

True or False?

In the following section we will identify common errors about discipleship.



There are many misconceptions and practices about what it means to make disciples. It is important to identify them before moving on to define what a disciple is in the biblical sense and in our Arminian-Wesleyan tradition.

- ✓ Discipleship is much more than teaching some doctrine classes (what we believe). True. In the process of discipleship, I must learn to live like Jesus.
- ✓ Evangelism does not have much benefit if it is not accompanied by discipleship. True. In many churches, evangelizing has been divorced from discipleship. When this happens what is obtained are converts, or convinced, but not disciples.
- ✓ It is assumed that people grow automatically by listening to sermons and attending Sunday School classes or other activities. False. This is not the case, since many believers remain in immaturity for many years and do not live integral holiness.
- ✓ Teacher is not the same as discipler. True. The discipler not only transmits knowledge, but is also a life model, mentor, and shepherds the disciple.
- ✓ The leaders and the pastor are the only ones who disciple. False, many in the congregation should be trained to disciple others.
- ✓ Those who are not leaders have no experience or preparation to disciple. This may be true, but they can and should be trained.
- ✓ Discipleship is the responsibility of a church ministry or a group of people. The correct thing is that it should be the responsibility of the entire church and all its ministries.
- ✓ You become a mature Christian by learning from the Bible. True, but you also need a more experienced brother or sister to guide you.

Evangelism does not have much benefit if it is not accompanied by discipleship. In some churches, evangelizing has been divorced from discipleship. When this happens, what is obtained are converts, or convinced, but not disciples.

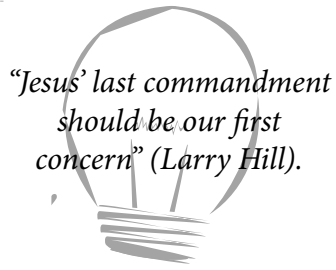
What can I do?

In this section we are going to see how to be part of the solution.



As we have seen in these passages, making disciples for Jesus is the purpose of the existence of the Church of Christ on this earth. Jesus does not call us to sit idly by. He does not call us to guard salvation as a personal

treasure. The Word of God says that we are debtors. When you have a debt, you have a responsibility. In the same way, the disciples of Jesus have a burden, an assignment, a task: To make disciples of Christ in all the families of the earth.



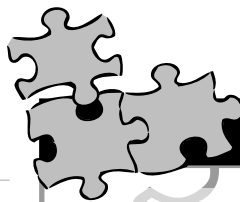
“Jesus’ last commandment should be our first concern” (Larry Hill).

All sons and daughters of God are called to play an important role in this task, helping someone, somewhere in the world, to be discipled. Many of us are already contributing through our prayers and offerings. But there is something else we can do...

1. You can make the decision to be a disciple committed to the lifestyle of Christ, seeking every day to be more like Him, letting Christ possess you, take over your entire being, use your life and continue his ministry in this world through you.

2. You can get involved in making disciples for Christ in your community, helping other people to be like Him, teaching them to put their lives at the service of the Lord.

God calls us all today. He keeps telling us: “Come, follow me” (Mark 2:14). The call of the Lord is a call for all of life; it is a call for all people. But let us not forget the challenge that follows this invitation: He wants us to engage in the task of discipleship.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The Great Commission from Jesus to His Church has not changed. Reproducing Christ-like disciples is our reason for existing as the people of God. Making disciples is the lifestyle that all Christians are called to.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In groups of two to three members, read the following story and then answer the questions included at the end.

A new family for Miguel

Raúl and Felicia are the proud parents of a new baby. They named him Miguel Antonio, they dressed him in his new clothes and they took him home from the hospital for the first time. There they plan to prepare his room later; his crib and the sheets that his grandmother embroidered are still disassembled in a corner. Raúl is very satisfied because he has done a good job of painting the room, although he still needs to finish it up (he will do it on the next work holiday in a few months). Also, he has plans to put up shelves and everything is going to look very pretty in light blue. He even thinks that it would be good to buy a soccer ball so that Miguel can practice alone with the neighborhood kids; who knows, the kid may have a talent for the ball!

When they enter the house, the first thing Raúl does is give Miguel a “tour” and explains the rules of survival of the house:

“Look dear son, this is your new house. Your mom is going to explain to you now how you can take care of yourself.”

The mother continues talking while she carries her son in her arms...

“This is your room, here you will one day have your bed, your clothes and your toys. Here is the kitchen, where you can take milk from the refrigerator and heat it in the microwave when you are hungry. There are baby bottles in the cupboards; don’t forget to wash them very well after using them. In the bathroom we have put the small tub so you can bathe once a day. For now you can use some liquid hand soap because we forgot to include bath products for you on the grocery list. We will include it next month, please write what you need in the kitchen shopping notebook.”

Then they lay him down on the couch and with much love they both say to him in chorus:

“Welcome Miguel to our family!”

Questions:

1. Is your church like this family?

2. How would you rate these parents?

3. Isn’t this story a lot like what some churches do with spiritual babies? Explain.



LESSON 2

Discipleship Objectives

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Define discipleship.
- Identify the goals of discipleship.
- Outline the profile of an authentic disciple.

Main Ideas

- The discipleship process must have clear goals so that people can be transformed according to the model of Jesus Christ.
- Discipleship is reproducing the life of Jesus in others, teaching them to cultivate a relationship with Christ, to grow in love and service to others.

Introduction

What is a disciple or, rather, who is a disciple? In the New Testament, the terms “disciple,” “Christian,” and “witness” are used synonymously. So, when we talk about making disciples, we are referring to forming Christians in the biblical sense. Our goal in making disciples is to help people develop so that they become mature Christians, committed to the mission of Jesus Christ.

What does the word “Christian” mean to the people in your community?

Today the word Christian is used with different meanings, which is why it is necessary to define who a Christian is in the original sense, as Jesus and the first believers understood and used it.

That is why, in this lesson, we are going to define the biblical characteristics of a disciple, which will help us build a profile that will serve as a guide for our discipleship task

The restorative mission of Jesus Christ

In this section we will study the key terms of the Old Testament.



Since human beings fell into sin, God imposed upon himself the mission of rescuing humanity from sinful life and its disastrous consequences for his creatures. From this purpose the restorative mission of Jesus Christ was born. That is why in order to understand the scope and implications of the discipleship process, we must start from a clear understanding of the concepts of salvation and the kingdom of God. These terms were used, starting in the Old Testament, in connection with the life and work of the Messiah, they were mentioned in the announcements of his birth, and were used by Jesus himself to describe the work that he had come to do.

Salvation

In the announcement of Jesus’ birth in Matthew 1:21, the purpose of his coming is stated. He came to bring salvation: “You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” It is important to understand what the salvation that Jesus brought consists of, since it was the propagation of this salvation that he then entrusted to his Church.

This concept of salvation comes from the Old Testament and refers to both spiritual and material or temporal evils. The realization of this liberation depended solely and exclusively on the successful fulfillment of the redemptive mission of the Messiah sent from God, and could not be achieved outside of Him (John 10:9; Acts 4:12).

Christ was “incarnated” in Jesus to bring this type of salvation. That is why it is not correct to speak of salvation in merely spiritual terms. Jesus became a model of the restored life that God wants to impart to us. He not only proclaimed salvation, He lived it. For Jesus, living salvation meant positively affecting the lives of all those he met along the way.

When Jesus healed, he was not limited to just physical or mental illness. That is why the authors of the gospels describe the healing action of Jesus with the Greek term “*sozo*”, which has generally been translated as save, but whose connotation is broader, expressing: “... to heal, restore, maintain or bring salvation and life”. The authors Lozada and Angulo describe it like this: Salvation is the process of restoration where God frees us from the bonds that degrade life. The empire of death begins to be absorbed by life (Mark 5:39; Mt. 8:16-17; Luke 7:12-16; Jn. 11: 38-44). The salvation of an individual in the context of Christ’s ministry must be understood as... “the action of having restored him or brought him to life in fullness” (Mt. 9:21; 27:42; Mr. 5:23) (Lozada and Angulo 1995: 166-167).

This complete restoration, which has also been called “integral salvation,” far from being limited to the transmission of ideas or concepts, aims to completely affect the lives of all those who are reached by it, and they in turn transform their context. In this process of salvation as a work of restoration, God must again impart the image of himself in each man and woman, repairing that which has been overshadowed by the rebellion since Eden. This image of God incarnated in human life is what can be fully contemplated in Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15; 2:9; 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:6).

God’s Kingdom

The Old Testament prophets announced that the Messiah would establish the eternal Kingdom of God as “King of kings” (Dan. 2:37). John the Baptist, and later Jesus, reinforced this truth during their ministries:

- a) In the preaching of John the Baptist: Matthew 3:2.
- b) In the parables of the kingdom: Luke 19:11-12.
- c) In the teaching of Jesus: Mark 10:15; Matthew 6:33.
- d) In the prayers of Christ: Matthew 6:10.

However, despite the expectations of John the Baptist and some of his contemporaries (Mt. 3:11), Jesus would not fulfill all the prophecies regarding the coming of the Kingdom in that generation. In Matthew 13, Jesus begins to shed light on this mystery of the Kingdom that He has brought but “which is yet to come with great glory and power” (Ladd 1974: 20-23).

Jesus rejected the easy path to the Kingdom that Satan proposed (Mt. 4:8-10). If Jesus had accepted this shortcut, his ministry would not have fulfilled

*Today a Savior has been
born to you in the City
of David, who is Christ
the Lord
(Luke 2:11).*

Salvation:
*in Greek sozo, means to
heal, restore,
maintain or bring life.*

its purpose of discipling men and women to be his instruments and to bring, definitively and permanently, the Kingdom of God to all families on earth.

Jesus Christ was aware that his mission was universal, not just for Israel. Also, he knew that such a great mission could not be completed in the short time of his incarnation. It is for this purpose that he trained the twelve and charged them with the mission of continuing to disciple the next generation. Jesus Christ successfully demonstrated the usefulness of the discipleship process to guide human beings in restoration towards a holy life. In the Great Commission, He established this strategy for the propagation of His Kingdom in human hearts.

Jesus Christ successfully demonstrated the usefulness of the discipleship process to guide human beings in restoration towards a holy life. In the Great Commission, he established this strategy for the propagation of his Kingdom in human hearts.

In the model of Jesus, we can see the essentiality of entering into a process of discipleship so that the holy image of God can be restored in us. “In the process of restoring all things to God, the restoration of his image in us plays a fundamental role. In the incarnation of Jesus Christ who ‘knew no sin’, he did not experience in any way in his human nature this distortion of the image of God. The Bible proclaims to us that He, Jesus Christ, is the image of God (Col. 1:15; 2:9; 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:6). We can direct our lives to him as a model or paradigm for our pilgrimage in the restoration process” (Lozada and Angulo 1995: 192).

The Kingdom of God is the space where God rules, where he is recognized as Lord. That is why we can affirm that this Kingdom is established in the heart of each of the disciples of Jesus. These authentic disciples are the first fruits of this Kingdom that will come in fullness in the future, when at the end of time all power and authority will be delivered to Jesus Christ, crowning him King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 12:10). Through the service to the world of the disciples who follow the example of Jesus, this Kingdom becomes visible to all humanity. Whoever wants to be part of this Kingdom must be willing to become a disciple.

The profile of a true Christian

In this section we will study the biblical characteristics of a disciple.



Just as an artist needs a model to know if her portrait is complete and faithfully represents the original, we disciplers also need to have a very clear idea of the type of Christian that should result from the discipleship process.

As we have seen in the previous point, Jesus is that prototype, the model that we all follow. Let's see below the seven main characteristics that must be formed in the life of every disciple of Jesus. All of them are what define the life of an authentic Christian, a follower of Jesus, who is faithful to the original.

1. He is a follower of Jesus. The life of Christ is shown in his daily life. He lives life like his Lord. The life of Christ Jesus is shown in his daily life, which is why he is a witness. He testifies of Jesus with his life, his word and his conduct.

2. He is filled with the Holy Spirit. A Christian is one who understands that “God made our body for the purpose of being a holy temple in which He can dwell and fill.” The Christian is a person who has invited the Holy Spirit to live in his heart (Neighbour 1976: 40). The Holy Spirit lives in him or her.

3. He is molded by the Holy Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, the apostle Paul affirms our need to be transformed by the Holy Spirit: “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” An authentic Christian is obedient to the transforming action of the Holy Spirit throughout his life.

4. He has died to selfishness. The Christian is a person who has given freedom to the Holy Spirit to live in him, and no longer lives to satisfy his selfish desires. “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” (1 John 4:12)

5. He Remains in the Word. The disciple is a Christian who immerses himself in the Word of God on an ongoing basis (John 8:31). Through the study of the Word, he learns to live life as His Lord did, and places his entire life under the authority of Christ. Little by little, he becomes a model and a life teacher for others.

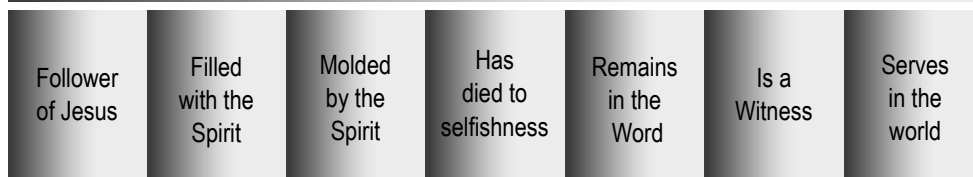
6. He is a witness. Michael Green points out that although in our day witnessing Christ is considered rather supplementary, in the times of the Early Church, it was a characteristic of all Christians who were witnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:32) (1996 : 327). The word “witness” and “martyr” come from the same Greek root “*martyrea*”. A witness or a Christian, then, is one who totally identifies with the Master, obeys Him in all areas of his life, serves Him with everything he is and with everything he has, and who is still willing to die before defrauding his Lord in word or conduct.

7. He serves in the world. The disciple of Jesus lays down his life for others (John 8:31). The disciple gives his life to the service of others. That is, the Christian exists for the mission. This service to the world is only possible thanks to the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. (John 8:31).

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP



What is discipleship?

In the following section we will study the biblical meaning of discipleship.

The word “disciple” is the translation of the Greek term “*mathetes*” which means “taught, trained.” In its verbal voice (“*manthano*”) it implies, in addition to the action of learning, the desire to educate oneself.

The Hebrew word that is most similar in meaning to the Greek “*mathetes*” is “*lamad*,” which literally means “to learn, teach, motivate to learn, get used to or become familiar with something.” It is used mostly in Deuteronomy and the Psalms, where it refers to the learning process whose objectives are: Obedience to God’s law, the practice of God’s love towards others, and personal acceptance of divine will.

In the context of the Old Testament, it is clear that God wants to teach human beings, but the objective of this teaching goes beyond occasional obedience to the commandments, but seeks to reorient the entire life of the individual towards the will of the Creator. It is not about acquiring new feelings or a new way of feeling, but about an internal change that leads the person to behave differently toward his or her neighbor.

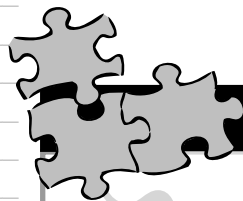
In the Old Testament, there is no word that describes the disciple-teacher relationship in the style of Jesus’ discipleship of the twelve. The most similar antecedent is the school of prophets founded by Samuel. The prophet was considered a guide or father who taught the doctrine, and the students were called “servants” (1 Kings 19:29; 2 Kings 4:12; Exodus 24:13). We can see an example of this in the disciples of Elisha (2 Kings 4:38 and 6:2).

Already in the time of Jesus, a Jew who wanted to know the Word (the Torah) looked for a teacher (“rabbi”) who would help him understand and put the Word of God into practice. The relationship between the rabbi and his disciple ended when the teacher considered that the disciple had acquired sufficient knowledge.

In the New Testament, it is clear that the goal of “discipleship” is to know God’s will for our lives and to live within that will. The living model of that incarnate will is Christ Jesus (Matthew 11:29). In the New Testament, discipleship is not just transmitting knowledge, but it involves leading others to receive Christ as Savior and Lord, and teaching them to follow Jesus, abandoning the life of sin and beginning a new life similar to the Lord’s pattern.

So discipleship in the Bible is not a program, a series of lessons, or finishing a study book. It is not transmitting information, but rather “training.” Discipleship is reproducing the life of Jesus in others, teaching them to cultivate a relationship with Christ, to grow in love and service to others.

“The Great Commission is not an option to be considered, but a command to be obeyed” (Hudson Taylor).



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The disciple is a person who is learning to be like Jesus. To achieve the profile of an authentic disciple, one’s whole life must be transformed by the Holy Spirit. The disciple must learn to cultivate a relationship with Christ, but he or she must also grow in love and service to others.



LESSON 3

Target Groups

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Identify those responsible for discipling the congregation.
- Learn to place each person at their level of growth.
- Know a discipleship plan in stages.

Main Ideas

- It is important to have a discipleship strategy for each target group in the church in order to guide them to new levels of commitment.
- Churches that grow in number are healthy churches in which each member is growing.

Introduction

The lack of growth in contemporary churches is largely due to a lack of understanding regarding Why, how, who and for what... should we make disciples? As we saw in the previous lessons, making disciples is the central mission of the church and one of the purposes of its existence. When the church does not see itself as discipling or making disciples, it delegates this ministry to just a few brothers and sisters and, as a result, one can observe:

1. A slow numerical growth, a result of the lack of maturity in the members and their limited involvement in the ministries both inside and outside the local church.
2. While in the Word, the functions of teacher and discipler are inseparable, Bible teachers and other leaders who teach the congregation limit their responsibility to transmitting the contents of a lesson, but there is little involvement in the lives of their students during the rest of the week. This practice is very different from early church times where a discipler was first and foremost a teacher of life, one who passed on the life of Christ.
3. Many Christian teachers understand that their responsibility is to teach the Bible lesson following the study book, but they do not take the trouble to connect the teachings with the daily lives of the students, responding to their questions and concerns.

In order to help our churches understand their role as a maker and multiplier of disciples, we are going to dedicate this lesson to answering four very important questions: Who is responsible for discipling people in the church? What are the groups of people in our congregation that we are responsible for discipling? How are we to measure the healthy growth of a local church? What are the levels of growth in the Journey of Grace discipleship plan?

Often in the church there is a lot of work, but there is little fruit in transformed lives. What is observed is an activism that only serves to entertain people. We turn church members into spectators, instead of training them to participate in the mission.

Those responsible for the growth of the congregation

In this section we will analyze the passage of Ephesians 4.



In his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4:11-16, the apostle Paul describes the role of senior church leaders:

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

It is clear in this passage that God’s call to ministry is for all believers. Everyone, from children to seniors, men and women, from every social class and marital status, with every level of academic preparation, is responsible for building one another up. This is why the Holy Spirit distributes gifts to all members: “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.” (Ephesians 4:7).

However, it is the senior ministers who have been given gifts by God to empower the entire congregation. The results that God expects in the church, as a result of this training that people receive from their spiritual leaders, in this passage are five:

- That they are trained to serve others according to their gifts and their individual calling.
- That the body of Christ will be built up, through the individual growth of each of its members, into the likeness of Christ.
- That there will be unity in beliefs (doctrines) and deep roots in faith.
- That they will grow in love and in the knowledge of revealed truth.
- That the integral growth of the church be the result of everyone’s work.

As we see in Scripture, church growth is more than adding people to the membership. The growth of a congregation must be measured comprehensively and will always be in direct relation to the individual growth of each person.

If spiritual leaders have been given gifts to guide the congregation to holistic growth, who will God hold responsible for churches that are not growing healthily?

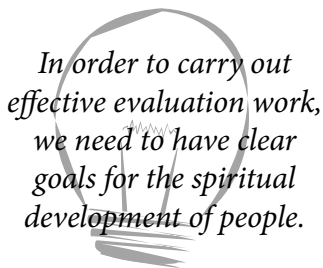
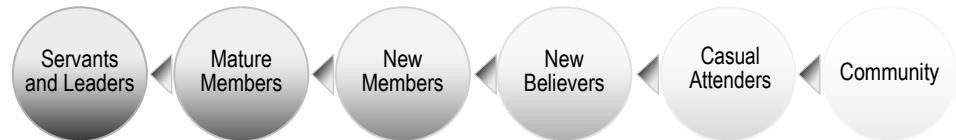
The target groups

In this section we are going to define the target groups for discipleship.



As we saw in the previous point, those of us who are part of the church need to be developed through discipleship. All of us, from the newest member to the oldest, must be in a process of growth. In a local church we can differentiate the following groups:

The Target Groups in the Local Church



In order to carry out effective evaluation work, we need to have clear goals for the spiritual development of people.

Leaders and servants: Leaders and all those who are serving in some responsibility, those who are part of the ministry teams, whether those who serve within the church, or those who serve in ministries in the community. These people are being trained to serve effectively in the ministry to which God has called them and for which the Holy Spirit has given them gifts.

Mature members: This group includes all brothers and sisters who have a firm commitment to the church, attend faithfully, tithe, live in holiness, and support the activities and ministries of the church. These people have gone through the basic levels of discipleship, are baptized, practice a life of purity, and are members of the church. These people continue to grow and deepen their relationship with God through discipleship. These brothers and sisters are discovering their gifts and are beginning to be trained to serve in the ministry to which they are called by the Lord.

New members: These are all those who have been received as members of the Church and participate in discipleship groups, learning to live in holiness.

New believers: This group includes all those who have accepted Christ as Savior and are growing in discipleship groups, preparing for baptism and membership.

Casual Attenders: Casual Attenders are those who attend a special activity (such as Mother's Day or Friends' Day) and have friendships with church members. This group needs to be guided to make the decision to accept Christ as Savior and begin the process of discipleship.

Community: The community includes all those who live in the church area or who are relations or friends of church members. They are all those we have the mission to reach.

The responsibility of the leaders will then be to take each person to the next level to ensure that all people who come into contact with the church will have the opportunity to develop until they become an authentic disciple according to the model of Christ.

What is healthy spiritual growth?

In this section we will see how to measure the growth of a disciple.



In the Bible, several words are used to describe the growth that God expects of us. Let's see the main ones:

1. Grow, growth: The Greek terms “*auxano, auxo, auxesis*” are used in the New Testament to compare the growth of the disciples with natural development, just as a plant or a child grows (For example in Luke 2:40; Acts 6:7; 1 Corinthians 3:6 and others).

2. Grow to the limit: The word “*hyperauxano*” that Paul uses in 2 Thessalonians 1:3 describes growing to the limit of your possibilities.

3. Progress or development: The words “*prokopto*” and “*prokopee*” were used by the original authors of the Bible to express the spiritual development or progress of a person or a group that is produced by the grace of God (Luke 2:52 ; Philippians 1:12; 25, Romans 13:12 and others).

4. Build, build upon: Other key words used in the New Testament are “*oikodomeo,*” “*epoikodomeo*” and “*sunoi kodomeo*” which express the idea of constructing or growing a building. These words described the apostle's special role toward the Christian community. In the early church there was individual growth of each disciple that accompanied the numerical growth of the congregation (1 Corinthians 3:10; 3:12,14; Ephesians 2:20,22; 1 Peter 2:5).

5. Perfect: The word “*katartizo*” and its variants refer to the work of perfecting the abilities and skills of the Christian for the work of service. This perfection is accomplished by God who completes what we lack to grow in holiness like Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:17).

Starting from this biblical basis, we can ask ourselves, How do we know if a new disciple is growing? Do we have a way to evaluate people's spiritual development? The answer is yes, and it is very important to do so. This will help us measure the effectiveness of our discipleship strategy, which includes not only the performance of the discipling teachers, but also the materials we use and the entire strategy we implement to integrate people as fruitful members of the local church.

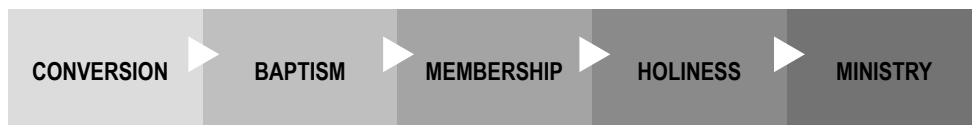
In the previous point, we saw that church members grow when they move to the next target group. How do we know when a person is ready to move to the next level? In the Christian life, we grow when we make decisions. From the first contact with the church, we choose between several options. For example: The first decision is to attend a special meeting or a cell group, responding to an invitation. Then we have to decide whether or not to attend again. But there are other decisions that will lead us to an increasingly deeper commitment.

There are five decisions, which are the most important in the Christian life, through which we can measure the growth of people in their walk as disciples of Jesus. These crucial decisions are shown in the following graph:

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.” (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

“Growth in Acts is not merely numerical or geographical, but growth in spiritual and ethnic dimensions. Quality accompanied quantity. The qualities of faith, love, honesty and purity are the result of a community of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. (Larson, Pedro 1989, p. 104).

Commitment Levels in the Christian Life



Each of these decisions takes us to a deeper level of commitment to Christ, his Church and his mission. When a Christian does not advance, they stagnate in their spiritual life. In the contemporary church, we can identify two types of diseases:

On the one hand, we find people who develop what we could call a “king or queen complex.” This is found in people who come to church to be served, to enjoy worship. They do not see themselves as servants of their brothers and sisters. They avoid any call to work in the ministries. They run the risk of becoming negative critics, speaking badly of their leaders and pastors, creating a bad atmosphere in the congregation, and especially harming new people in the church. In their way of thinking, they believe that the church is obliged to offer them and their family what they like, what makes them feel good, and when this does not happen, they look for another church or stop attending.

Another disease that we can identify is “lack of commitment.” This is found in people who do not regularly attend services and activities, do not tithe or tithe less than they should, and do not serve others. They fluctuate in their spiritual life and many of them end up distancing themselves from the Lord.

These illnesses and lack of growth can be prevented through a discipleship plan designed for the needs of each target group.

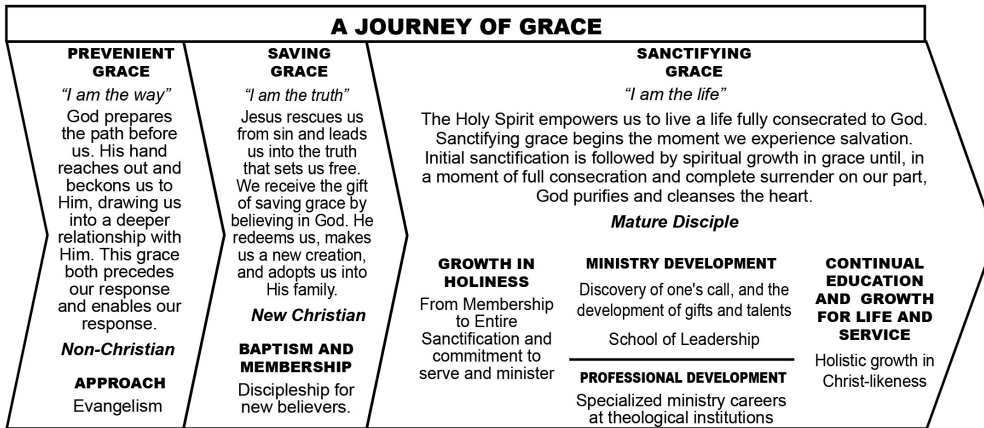
The discipleship plan, A Journey of Grace

To finish we will see the stages of the discipleship plan.



Complex:
It is a term used in psychology to describe a person who has a certain unhealthy idea about himself, such as superiority complex, fat complex, Oedipus complex, among others.

Thank God, we have many materials to disciple church members. In the Global Church of the Nazarene and the Mesoamerica Region, there are teams of people who have developed a comprehensive discipleship plan for the local church, which is called A Journey of Grace. Following is a graphic that displays this plan.



Thanks to the efforts of the Regional Ministries Coordinators, we currently have books in the Mesoamerica Region of the Church of the Nazarene for the needs of each target group.

Each part of the journey, infused by God's Prevenient Grace, Saving Grace, or Sanctifying Grace, represents a target group and has its own specific objectives:

Prevenient Grace: Non-Christian: Guide them to the conversion experience.

Saving Grace: New Believers: Baptism and integration into church membership.

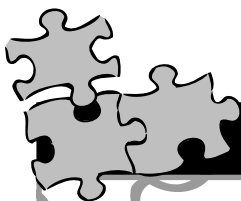
Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness: Members in process of maturing: Lead them to a commitment to a holy life.

Sanctifying Grace - Ministry Development: Mature members who desire to serve: Trained according to their gifts and calling.

Sanctifying Grace - Continual Education and Growth for Life and Service: Mature Disciples: Guide them in their integral growth.

In the following lessons, we will be studying how to disciple each specific group at each of these levels.

More information about the Journey of Grace discipleship plan and resources can be found here: www.mesonaz.org/journey



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

All people in the church are at some level of development and need to grow toward deeper commitments in their faith. God's will is for his sons and daughters to grow to the limit of their possibilities, and those responsible for that growth are the spiritual leaders. Each target group needs discipleship with specific objectives, according to their needs.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Look at the box “Target Groups in the Local Church” (page 30) and then respond.

a. Which group do you belong to at this moment?

b. What should be the next goal in your spiritual growth?

c. Which group should you belong to in order to be a discipler?

2. Respond in a group of two to three class members. In churches, there are usually people who we can describe as “immature members” or “uncommitted members.” They were baptized and received as members but they attend very little, do not tithe and do not serve in the ministries of the church. What strategies would you implement to lead these people to be mature members?

3. In pairs, draw a line joining the Greek term with its correct meaning, as used in the New Testament to describe the growth of a disciple.

Auxano	To Build
Huperauxano	Progress or development produced by the grace of God
Prokopto	To grow like a plant grows
Oikodomeo	To perfect, complete
Katartizo	To grow to the limit of possibilities

4. Write down your goals as a disciple based on the part of the journey you are currently on. You may need to strengthen some of the previous segments as well.



LESSON 4

Outreach: Commitment to Christ

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Understand the conversion process.
- Learn to present the gospel.
- Make a commitment to reach others.

Main Ideas

- The discipleship process begins in preconversion.
- Cell groups and activities designed for the unconverted give good results in winning friends for Christ.

Introduction

Evangelism

“It is the activity of Christians through which they seek to announce the gospel and persuade people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”
(Taylor, 1995, p. 279).

Many Christians have misconceptions about: What evangelism is, Who the evangelists should be, and Where and how we should do evangelism. The idea of evangelism is generally associated with a planned service or campaign with an excellent speaker. Others think of the instantaneous proclamation, that which is usually made in the streets or squares, which briefly presents the story of Jesus, in which the listener is asked to make an immediate decision about accepting Christ as Savior. It is true that these strategies have been practiced for many years in evangelical churches, but they present several drawbacks. When we examine them in the light of the Word, we see that they are not sufficient to fulfill the mission of making disciples.

First, both tend to be sporadic efforts of the local church rather than an ongoing ministry. If we want to be salt and light, we need a strategy that allows us to have the church doors open every day of the year so that the lost can be invited in. Secondly, the mission of making disciples is for the entire congregation, which is dispersed in the community and knows its neighbors whom it can impact with its testimony. Third, efforts at instant evangelism have yielded few results in disciples remaining in the faith. In our region, there are many people who in a service, campaign or film screening raise their hands indicating that they want to accept Jesus as Savior. But of all of these, only a minimal percentage continues beyond the first discipleship lesson.

That is why in this lesson we are going to study some principles and practices for effectively reaching the lost and leading them to a lasting commitment to Jesus Christ.

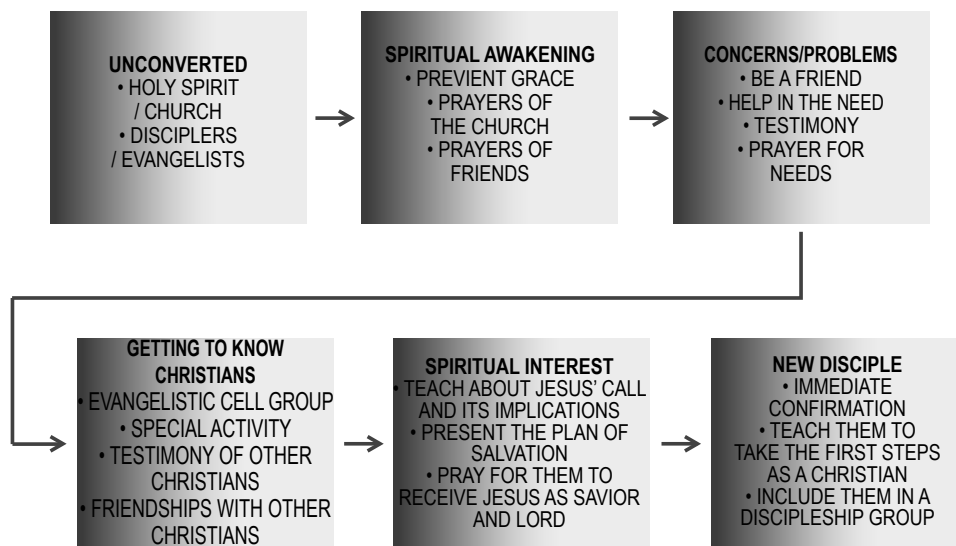
From unconverted to New Life in Christ

In this section we are going to study the process that leads to conversion.



Before a person can make a decision to accept Jesus as Savior, they need to have the opportunity to understand the implications that decision will bring to their life. That is why in the Journey of Grace discipleship plan, this stage has been called “Approach”.

Disciplers, who are going to evangelize the unsaved, must understand the process by which a person goes from not being interested in Jesus to making the decision to be a disciple of Christ. Let’s look at these stages:



The Process of Conversion

In this table, we see that we can identify five stages in the conversion process that an unconverted person goes through in their approach to Christ. Let's see how the church and disciplers should accompany people in this process along the Journey of Grace.

1. Spiritual Awakening

In this first stage, the unconverted is not yet interested to the point of attending an activity organized by the church. Some of our neighbors went to a church as children and claim to be Christians, but without knowing what it really means. Some may have prejudices and a certain distrust of Christians and evangelical churches. They do not understand what Christians do and why they do it, and they may not even have Christian friends or family. Maybe they pray from time to time to find a solution to their problems, but Jesus is someone distant and unknown to them.

The Holy Spirit is seeking those people, drawing them to the love of the Lord. This is God's **prevenient grace** at work. The church, as well as its Lord, is called to love and intercede in prayer for those who live in darkness.

How should we pray for the unsaved people we have on our lists? We should pray that God would draw them with his merciful love (John 6:44-45). Furthermore, prayer should be aimed at breaking down the barriers that prevent them from seeking the Lord:

- That they understand the message of the gospel (Luke 8:12).
- That the blindness that the Devil sowed in their heart be removed so that they may walk towards the light, which is Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4: 3-4, Acts 26:18).
- That pride be removed from their heart (Matthew 13: 13-15).
- That the Lord opens their heart so that they may receive the Word (Acts 16:14).
- That the Holy Spirit convicts them of sin (John 16:7-11).
- That God gives them faith to repent (Acts 17:30-31).

Preventive Grace:
It refers to the many ways in which God intentionally acts with the unsaved, persuading them to return to communion with Him.

“One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.” (Acts 16:14).

- That they make the decision to accept Christ as Savior and Lord and be born again (1 Timothy 2:1-4; John 3:3-6).
- That they make the commitment to follow Christ and grow through discipleship in the church (Acts 26:18).

2. Concerns and problems

Unsaved people live in darkness. They usually have many problems caused by themselves and their bad decisions. They may have vices and habits that are unhealthy. The daily testimony of the Christian is essential to approach the unconverted. They are going to wonder why you are different?

Seeking solutions to their problems, many of these people allow a Christian acquaintance or friend to pray for their need. This opens the door to a closer relationship and gives us the opportunity to help solve that need. When we pray for specific needs and God answers, unsaved people start to recognize that God is real and cares about them.

In the conversations that follow, we take the opportunity to answer their questions about God and the purpose of their lives. It is then that the door opens to have a series of meetings in a home, office or cafe to talk about spiritual matters in order to bring them closer to Jesus Christ.

3. Getting to know Christians

Once the unsaved has discovered that God is interested in their life, is grateful for the answered prayers and the help we have given them in their need, it is time to invite them to a special activity or a small group. Our goal is for them to meet other Christians, to listen to their experiences and to discover little by little God’s plan for their life. There are several strategies that we can implement for these purposes, which we will see later in this lesson.

4. Spiritual Interest

At this stage, the unbeliever is struggling with many questions, possibly reevaluating their life, and has become aware that there is something else they need. Everyone wants to be happy, and the unconverted always have one or more voids in their life that prevent them from feeling fully happy. When we get to know our unconverted friends, we can identify the lack in their lives, such as lack of love, joy, peace, self-control, hope or forgiveness, among others.

By recognizing their need, the unsaved is showing interest in filling that void. This is the opportune time to present the plan of salvation to them. We can do this in different ways:

- Personal evangelism, that is, one to one.
- In a small group or cell group.
- In an evangelistic activity of the church.

In all cases, it will be important to make this presentation without haste, giving the unsaved the opportunity to ask questions and understand what the invitation that Jesus Christ makes to them consists of. Cleansing from

sins committed and receiving eternal life is a gift received by faith, but it also includes a challenge. To enter eternal life with God, one must remain in the experience of salvation, walking away from sin and walking close to Jesus every day. That is why in the evangelistic presentation, it will be necessary to teach people that Jesus came to be our Savior and also the Lord of our life. The call to salvation goes beyond a call to repent; it is a call to start a new life following Jesus as a disciple.

Once the person understands Jesus' invitation, we ask them if they want to pray for forgiveness for their sins and begin to be a follower of Jesus. If the answer is affirmative, we guide them to pray the prayer of faith to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord.

A discipler in this stage of the journey must know a simple plan to present the plan of salvation. It will be important to memorize the verses and be prepared to guide the conversation by asking and answering questions.

SIMPLE PRESENTATION FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP EVANGELISM

- a. God loves you and has a plan for your life (John 3:16; John 10:10).
 - Is God interested in our lives?
 - What kind of life does God want for us?
 - What did God do to show us his love?
 - What does God want to give us?
- b. There is a problem that prevents human beings from experiencing this full life (Romans 3:23, 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6; Romans 5:8).
 - What is sin?
 - Who offers us the only solution to the problem of sin?
 - Who paid the price to free us from the punishment we deserve for our sins?
- c. Christ gives us a New Life (John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - How can I receive the gift of this New Life?
 - What does it mean to repent?
 - What does it mean to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord?
 - Do you want to pray for the Lord to cleanse your sins and start living this New Life starting today?

5. New disciple

When a person has prayed the prayer of faith to receive Christ as Savior and Lord, he or she has been born as a new disciple. This is the time when the new believer needs two things:

a. Confirmation of their salvation. After praying together, the first thing we are going to do is congratulate the person for the important decision they have made. We invite them to read what the Bible says about him or her in John 1:12 and John 3:36 (where it states that they are now a son or daughter of God and has eternal life).

b. Receive the first instructions. The new disciple needs us to guide them to take the first steps in their Christian life. At this moment it is important to

Cell Group:

A small group of people that meets in the church or outside of it on a regular basis, often weekly. There are different types of cell groups. Depending on their purpose, they can be evangelistic, discipleship, spiritual growth, prayer, ministry groups that serve the community, among others. When these groups grow in number, they divide and multiply, forming new cell groups.

Evangelistic campaigns must be followed by responsible follow-up of new converts. Otherwise we will be giving their souls to the devil.

remind them that God's will for their life, starting today, is for them to live away from sin and learn to cultivate their relationship with Jesus. We can read the passages of 1 John 3:9 and 5:17 together. There are four things that the new believer will need to put into practice to grow as Jesus' disciple:

- Bible: Help them understand that the Bible is the Word of God and in it God reveals his will for our lives. That is why it is important to start reading a portion each day, starting with a gospel like Luke or John. If they do not have a Bible, one will have to be provided.
- Prayer: Teach them that prayer is the way we grow a relationship with God. Every day we need to talk to God to worship Him, thank Him, ask Him for help with our needs, and intercede for others.
- Church: Help them understand that the church was started by Jesus so that we can support each other. In church, we gather to worship, learn from God's Word together, fellowship, and serve God.
- Discipleship: Help them see the importance of attending a discipleship group where more mature Christians will help them grow in their Christian life.

Conversion:

The translation from the Greek verb epistrephus literally means to turn around, go back or return.

It is used in the New Testament to describe the decision of the unconverted to turn their life around, abandoning sin to follow Jesus.

Objectives for the disciple in the Preventive Grace stage

In this section we are going to define the goal of evangelism.



The goal of discipleship in the Preventive Grace stage is to help unsaved people draw closer to God. In pre-conversion, we accompany the unconverted in their spiritual awakening until reaching the final objective, which is to present them with the message of salvation and guide them to make the decision to follow Christ as a disciple. In this stage, we can identify three weak points in many churches.

The first is the lack of friendship of the members with unconverted people. At this stage, the target group is people in the community (neighbors, acquaintances, family members, students, co-workers of church members, etc.). New believers are the ones who have the most relationships with unsaved people, which is why we must encourage them to bear witness to their faith and invite their network of relationships to special groups or activities for unsaved people.

However, when the church has mostly mature members, we need to encourage them to intentionally seek to make friends with unsaved people. For example, joining a gym or other group to make friends, serving my neighbors by helping with tasks such as cleaning the garden, taking care of children or the elderly; invite co-workers or students to have coffee, etc.

The second weak point is the lack of people trained for personal evangelism. Church leaders are responsible for providing training to the congregation so that they can win their friends to Christ.

The third weak point is the incorporation of spiritual babies into discipleship for new believers (Saving Grace). In many churches, new people or visitors often attend, but there is not an intentional plan to bring these people to the conversion experience and incorporate them into a discipleship group. Frequently in discipleship groups we find people of all ages who have attended church for months and years and are not sure of their salvation. Our mission to make disciples begins by offering all people who have contact with the church the opportunity to repent of their sins and start a New Life as a disciple of Jesus.

If we find weaknesses like these in our local church, we must correct them.

What strategy can we implement?

Now we'll get to know some strategies that are getting good results.



For discipleship in the Preventive Grace stage or pre-conversion, we can implement different strategies. The chosen strategy will depend on the characteristics of the community, the culture and also the gifts of the church members.

We will mention some ideas that are having good results in various places.

1. Small groups or cell groups. These are groups that meet outside the church and are very attractive to unconverted people who come at the invitation of a friend. In these groups, one or more trained leaders with knowledge in evangelism and conducting Bible studies will be needed. What distinguishes the meetings of these groups is the family atmosphere that facilitates informal conversation.

Let's look at some variants:

- *Cell groups for believers:* In these groups the members of the church meet to have fellowship, study the Word together and serve their community. But they are prepared to evangelize when a non-believer attends. The guest is introduced as "a friend" so that everyone understands that on that day the cell will be evangelistic, they will share their testimonies and present the plan of salvation to guide the guest to accept Jesus as Savior.

- *Cell groups for non-converts.* These cell groups target a specific target group, for example, university students, adolescents, women, married couples, men, seniors, etc. These people are invited to a series of Bible studies which are designed especially for the needs and topics of interest of each group. In these cases, the discipler, who is a Bible teacher, must know how to guide the group in learning biblical principles for life. There are programs designed for target groups of non-Christians such as the ALPHA plan and others.

2. Special activities for non-believers. The venue can be a hall or on the church premises. In these activities, members are instructed to invite their friends for whom they have been praying. A theme is chosen for the activity, which can be Mother's Day, friend's day, country's day, etc. A receptive atmosphere is prepared with decorations, food and a program with

If we analyze the statistics of "new" believers in our local church and district in the last five years, can we affirm that we are fulfilling the mission of making disciples?

music related to the theme of the celebration. People are seated at tables that facilitate conversation and a testimony is presented that impacts lives. It can be someone famous such as a soccer player, actor, professional, or a person from the community who has a testimony of a life transformed by Jesus. After the activity, members are instructed to share their testimony with their friends and invite them to a small group or church meeting.

The discipler

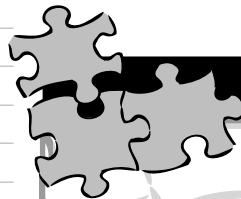
Now we are going to see the qualities of a discipler for the unconverted.



ALPHA is an evangelism tool for groups of unconverted people, which consists of 10 sessions with videos that introduce dialogue on topics that bring non-believers closer to the conversion experience. It is a free plan and sessions can be downloaded online: <https://alpha.org/about/>

The discipler of the unconverted who is going to lead a group or cell must have the following characteristics:

1. Has gifts of evangelism, discernment, leadership, teaching, among others.
2. Has a calling and passion to reach the unconverted for Christ.
3. Communicates in the language of the target group (Avoids words that the unconverted person does not understand).
4. Accepts and loves people as they are.
5. Understands the habits and preferences of people in the community.
6. Knows how to listen.
7. Has good interpersonal relationships.
8. Is available outside of meeting hours to the people in their group.
9. Has the ability and training to lead a participatory Bible study group.
10. Is punctual and responsible.
11. Is a mature Christian, an example of holiness and Christian life.
12. Is under the authority of the pastor and leadership of the Church.
13. Works as a team with other leaders, especially w/ evangelists and disciplers.
14. Has a firm commitment to the local church, its mission and its doctrine.
15. Knows how to give wise advice to unconverted people in their crises and problems.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The Holy Spirit is seeking non-Christians in our community to become disciples of Jesus. Unconverted people go through a process of spiritual awakening that we need to know to accompany them with our prayers and friendship. Those who show interest need us to guide them so that they can make the decision to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord. As a church, we are responsible for implementing strategies to attract the unsaved and help them become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Remember how you became a Christian. What attracted you to the church?

2. Think about your friends, acquaintances, or family members who are not Christians. What type of activity would attract them to get to know other Christians and listen to their testimonies?

3. Here are some ideas to attract your non-Christian acquaintances. Which ones have you not started implementing yet? Mark with an x.

- My neighbors and friends know that I am a Christian.
- I pray daily for their needs.
- I get closer to them to cultivate friendships.
- I intentionally make friends with non-Christians.
- I spend informal time with non-believers.
- I help with any needs that I can.
- I show the holiness of life in my daily life.
- I introduce my non-Christian friends to my Christian friends.
- I invite them to activities with my Christian brothers and sisters.
- I learn to guide others to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord.

4. Write the names of 2 or 3 unsaved people that you know from your community, work, study, new people who are coming to the church, or people from your own family, for whom you commit to pray and become friends with to lead them to be disciples of Jesus in this year.

5. *There are times in life when people are more receptive to hearing the gospel message. Think about these people or others you know and write a friend or acquaintance's name in the right column.*

Times of receptivity	Name
Death of a close family member	
Divorce or separation	
Accident or illness	
Marriage	
Pregnancy or birth of a child	
Moving to a new house	
Dismissal or job change	
Retirement	
Family/business economic crisis	
Natural disaster, house fire, etc.	

6. *There are relational and emotional needs that are universal to all human beings. Think again about your unsaved acquaintances and their needs, and place their names in the right column.*

Need	Name
To be loved	
Have a purpose in life	
Forgiveness	
Feel valuable	
To be freed from problems such as worry, regret, bitterness.	
To learn to resolve conflicts in the family and at work.	

7. *As a class, take time to pray and consecrate your life to the ministry of discipleship. Pray for each other to remain firm in this commitment.*



LESSON 5

Baptism: Commitment to the Family of God

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Characterize the new believer.
- Describe the factors for their growth.
- Assess the role of the discipler as a life model.

Main Ideas

- Relationships of trust in a discipleship group facilitate the growth of disciples.
- The Christian life is learned by “contagion;” that is why the disciplers of new believers must be models of a high quality of Christian life.

Introduction

In the previous lesson, we studied that evangelism and discipleship must walk hand in hand if we want to be faithful to the mission of making disciples in the image of Christ in the nations. Once the unconverted accepts Jesus as Savior, they need to grow in the likeness of their Lord, and the church is responsible for providing discipleship at each stage of their growth according to their level of spiritual development.

In this lesson, we will study how to lead a new convert to a commitment to Jesus Christ and the local church. In the Journey of Grace discipleship plan, this is the stage that corresponds to Saving Grace. One of the main goals of the stage is baptism. At this level, we also teach new believers that God’s will is for them to become committed members of the local church.

Spiritual Babies

In this section we are going to define the target group: Spiritual Babies.



At this level of discipleship, our target group is made up of spiritual babies. What is a spiritual baby? A spiritual baby is a new convert, someone who is taking their first steps in the Christian life.

Having been forgiven by Christ marks the beginning of a new life, walking step by step with Jesus, and learning from Him. They may be a child, a young person or an adult, but everyone needs to be guided as they move through these new experiences on this journey with Jesus.

The author of Hebrews describes them this way: “They are like newborn children, who cannot yet distinguish between good and evil” (5:13). People in this target group are the most fragile in the congregation, since due to their immaturity, they can be easy prey for Satan and return to their life without God. In order for them to develop healthily and become mature disciples, they need to learn to live as sons and daughters of God in the same way that human beings go through stages of natural growth in their development until they become adults.

*“Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.”
(Hebrews 5:13).*

The apostle Paul encountered disciples in the church of Corinth who, although they had been part of the church for some time, had not matured healthily in their faith: “Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

It is expected that a newborn in Christ will struggle with sinful habits, have attitudes motivated by pride, and will not understand beyond the basic teachings of the gospel, but this childhood should not be prolonged beyond what is necessary. A Christian who grows healthily learns enough to become a teacher and example of life for others, as the book of Hebrews states: “In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!” (Hebrews 5:12).

The conditions for healthy development

Now we will study how to promote the growth of disciples.

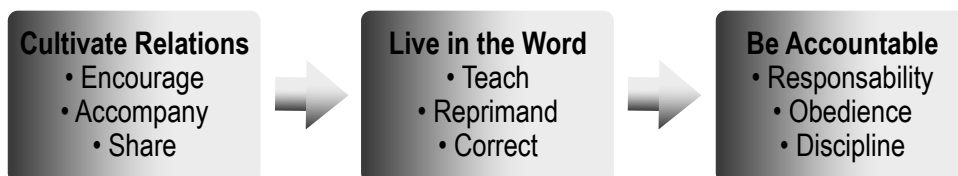


As we saw, discipleship is a process of transformation in which new disciples become Christians committed to their Lord and their Church. The Saving Grace part of the journey focuses on leading the new convert to make the decision to be baptized and join as a member of the local church. These are key decisions so that the new disciple can continue to grow and develop healthily in the future.

In the previous section, we saw that in the New Testament the new disciple is compared to a child. We can also compare them to a plant. Every plant needs certain favorable conditions to grow. Author Gregory Ogden compares the discipleship group to a greenhouse: “Greenhouses maximize environmental conditions so that there is greater growth than there would be under normal conditions” (2006, p.151). In discipleship groups, we create that microclimate that new believers need so that, through the action of the Holy Spirit in their life and through the group, they develop healthy and strong.

For the new disciples to achieve this goal, they will need us to provide them with the following conditions:

Indispensable Factors for Growth



Greenhouse:

Enclosure in which adequate environmental conditions are maintained to favor the cultivation of plants.

Cultivate Relationships

A small discipleship group is the ideal environment to cultivate deep and sincere relationships. To promote growth in the Christian life, we need that safe space where we can share with our brothers and sisters about the areas of our lives that need to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Being able to confess our sins to our fellow Christians facilitates the healing process. By talking about our struggles and weaknesses with a trusted group, we become stronger, we understand more about our vulnerability, we grow in our dependence on God, and Satan's power to influence us is weakened. Sincere and transparent relationships allow us to learn from each other, sharing valuable experiences about how to overcome temptation.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to learn to care for each other, encourage and reaffirm each other, accompany each other in the difficult moments of life, listen to each other, and give each other advice from the Word of God.

Living in the Word

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the importance of studying the Bible and putting its teachings into practice for our growth is summarized: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The apostle Paul affirms that the Word of God transforms us, rebukes us, corrects us and teaches us to live in holiness.

The Bible calls all followers of Jesus "disciples." This means someone who learns, a student who follows the example of their teacher. Disciples of Christ are followers and learners throughout their lives, and the purpose of this learning is to be more like Jesus every day in our entire way of living.

In the initial discipleship process, we learn that God has a wonderful plan for our lives, which encourages us to put our entire present and future into God's hands and obey Him in everything He commands us. It is very important to have the guidance of more mature brothers and sisters in the faith to clarify the doubts that arise in the interpretation of biblical texts..

Being Accountable

In the process of spiritual growth, it is very important to be accountable to others. This role, in the early stages, is carried out by the discipler, who will guide the new believer and ensure their healthy growth.

As we advance in this part of the discipleship journey, aspects arise that God wants to transform in the lives of our disciples, for example, establishing new habits such as prayer, daily devotional, meeting with the church to worship together, talking to others about Jesus, serving others, etc. They will also be transformed in other areas of their life such as character, dealing with others, etc.

"In this world where the normal thing is to trample on others, we all want to be affirmed. In the intimacy of a small discipleship group, we have the opportunity to observe the formation of that unique creation that God has made in creating my brother or sister, and to reaffirm what God is doing in them"
(Gregory Ogden).

"Disciples of Christ are followers and learners throughout our lives and the purpose of this learning is to be more like Jesus every day in our entire way of living."

It is very important that the new disciple learns to be disciplined and responsible by completing their tasks on time, attending the weekly meeting punctually, and showing a willingness to collaborate with the Spirit in their transformation. Also in this initial stage, the new disciple must demonstrate that they strive to overcome their sins and weaknesses, even if they have some setbacks along the way.

The plan

In this section we will learn how to organize the discipleship groups of the Saving Grace part of the Journey.



Before starting a discipleship group, it is necessary to do good planning that includes the selection of the team, resources and the preparation of the calendar of activities. Below is a guide to carrying out such planning according to the Journey of Grace discipleship plan.

The team

The human resource for discipling new believers includes, in addition to the pastor, the discipler and a secretary.

The pastor, who is ultimately responsible for the spiritual development of the congregation, will supervise the performance of the team, perform baptisms and welcome new members into the local church. The pastor is responsible for presenting the candidates to the Evangelism and Membership Committee of the local church, who together with the pastor approves the new members (Paragraph 110.8 Manual Church of the Nazarene 2017-2021).

The discipler will be responsible for guiding new believers in their first steps in the Christian life. He or she will ensure their progress in the study of the lessons, in the application of what they have learned to their lives, and in their integration into the family of faith. During this time, the discipler will report to the pastor on each person's progress.

The secretary will keep the records of those enrolled, complete the Baptism and Membership certificates and the course completion certificates. They may also be assigned other responsibilities, such as preparing study books, Bibles, registration forms, creating groups via cell phone or internet, assisting with the details at the Baptism ceremony, among others.

Resources

In the Journey of Grace discipleship plan we have two main lesson books for this level of Saving Grace for adults:

-New Life in Christ: It includes six lessons that guide the new believer in their first steps as a disciple of Jesus and prepares them to join the communion of the church through the Lord's Supper and baptism. This book includes the "Baptism Application" card to be filled out by the new convert and the Course Completion Certificate.

The books for the Journey of Grace can be downloaded for free from Discipleship Resources on the website:
www.NdiResources.MesoNaz.org

Other resources for this level:
 For children:
 *Friends of Jesus
 For teenagers:
 *High voltage
 For adults:
 *Following Jesus
 These books and a full list for each part of the journey for each age group can be found at www.NdiResources.MesoNaz.org

-Keys to an abundant Christian life: Includes seven lessons that guide the new disciple in the spiritual principles of the Great Commandment, that is, putting into practice in their life loving God above all things and loving others. Furthermore, they initiate the new believer into the experience of the complete surrender of their life to the Lord, the filling of the Holy Spirit, service to others, and commitment to the Great Commission. This book includes the “Membership Application” card to be filled out by the candidate and the Course Completion Certificate.

These books are designed as a study guide for the disciple and the discipler. Each includes a number of additional resources, such as: Daily devotionals based on the Gospel of Luke, Dictionary for new believers, What we Nazarenes believe (the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene explained), History and ministry of the Church of the Nazarene in the world and others.

-Bibles: It is important to have Bibles to give as gifts or sell, in case the new disciple does not have one. Preferably in a simple language version, such as the New International Version.

-Additional Resources: These additional resources are also recommended for disciples on this part of the journey: Following Jesus #1 - Who is Jesus and What Does It Mean to Follow Him; Following Jesus #2 - What Does it Mean to Be “In Christ”?; Following Jesus #3 - What Does it Mean to Be Part of the People of God?; Way, Truth, Life; Articles of Faith card; Nazarene Essentials

Calendar

When making the calendar for the Saving Grace part of the journey, we must include the dates and times for group meetings and key events, such as baptism, the reception of new members, and also a graduation activity. Let’s look at an example of a calendar for the 2 main books. (Using additional books will obviously extend the calendar):

Weeks	Activity	Place/Time	Person in charge
	Registration 1-3 weeks before	Church	Secretary/Discipler
1-6	Group Meetings Book: New Life in Christ	Classroom	Discipler
7	Baptism/handing out certificates	Church Picnic	Pastor/discipler
8-14	Group meetings Book: Keys to an Abundant Christian Life	Classroom	Discipler
15	Preparation for church membership	Classroom	Pastor/Discipler
16	Membership Reception	Church	Pastor/Discipler

The Baptism Service

The baptism service marks a very important milestone for the life of the new believer and also for the local church. It is the new disciple who requests to be baptized to give a public testimony of their conversion and decision to follow Jesus as His disciple. For the church, the reception of new brothers and sisters is a cause for joy and celebration, but it is also a time to commit to receiving and caring for the new members of the spiritual family.

At the end of the New Life in Christ lessons, it is advisable to organize a session with all the disciples to have a time of fellowship and preparation for the sacrament of baptism. This session may include:

- A rehearsal.
- A time for questions.
- Instruction on appropriate clothing to wear during the baptism.
- Encouragement for them to invite their family and friends.
- Practice of their testimonies.

Preparation for Church Membership

Upon completion of the Saving Grace Level discipleship books, it is important for the pastor to have a special time with candidates for church membership. In this session, it will be important to verify that the candidates believe in the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene and wish to join as members knowing their privileges and obligations:

- Join the communion of the local church, regularly attending services.
- Believe in the Articles of Faith (basic doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene).
- Know the form of government of the local Church and submit to its leadership.
- Serve with their gifts, supporting the ministries of the church.
- Contribute faithfully with their tithes and offerings.
- Commit to the Covenant of Christian Character and the Covenant of Christian Conduct (Church of the Nazarene Manual, Part III).
- Continue to higher levels of spiritual growth.

“For the church, the reception of new brothers and sisters is a reason for joy and celebration, but it is also a time to commit to receiving and caring for the new members of the spiritual family.”

The Reception Service for new members

When welcoming new members and introducing them to the congregation, it is important to include the following:

- Public commitment to the church (See ritual to receive new members, paragraph 801 Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021).
- Remind them of their commitment to give offerings and tithe regularly, and give them their tithe envelope.

Graduation time

The celebration of the completion of studies is very important in each stage of discipleship. Each of the books in this stage includes a certificate of completion of studies at the end.

This graduation ceremony can be done in the same baptism service and reception of members or separately. Some churches celebrate new members with gifts, a time of fellowship, or a special meal, so that the entire congregation has the opportunity to celebrate the spiritual growth of the new members.

The discipler's responsibility in the Saving Grace part of the Journey

Finally we will study the responsibilities of the discipler.



The discipler of new believers must have a calling and gifts for discipleship and the assurance that he or she has been chosen and called by God for that ministry. Discipleship will require an investment of a lot of time and energy, and we cannot remain in this task without the love and passion for developing new believers, passion and love that only the Holy Spirit can give us.

In his grace, God imparts special gifts to his sons and daughters for this ministry, such as: Teaching, discernment, knowledge, leadership, pastoring, faith, encouragement, evangelism, intercession, among others. These gifts develop as we make disciples (we learn from experience), but it is also important to take advantage of all the resources that the church makes available to us to prepare ourselves ministerially.

The responsibilities of a discipler in the Saving Grace part of the journey are:

Pray constantly for their disciples

Discipleship is a ministry in which we do not work alone. It is the Holy Spirit who does the work of transforming the minds and hearts of people, and it is the discipler who will be available to the disciples 24 hours a day. That is why prayer is a fundamental discipline of disciplers. Their prayers should be directed to the following objectives:

- That the disciples develop the spiritual disciplines.
- That the Lord enlightens their minds and help them grasp the truths of the Word.
- That they will persevere in discipleship and not give in to pressure from family, friends, or sinful habits to stop.
- That God would meet the needs of the disciples and their families.

Cultivate Relationships

Discipleship ministry is based on cultivating relationships. For a new believer to remain in the local church, it is essential that they make friends with other brothers and sisters. The discipler will share his or her life, experiences, and knowledge to guide others. It is vitally important that they develop relationships of friendship, love, trust and mutual learning with their disciples and among their disciples. New believers have similar problems, doubts, and fears, so they can talk, encourage, and learn from each other.

It is important to help new disciples make friends with some strategies such as planning fellowship times with other brothers and sisters who have similar life experiences. In the case of people who are struggling to get rid of addictions or specific problems, they can be connected with a mature brother or sister who has triumphed over the same problem and who could share their testimony and experience.

Model the Christian life

The life of the discipler will be the first model of Christian life that the new disciple will have. The natural tendency of the spiritual baby will be to imitate their discipler. The discipler, first of all, is called to be a teacher of life, someone who transmits the life of Christ to others, who teaches how to live like Christ. The new disciple cannot see Christ; what they can see is Christ living in their discipler.

New disciples need to be transformed in their entire being; this includes body, mind, soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Little by little they must reorganize their entire lives according to the principles of holy living that Jesus taught for all who are part of his church. To do this, they need to see other faithful Christians acting godly in real life circumstances.

We can say that the Christian life is learned by “contagion.” That is why it is so essential that disciplers be high-quality models in their Christian life, examples that when reproduced will contribute to the growth of a healthier, more committed, more generous, more fruitful church in its ministry.

Be a patient teacher

Patience is an indispensable virtue of good teachers. Good teachers know that the most important thing is that each lesson is assimilated and carried into the life of the disciple. The disciples will need to be encouraged to continue putting into practice what they have learned, since these lessons teach essential habits for their growth and permanence in the Christian life.

Evaluate their disciple’s growth

We can measure the healthy growth of the disciples through observation, questions, applying self-evaluation (their testimonies), through the testimony of their family and friends who have been able to see changes in them, etc.

Spiritual babies are very fragile and need intercessors to fight spiritually for them, since Satan will use all his tricks to try to divert them from their purpose of following Jesus.

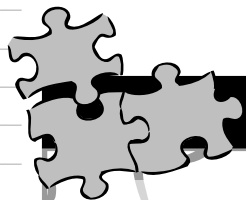
Let us remember that new disciples need to develop new commitments, which we can evaluate by answering the following questions:

- *Commitment to discipleship:* Do they complete the lessons? Do they attend weekly meetings on time? Do they participate in group discussions?
- *Commitment to obedience:* Do they apply the teachings to their life? Can they testify to changes in their character? Is there progress in overcoming temptation and sinful habits? Do they practice new habits of prayer, daily devotions, attendance at services?
- *Commitment to loving others:* Do they serve others? Do they share their testimony with others??

*“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:23).*

Be accountable to their spiritual leaders

The discipler must be a person loyal to their pastor and the doctrines of the church in which they serve. Periodic meetings with the pastor and/or person in charge of the local discipleship program will be very helpful to define strategies, plans, calendars, receive training, direction, give performance reports and evaluate results. Also meetings like these have the purpose of providing motivation, receiving guidance and advice in difficult situations and, especially, praying for each other and for the ministry.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

We are responsible for providing spiritual babies with what is needed for their healthy development, such as Discipleship groups, Bible learning and accountability. The discipler plays an important role as an example of life and teacher of new believers, guiding them to the experience of baptism and an active commitment as members of the local church.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Evaluate the way you have been disciplined. Point out the positive aspects (what helped you grow) and the negative aspects (what should be avoided).

2. Evaluate your own life in terms of the example of holy living that others can see. What areas do you need to strengthen to be an example of Christian life for new believers to imitate?

3. In groups of three, evaluate your church's current strategy for discipling new believers. Point out what is being done well and should continue, what should be changed, and what needs to be implemented.

4. In the same groups, come up with creative ideas to make it easier for new believers to make friends with church members.

5. In the same groups, brainstorm creative ideas for the congregation to celebrate the reception and graduation of new members of the local church.



LESSON 6

Growth – Commitment to a Life of Holiness

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Know the high objectives of Jesus' discipleship.
- Understand that loving is a requirement to serve.
- Assess the role of the discipler teacher.

Main Ideas

- The discipler of the Sanctifying Grace stage is first of all a teacher trainer of holy lives.
- The life of holiness consists of learning to love God above all else and our neighbors with the love of God.

Introduction

As we saw in the previous lessons, commitment to baptism and church membership are not the ultimate goals of discipleship. The disciple is a person who is learning to be like Jesus. To achieve the profile of an authentic disciple, one's whole life must be transformed by the Holy Spirit. The disciple must learn to cultivate a relationship with Christ, but he must also grow in love and service to others.

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In the early church model, leaders were responsible for training new brothers and sisters until they were fully prepared to serve others (2 Timothy 3:17). Contemporary healthy churches implement strategies to keep the congregation in constant growth. People grow because they are being transformed by the Holy Spirit in their entire way of living. These churches have understood that living in holiness is the essential requirement to assume responsibilities in the Body of Christ.

That is why in this lesson we are going to study how to lead new members to be Christians committed to the holiness of life.

Heart Transformation

In this section we are going to study the goals of Jesus' style of discipleship. 

In the initial stages of the journey of discipleship, we learn to cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus and begin to obey him, following his example. From there, we need to continue growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ to become saints like Him.

In the process of discipleship, Jesus sought to form the hearts of his disciples, that is, to transform them from the inside out, starting from their feelings and will. He didn't waste time trying to change what they did, but rather he focused on why they did it.

Jesus had one main objective for discipling the twelve - to exchange their self-centered focus for the vision of God's merciful love. Jesus imparted guiding spiritual principles to them; by accepting them, they agreed to change their attitudes toward people and situations, and therefore, their actions were also transformed. Acceptance of living according to these guiding spiritual principles is the key that sets in motion the process of improvement. What were these principles that Jesus taught?

Desire first what God desires: In Matthew 6:33, Jesus teaches that the disciple must first seek the kingdom of God. “Seek” is the translation of the Greek “*zethethus*,” which means, “to go after.” The holy disciple seeks to do the will of God in each and every area of their life, as the author Vargas Cruzado explains: “To seek first the kingdom of God, in the spiritual sense, is to seek the sovereignty of God over oneself.” Vehemently seeking righteousness is one of the tasks in which Jesus disciplined them. Righteousness (from the Greek “*dekaiosume*”) indicates right action, righteousness in all your actions, whether big or small. God’s subjects never act according to their own desires nor do they incline to the desires of other humans, but to that of God” (1991: 20, 22).

Be willing to pay the highest price, take up the cross: The cross represents suffering and death. We know that in some areas of the world, serving Christ puts our brothers and sisters at risk of literal death, but Jesus was referring more to the fact that all of his followers must undergo some type of suffering. Author Stuart Briscoe says: “Taking up the cross means so consecrating ourselves to the Master’s will for our lives that, living one day at a time, we carry the burden faithfully even through pain and suffering, and sometimes, death itself” (1990: 99).

In Matthew 24:13, Jesus says, “...but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” This promise of salvation is for those who persevere to the end. Jesus calls his disciples to remain faithful because whoever does not do so will lose the status of being his disciple. It is important to remember this demand of the Master at the beginning of the 21st century, where all things are taken as transitory, such as job, house, car, church and even partner. The true disciples of Jesus are those who persevere in the face of adversity, even when it seems impossible to bear.

Love the Word of God: The disciple of Christ submits to the authority of the Word. He loves God’s Word because he loves the Author of that Word. The life of a Christian cannot be built without the Word. The Word is the manual of discipleship and is the guide in the restoration of people. We cannot learn to live in holiness without submitting ourselves in obedience to the Word.

Serve others: Jesus taught that true greatness is to be found in the path of service. This is the most important principle of Christian leadership. But service is not only for the leaders, but for each disciple of the Lord, who must serve the people with the same attitude as Jesus, without making distinctions between people. The source that motivates service to others is God’s love filling our hearts. We are filled with God’s love only when we renounce pride and allow the Holy Spirit to fill us completely.

Living a disciplined life: The disciplined life consists of overcoming temptations at every moment. Any distraction that takes the disciple away from the spiritual disciplines is a dangerous temptation. In today’s world, there are many voices that want to silence the voice of conscience. Satan uses distractions; he is a master in the art of entertaining believers and keeping them away from healthy habits that produce spiritual growth, such as Bible reading, prayer, attending worship services, and service.

“We are filled with the love of God only when we renounce pride and allow the Holy Spirit to fill us completely.”

Henrichsen summarizes the problem of undisciplined living in the following: “You sow a thought and reap an act, you sow an act and reap a habit, you sow a habit and reap an eternity” (1976: 29).

Disciplined living is not easy, but Jesus taught that the disciple must discipline him or herself in all areas of their life. Vargas Cruzado affirms that a disciple must steward well their time, money and body: “In the spiritual area, he fulfills his duties towards God. In his social life, he fulfills all the duties of a responsible citizen, being an example to those who do not know God” (1990: 17-28).

Learn to love as God loves: God loves each person with holy love. The way in which human beings love each other is very distant from that love. Jesus taught his disciples to love themselves and others with this love. This love is powerful to transform people and is the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the disciple of Christ.

Jesus knew that this was the only love that could hold the disciples together when he was not among them, and that is why to the end he prays to the Father that they may be invested in this kind of selfless love (John 13:34).). But as S. Briscoe rightly states: “It is easy to talk about loving others, but it is hard work, especially when it comes to doing helpful, humble and simple tasks. It is common for believers to say out loud that they love, while at the same time not wanting to serve. When that happens, spiritual surgery is needed” (1990: 172). Jesus’ disciples had to learn to love with God’s love and not with the human love that comes from a selfish heart.

Broaden their vision: Jesus helped them see beyond the nationalistic selfishness with which they had been raised. Little by little, they began to understand the purpose for which the church existed in the world. “Jesus gave them a perspective toward all nations. He challenged them to look at the fields ‘because they are white for harvest’ and made it known to them in no uncertain terms that ‘the field is the world’” (Lewis 1990: 94).

Objectives of the “Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness” level of discipleship

Now we will study the objectives of the Sanctifying Grace Growth in Holiness Discipleship level.



In the Journey of Grace Discipleship plan, the general objective of the Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness part of the journey is to guide the new member in the process of growth towards and in the life of holiness.

What is it to live in holiness? We can summarize holiness in a very simple way: The life of holiness consists of loving God above all else, and loving our neighbors with that same love of God that dwells in our being, through the Holy Spirit.

God’s purpose for our lives is for us to continue growing in loving God and loving others. Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment more important than these” (Mark 12:30-31).

Learning to love God above all else implies a transformation in the way of thinking, in the way of managing emotions (feeling), and in acting.

The doctrine of holiness of life that God calls his sons and daughters to is the doctrine that the Church of the Nazarene embraces and which is called to be taught to its congregations around the world.

As pastors and leaders of our churches, we are responsible for training our people to live in holiness and for developing them as ministers who serve others for the right reasons. The life of holiness is opposite to one dominated by pride. A heart full of pride cannot love with the merciful love of God.

We need this experience of growth in the love of God to grow according to Jesus' model. This was the goal of Paul's discipleship of the Churches: "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:14-19).

When each of us begins to walk in the Christian life, we are dominated by selfish motivations, which need to be cleansed from our hearts. Only when we renounce these and allow God to fill us with holy love from His Holy Spirit can we grow towards a life consecrated to service.

In the following graph we can see the natural result of a disciple who grows in the holy love of God:



Resources for discipling new members

Now we'll be informed about the materials for discipleship in the Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness part of the journey.

To help churches fulfill the purpose of guiding their people in growth in the life of holiness, for the Growth in Holiness part of the journey, the "Filled with the Spirit" series has been developed. These books focus on the consolidation and growth needs of people who have recently been incorporated into local church membership.

The Filled With the Spirit series encompasses three books:

- The Spirit-Filled Life
- The Mind Refocused on Christ
- The Fruit-Filled Life

Holiness:

It is the very essence of God, who is sinless. In the Old Testament, it was applied to any person or object that was consecrated to the service of God. In the New Testament, it refers to Jesus and the members of his church. Holiness is a command from God for all his children so that they live away from sin. It is the cleansing of original sin from the heart so that God and neighbor are loved wholeheartedly.

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life." (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7).

The book series
"Filled with the Spirit"
and other resources for
adults for this stage can
be downloaded for free at
the Discipleship Resources
website:
NdiResources.MesoNaz.org

Resources for children
and youth for the Growth
in Holiness stage are
available here:
NdiResources.MesoNaz.org

Each book contains 13 lessons, therefore, the study of the three books extends for nine months, in which the member of the church will achieve the following objectives:

- Identify the natural and progressive changes that are the result of the action of the Holy Spirit in their life, changes that are observable not only by him or herself, but by all of their relationships.
- Grow in life filled with love for God, an essential requirement to serve the Lord and our fellow human beings.
- Collaborate with the Holy Spirit in the progressive and total transformation of life according to the model of Jesus Christ.

Additional Resources for this part of the journey include: Basic Lessons of the Ministries of the Church; Way, Truth, Life (chapt.4).

Tips for planning the Growth in Holiness stage

In this section we will see some implementation ideas.



After the reception of new members, once the Saving Grace level has been completed, it is important to continue with the Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness level. The brothers and sisters have already become accustomed to weekly study and it is better to start them on the next stage before they fill this valuable time with other things.

New members will be eager to serve, so it will be important to encourage them to join a ministry as helpers since they still need to grow and be trained to serve as a teacher or leader, that is, to be responsible for others.

Growth in Holiness books are designed for small group study with a leader or discipling teacher. Ideas for illustrations with objects or group dynamics are included in the lessons to reinforce the core teaching. The Activity Sheets are designed to be done as the lesson presentation flows.

For the weekly meeting of these discipleship groups, there are a variety of options we can choose from, depending on what is best for your church:

Church classes: These can meet on a weekday or Sunday as part of Bible or Sunday School classes.

Small groups in homes (cells): You can start as many groups as desired, always taking into account that for each cell you will need a master discipler. These will be closed groups since it is a course and they will advance together until the book is completed.

Homogeneous groups (women, young people, men, couples, among others). Peer groups allow for greater interaction since their members share similar experiences and concerns. These groups can meet in the church, in homes or in another facility, such as a work center, cafe or other.

You should also consider creating virtual groups. In all options we must emphasize attendance, since it is a course that is a requirement to move to the next level, which is Leadership Development, where they will receive training in the School of Leadership to serve in the ministries of the church.

Regarding the calendar, it can be extended from nine months to a year:

Month	Activity	Place / Time	Person in Charge
	Registration 1-3 weeks before	Church	Secretary
January to March	Group meetings Book: The Spirit-Filled Life	Classroom	Master Discippler
May a July	Group meetings Book: The Mind Refocused on Christ	Classroom	Master Discippler
September to November	Group meetings Book: The Fruit-Filled Life	Classroom	Master Discippler
December	Graduation/Registration for the School of Leadership	Church	Pastor and Master Discippler

As for the human team, in addition to the pastor, a master discipler and a secretary will be needed to do the registrations and take care of other details.

The Discipler in the Growing in Holiness stage

Finally we will see the discipler's responsibilities.



The Growth in Holiness level discipler will be responsible for ensuring the integral growth of the members of his group as they advance in the study.

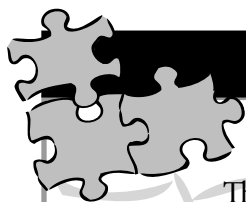
He or she must be a person who has a calling and gifts for teaching and who feels comfortable with classes with participatory dynamics. That's why their role description is "master discipler." A master discipler is a trainer of lives, whose objective is that those they disciple will overcome the ties of pride and the mind inclined to satisfy the desires of the flesh, to abandon the worldly practices typical of their culture and context, and to commit to a life filled with the Spirit and its fruit. They must be a wise and patient person, willing to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the restoration process that He will carry out on each brother and sister in the group.

Their other responsibilities will be similar to those of the Saving Grace stage discipler included in the previous lesson. However, it is important to emphasize that they must be a model person of a life of holiness, that is, they must be an example of loving God, loving others, and in their dedication to service.

We need to take responsibility for discipling people to live in holiness. The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene recommends that its churches choose as leaders:

"...active members who profess the experience of entire sanctification and whose lives give public testimony of the grace of God that calls us to a holy life; that they are in harmony with the doctrines, government and practices of the Church of the Nazarene; and who faithfully support the local church with their attendance, active service, and their tithes and offerings. Church officials must be fully committed to making Christ-like disciples among the nations" (Part III Covenant of Christian Conduct F).

A master discipler is a trainer of lives; their objective is for their disciples to overcome the ties of pride and the mind inclined to satisfy the desires of the flesh, to abandon the worldly practices typical of their culture and context, and to commit to a life filled with the Spirit and its fruit.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

New members need to be guided to understand the life of holiness to which Jesus Christ calls all his disciples. Through small groups and under the guidance of a master discipler, we can grow not only in understanding this new lifestyle filled with the love of God, but we also learn to put it into practice in our lives.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Evaluate your life in regards to the spiritual principles that Jesus taught his disciples. Rate your level of commitment to each by placing an "x" in the corresponding column of the table below.

Values / Spiritual Principles	Level of commitment		
	Weak	Medium	Strong
1. First desire is what God desires			
2. Willing to pay the highest price: Take up the cross			
3. Loves the Word of God			
4. Serves others			
5. Lives a disciplined life			
6. Learns to love how God loves			
7. Broadens the vision			

2. Write a plan to grow in your level of commitment to the principles/values you assessed as weak and medium.

3. In groups of three to four members, answer the following:

- What strategy for discipling our church members do we have so that they learn to live in holiness?
- Judging by how our church members demonstrate that they love God and others, what is our evaluation of this strategy? What do we need to change, improve or incorporate?

4. In the same groups, propose creative ideas to encourage church members to enroll in the Growth in Holiness discipleship courses.



LESSON 7

Ministerial Development: Commitment to God's Mission

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Understand that the call to serve is for everyone.
- Define the objectives in the training of leaders.
- Know the available resources.

Main Ideas

- Mature members need to be trained to serve in a ministry.
- All disciples receive spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit.
- We were specially created to serve God in some specific task in His kingdom.

“Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.”
(1 Corinthians 13:8).

Mature members are those who through discipleship have reached the level of commitment to the life of holiness. But we must not deceive ourselves, holiness is not God’s final goal for his sons and daughters. Holy living is the essential requirement for serving God (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13). We serve God when we serve our fellow human beings, just as Jesus did.

Church leadership is responsible for training for ministry all committed members who have been previously discipled at the basic levels and who bear witness to holy living.

That is why in this lesson we are going to study how to lead mature Christians to actively serve in a ministry. We will also see how to take advantage of the resources provided by the Church of the Nazarene at the Sanctifying Grace - Leadership Development discipleship level incorporating the School of Leadership.

Introduction

We are called to serve others

In this section we will study spiritual gifts, God’s calling, and ministry. 

Each disciple has a vocation, that is, a purpose or mission for which God has given them life. This vocation is fulfilled in everything a person does, whether in church, at work, at school, in their family, etc.

One’s vocation is unique and individual. You could say that we were custom created to be able to serve God in that vocation. Whether we receive a salary for the exercise of that vocation or not, that vocation is always the place where we serve God; It is our ministry. So if our vocation is to be a baker, we serve our fellow humans by feeding their bodies and we do this as a service to God.

Investing our lives in serving others is an essential requirement for our development. We cannot grow in the image of Jesus Christ if we do not invest our lives in meeting the needs of others. This is why the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to God’s sons and daughters (1 Corinthians 13:4; Romans 12:6).



A spiritual gift is the ability or capacity received from God, through the Holy Spirit, to do some Christian service. Spiritual Gifts are tools for ministry; that is why we must guide believers so that each one can discover their gifts.

In addition to spiritual gifts, there is a call to a special and unique function within the Body of Christ, which God gives to each of his children (1 Corinthians 12). When each believer serves according to his or her gift, it prevents a few members from becoming overburdened and exhausted. Many volunteers are needed in the church to serve in various capacities; some are more visible than others, but all are essential to the healthy development of the church. The more members involved and the more diverse the ministries, the more effective a congregation will be in the mission of making disciples of Christ in their community.

All of God's sons and daughters are called to serve in a ministry. The term "ministry" encompasses all job responsibilities in churches. In the New Testament, ministry was a function that all brothers and sisters performed, that is, all disciples participated in the task of making Christ known according to their gifts and abilities. The apostle Peter stated: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9).

Many Christians do not find a place where they can serve in ministries because they think they cannot because they do not have the gifts to be a preacher, teacher or do not play musical instruments. The problem is that worship has been made the only place and time where Christians think they can serve. This is a big mistake because a church must be in ministry every day of the week through the service of its members.

Each disciple must learn to value everything they do as a service to the Lord. We must be aware that every act of our life should bring glory to God. This change of vision transforms the routine tasks of life into events to show others the glory of the Lord.

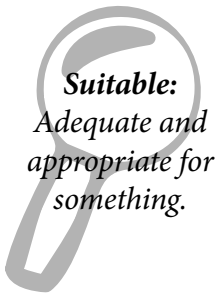
We must learn to see service at home, on the street, at work and everywhere as extended arms of the ministries of the local church. Any training we receive in the local congregation to serve will not only be used in church activities, but will enrich my service everywhere.

In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul teaches about the call to ministry: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

First of all, in this passage the apostle Paul affirms that the call to ministry is for all believers since he does not discriminate against anyone based on their age, sex, marital status, social class, race or academic preparation.

Secondly, he refers to the training that leaders are responsible for giving to the members of the body of Christ so that they can serve in the different ministries to which God calls them.





Suitable:
Adequate and appropriate for something.

Third, it is important to note that the goal of all ministries is to “build up” the body of Christ, that is, the church. Jesus Christ wants the building of his church to be solid and resistant, well founded and also to have the capacity to expand, incorporating new disciples, as many as possible.

A building with these qualities needs to be built by qualified workers. The apostle Paul in other passages refers to the suitability of those who minister. For example in 2 Timothy 2:2, he refers to the qualities that teachers should have: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

So to serve in the ministries of the church, we must not only identify our gifts and our calling, but we also need to be trained by more experienced ministry leaders.

Objectives of discipleship in the Ministry Development part of the journey

Continuing, we will study the objectives of the formation of ministry leaders.



The Ministry Development part of the journey of discipleship consists of the training of believers for ministry. In the Journey of Grace discipleship plan, we advise leaders that all brothers and sisters who enter this stage should have previously gone through the earlier discipleship levels of Saving Grace and Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness.

To provide training to lay people for the purpose of serving in a local church ministry, we will need to focus on students achieving the following objectives:

1. Identify the spiritual gifts they have received from the Holy Spirit.

There are different ways to identify and confirm spiritual gifts. Initially, quizzes can be completed, which will show the person’s inclination towards certain gifts or ministries. However, it will be necessary for the brothers and sisters to understand what each gift consists of, as they may have wrong ideas. It may be that upon completing the quiz, people lean towards the more visible gifts, such as leadership, preaching, leading worship, music, praise, among others. That is why it is very important that these gifts be “tested,” that is, put into practice. It will be then when people will be able to know if they really have those gifts and if this ministry is their vocation and calling.

A gift is verified if it passes the following tests:

- The believer feels comfortable or enjoys that work.
- The disciple takes time to prepare.
- The disciple strives to do their best, instead of evading their responsibility, doing things lazily, or complaining about what they have to do.
- The people or the congregation feel blessed by their work.

What are those less visible, but important, gifts for the development of the church?

2. Know how the ministry to which they have been called functions.

To serve in a ministry, it is necessary to know how it is organized, since the ministries in the Church of the Nazarene serve at different levels: local, district, field, regional and global.

It will also be necessary to know your mission, vision, values and principles, the responsibilities of your collaborators, and the available tools. (*Basic Lessons of the Ministries of the Church* is a good resource to help with this. Each lesson covers a different ministry of the church.)

Each ministry has its main areas of service. For example, Nazarene Youth International (NYI) at its local level has three: Evangelism, Discipleship and Leadership Development.

3. Acquire the tools to serve in that ministry.

To serve in a ministry, we need to develop specific skills. For example, a teacher of adults needs to develop skills to vary the way they direct a class, incorporating various resources and techniques, as well as knowing how to vary individual and group learning activities.

In addition, every servant needs to be trained in the biblical foundations of a ministry, understand the practical aspects of developing it in their context, train themselves to carry out their different functions and responsibilities, learn to evaluate the results, correct deficiencies and make the necessary improvements.

4. Receive inspiration and training from more experienced ministry leaders.

While many of the ministry tools must be perfected in practice, there is basic training that every volunteer will need to receive from more experienced leaders. However, in addition to all the advice and corrections that these leaders can provide, there is something very important that only they can transmit to us: the passion for that ministry.

Passion, that is, the love and commitment we made to the Lord who calls us to that ministry, is what will keep us firm in difficult times, which, without a doubt, we will all have to go through. That passion is learned by contagion, from good leaders.

5. Begin serving as an apprentice in that ministry.

One of the things we must correct in churches is the way we delegate responsibility to those who are starting out in a ministry. Sometimes a brother or sister is elected as a leader of a ministry or for another function in which he or she has no experience and has not been trained. This has caused many people to become frustrated and leave the ministry, or perform very poorly, failing to meet expectations.

Another issue that limits many people from using their gifts is a lack of confidence in their potential or a low appreciation of their abilities and talents, that is, they do not believe that they can be a teacher, lead a meeting or anything else they have never done before. People who are shy, have low self-esteem, or have not been valued in their past are the ones who will need to be most encouraged by leaders.



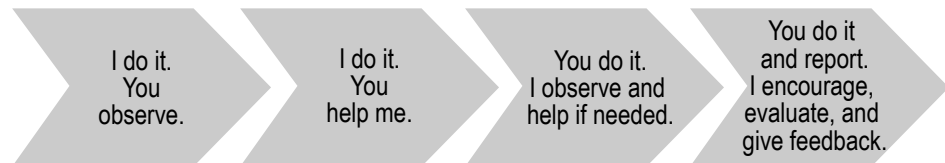
Passion:

A passionate person is one who has a love and commitment to something or someone.

We need to stop and ask: Who is responsible? Imagine a father who sends his son to dive into a two-meter-deep pool without first having taught him to swim and without floats. Don't we often do the same thing with volunteers in our church ministries?

What is the best way to train volunteers? We need to understand that a training process is needed and this will require time and effort on the part of the leaders. The following graph represents in a simple way the four stages of the learning process:

Steps in the Process of Learning



As we will see in the next lesson, the School of Leadership regional plan is based on these five objectives to develop leaders.

Resources for Ministry Development

We will now look at the objectives of the School of Leadership plan.

To contribute to the comprehensive formation of those called to service, the Church of the Nazarene of the Mesoamerica Region has developed the School of Leadership. The School of Leadership course series has been designed with the purpose of providing a tool to the church for the formation and training of its members in order to actively integrate them into Christian service according to the gifts and calling (vocation) that they have received from their Lord.

The general objective of the School of Leadership is: "To collaborate with the local church in equipping the 'Saints for the work of ministry,' grounding them in solid theological biblical knowledge and developing them in the exercise of their gifts for service in their local congregation and in society."

The specific objectives of this plan are threefold:

- ✓ Develop the ministerial gifts of the local congregation.
- ✓ Multiply service ministries in the church and community.
- ✓ Raise awareness of the vocation of professional ministry in its diverse forms.

In the next lesson we will study the key aspects of starting a School of Leadership in the local church.

*The School of Leadership
plan books can be
downloaded from:
[www.NdiResources.
MesoNaz.org](http://www.NdiResources.MesoNaz.org)*

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Mature members need to discover their gifts and God's personal calling on their lives. God's will is for us to serve him in some specific responsibility in the expansion of his kingdom, and for this he has created each and every one of us with unique characteristics. It is the church leaders who are responsible for providing that training.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In your own words write a definition of spiritual gift, calling, and ministry.

Spiritual gift: _____

Calling: _____

Ministry: _____

2. Point out two or three areas in which a ministry that is always training new apprentices is strengthened.

3. What are the dangers that threaten a church that does not have a plan to train mature members for service? Mention two or three.

4. Think of a leader who is training another in a ministry, for example, evangelism or other. What would the leader and the learner do at each stage of the learning process?

5. In groups of 3 or 4: Assess your church members' current commitment to ministry responsibilities. Then describe how your church would change in 5 to 10 years if you begin implementing a Ministry Development plan.



LESSON 8

Implementation of the School of Leadership

Current Discipleship Strategies

Objectives

- Know the School of Leadership plan.
- Acquire ideas for implementation.
- Identify the responsibilities of each one.

Main Ideas

- The holy lives of disciples must be the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ serving the world.
- The ministry leader and the teacher are responsible for training students in the practical aspects of ministry.

Introduction

As we saw in the previous lesson, church leaders are responsible for training each mature member so that they can serve according to their gifts and calling. In the Mesoamerica Region of the Church of the Nazarene, a course plan has been developed to support the local church in this task.

That is why in this book we have presented the resource of the Journey of Grace Discipleship plan, a plan designed for the churches of the Nazarene so that we have tools available to disciple all target groups according to their level of development, in order to take them to new levels of commitment.

Each Nazarene must be involved in the mission of “Making Christ-like disciples in the nations,” and to do this, we need to train the people of our congregations to be disciples committed to Christ, his church and his mission.

Our mission of discipleship would be incomplete if we only implemented the first three parts of the journey. As we already mentioned in the previous lesson, God’s plan for his disciples is that they live loving him and that their holy lives are the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ serving the world.

That is why in this lesson we are going to study how to start a School of Leadership in our local church.

The courses of the School of Leadership Plan

In this section we will get to know the books used in the School of Leadership. 

The purpose of the School of Leadership is to train volunteers who will serve in the different ministries of a local church. The areas of ministry currently covered are: pastoral leadership, evangelism, discipleship, compassionate ministries, intercultural missions and youth ministry.

In the School of Leadership, each book is a course. The plan begins with five Basic Courses which constitute the common basis for all ministries, and continues with six Specialized Courses that provide training to begin serving in one of the ministries of the church.

Among the basic books, one of the courses studied is *Discovering my vocation in Christ*, whose objective is to guide the students to identify their gifts and their vocation or calling. In this course, they are guided toward a local church ministry where God calls them to serve.

After passing the five basic courses, the student continues training in a ministerial specialty. There are six Ministerial Specialties available and each one has six courses:

- *Ministerial Leadership*: In this specialty, all those who have gifts and calling related to the leadership and pastoral care of the congregation will be trained.
- *Youth Ministry*: In this ministry, those who are called to serve in ministries with adolescents and young people will be trained.
- *Intercultural Missions*: In this ministry area, those who will serve in intercultural/cross cultural ministry will be trained.
- *Christian Discipleship*: This specialty is for all who have a calling and gifts to serve in the ministries of discipleship and Christian education.
- *Evangelism*: Ministry that trains the team that serves in evangelistic activities.
- *Compassion Ministries*: It is an area for those called to serve others in physical and material needs.

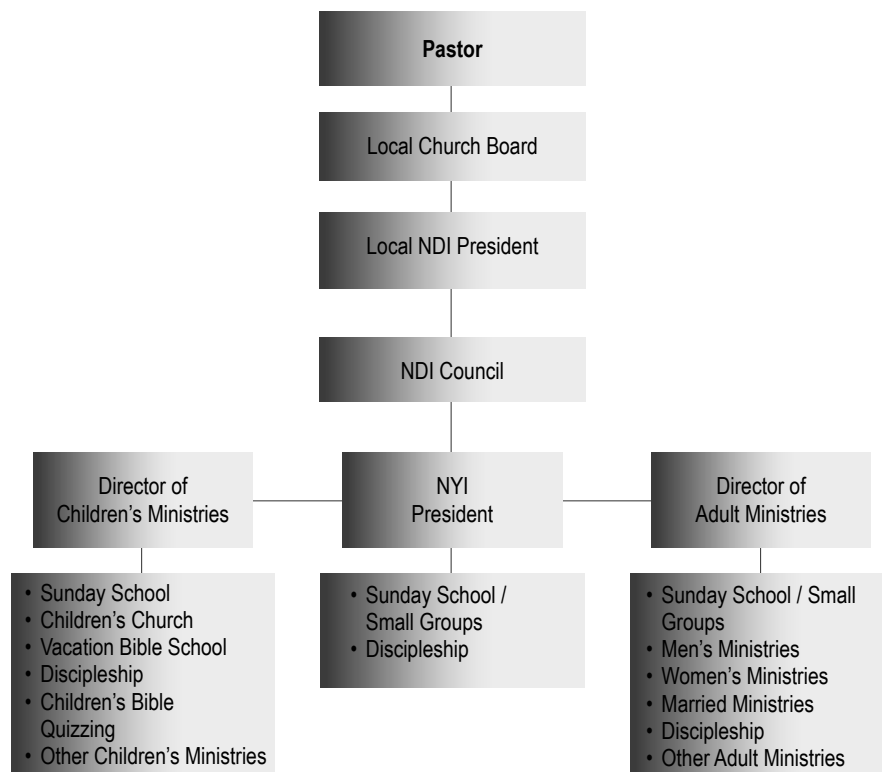
The table on page 79 includes all basic and specialty courses.

Team and Calendar

Now we are going to see how to organize the courses.



The team to organize a School of Leadership in the local church can range from basic to more complex, depending on the size of the church. The organization chart for a basic team would look like this:



The NDI President, with the support of the Secretary, will be responsible for carrying out promotion, registration, collections, preparation of books and materials, supervision of courses and teacher performance, and graduation. (However, a School of Leadership Director can be appointed to be responsible for leading this ministry instead of the NDI President.) The Ministry Leaders, together with the pastor and NDI President (and Director), participate in the design of the students' practices, as we will see later.

In order to be trained to serve in a ministry, the student must pass eleven courses, which include the five basic courses, plus the six specialty courses, which can be planned in two years.

Each course is designed to last eight weeks (2 months). The five basic courses can be planned in the first year (10 months) and the specialized courses in the following year (12 months).

It will be important, as in the previous segments of the journey of Saving Grace and Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness, to celebrate those who completed their studies with a graduation ceremony. To do this, local leaders can inform the respective Nazarene theological institution, which will grant the student a certificate (or diploma) in the Specialized Ministry.

The course design

In continuation, we will see how a School of Leadership class is taught.



The School of Leadership courses have been designed for 8 sessions of 90-minute classes. In addition, students and teacher will invest time outside the classroom for ministerial practice during the 8 weeks of the course.

Classes or group meetings have been planned in a way that facilitates participation and encourages service in ministry teams. That is, a traditional class model should not be followed where the teacher presents the lesson and the student simply listens.

For this reason, in the 90 minutes that a class lasts, the teacher will divide the time into the following:

Introduction (3 minutes): This time is to make a link with the previous topic and pray for the class. For this purpose, the lessons contain the section *What did we learn?* This provides a brief summary of the lesson content. In addition, each lesson includes a summary of the main ideas at the beginning.

Review and discussion of the lesson (30 to 35 minutes): This is the longest section since it develops the contents of the lesson. These lessons have been written thinking that the book is the teacher, so its content is expressed dynamically, in simple language, and connected to the ideas of the contemporary world.

The student must arrive at each class having studied the lesson. Let us remember that we are training leaders, and one of our objectives is for them to assume responsibility and learn to be disciplined to fulfill the tasks assigned to them in the ministries.

The teacher will be responsible for making this a dynamic and participatory time. They should not make the mistake of reading the content of the lesson again. What they have to do is review the topics of the lesson. For this they can use learning dynamics and visual media such as graphics, drawings, objects, pictures, questions, etc. They can also pre-assign multiple students to present parts of the lesson, etc. It is important that teacher and students use creativity in the classes and adapt to the resources they have available, such as a printed outline, blackboard, whiteboard, posterboard, projector, video, etc.

Complete the activities (20 minutes): Each lesson in the book has a page at the end that contains individual or group learning activities related to the topic studied.

Talk about Ministerial Practice (20 minutes). The School of Leadership courses have been designed so that the learning of thematic content advances at the same time that the student acquires practice in the ministry. That is why this time is very important for teachers and students to share and report to each other on what they are doing outside of classroom time.

The Ministerial Practice is assigned to each student at the beginning of a course. Each book on page 9 includes a list of suggested ministry activities for the course. As we will see later in this lesson, there is a team of church leaders who participate in both planning and training the students during their internship.

When talking about the practices that are in progress or completed, the teacher will guide the students' conversation so that they share what they learned, both their successes, their mistakes, or the difficulties that arose.

Prayer for Ministerial Practice (10 minutes): The class becomes a ministerial team and it is important to acquire the discipline of praying for each other. During the reporting time, topics will have arisen that we must take to the Father such as challenges, people in need, problems, gratitude for the results, among others.

Break (5 minutes): It is important to include a break time in the middle of class time or when it is more convenient to take a break.

Evaluation: In the School of Leadership plan, the student is evaluated in three areas: their work in class, their participation in ministerial practice outside of class, and a written evaluation at the end of the course.

The final evaluations have been designed to be an activity to reinforce what was learned in the course and not a rote repetition of the contents of the book. If necessary, students can consult their books and Bibles. What is proposed with this evaluation is to measure the student's understanding and appreciation of the topics covered, their spiritual growth, their progress in commitment to the mission of the local church, and their advancement in ministerial experience. This Final Evaluation is included at the end of each book and once completed, the student must copy or separate it from the book and deliver it to the course teacher.

Completing this activity will take about 15 minutes of time in the last class of the course.

In the Mesoamerica Region there are 8 educational institutions that serve the Church of the Nazarene in professional leadership training for a variety of ministries.

Planning for the practical ministry

Now we're going to see how to plan for the practical ministry experience.



How is the School of Leadership similar to the strategy that Jesus used to train his disciples?

A team composed of the pastor, the local ministry leader, the director of the School of Leadership and the teacher will propose ministry activities that the students can choose, according to their preferences and gifts.

They may include among the activities suggested in the book (page 9) and other needs of the ministries of the local church. Leaders must ensure that these activities are in accordance with the mission and ministry objectives of the local church. The list of ministerial practices must also be related to the topics studied in the course.

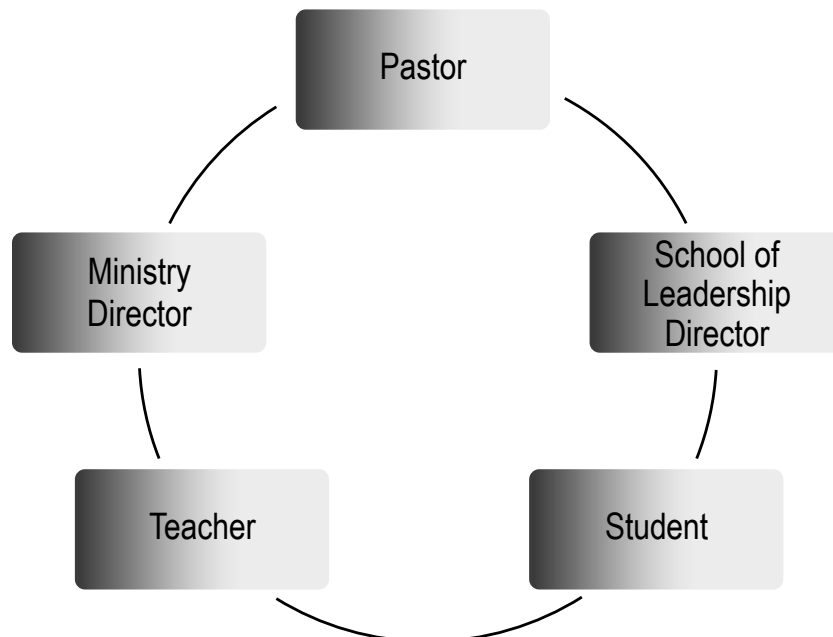
Students will choose their internships on the first day of class, according to their preferences. It is recommended to have no less than three ministerial activities per person, considering that they will have to be carried out during the duration of the 8-week course.

These practices can be carried out individually, in pairs or in a group. The entire group of students can also be assigned to the same project or different tasks in groups according to their interests, gifts and abilities.

It is advisable to involve students in a variety of ministry experiences that are new and challenging for them as they progress through the courses.

The ministry leader and teacher are responsible for training students in the practical aspects of ministry. They will be role models and coaches for students outside of the classroom. To do this, they will accompany the students by putting into practice the learning process that we saw in the previous lesson.

In the following graph you can see the team responsible for the Ministerial Practice:



Investing in the multiplication of leaders is one of the key factors for church growth and expansion.

Responsibilities of the teacher and student

Now we will see the responsibilities of the teacher and the student.



Teachers for the School of Leadership courses must have the following characteristics:

- Are pastors or lay people committed to the mission and ministry of the Church.
- Are members of the local Church of the Nazarene or another church in the area.
- Are leaders who transmit passion for the ministry in which they are going to train.
- Preferably have experience serving in the ministry they teach.
- It is not imperative that they have formal training in a theological institution.

The responsibilities of teachers are the following:

1. Prepare in advance by studying the content of the book and scheduling the use of time in class.
2. When studying the lesson you should have the Bible and a dictionary at hand. Although simple vocabulary is used in the lessons, it is recommended to “translate” what is considered difficult for students to understand, that is, put the lesson in the language they understand best.
3. Ensure that students study the material in the book and achieve the learning objectives.
4. Plan and accompany students in ministerial practice activities.
5. Keep attendance and grades up to date.
6. Teachers should not add study assignments or readings apart from the content of the book.
7. Be creative in designing learning activities in class and in planning ministry activities outside of class according to the reality of your local church and its context.

The School of Leadership student is responsible to:

- Enroll in the course on time.
- Study each lesson before the in-person class.
- Punctually attend face-to-face classes.
- Participate in activities in class.
- Participate in ministerial practice in the local church outside of class.
- Complete the final evaluation and deliver it to the teacher.

*“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
(Matthew 9:36).*

Teacher:

Jesus is without a doubt our best model for learning the art of teaching. He made eleven simple men the greatest teachers the world has ever known. Teaching is much more than transmitting knowledge. Christian education must transform lives, and those lives, in turn, must transform the world.

Continual Education

Finally we are going to see the last parts of the discipleship journey.

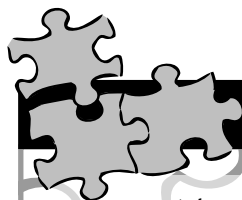
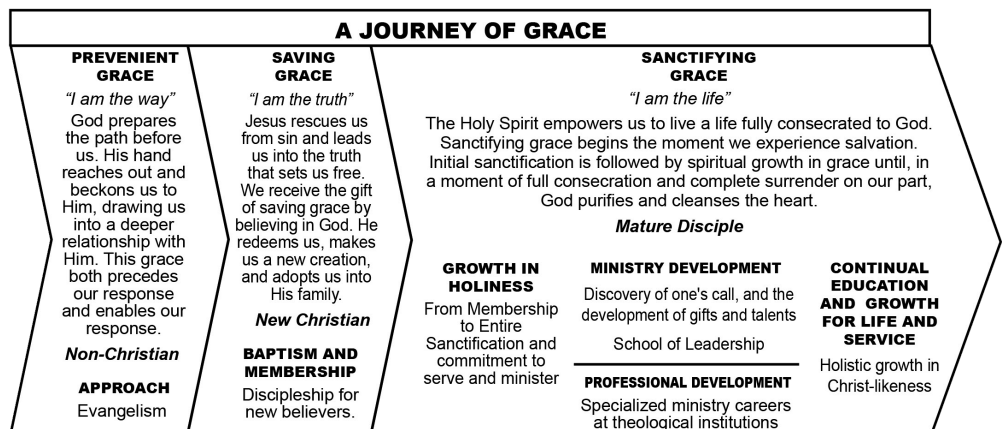


The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:12-14, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

At the end of the School of Leadership courses, the student will continue or start serving in the local church. When one does that, their calling is confirmed and they help build the church. In doing that, for some their desire to invest more time in ministry may increase. That is why the Church of the Nazarene offers in its different institutions and extension programs courses to train leaders with professional training in different ministries. This Professional Development also belongs to the Ministry Development level of the Journey of Grace discipleship plan.

But even for those who don't feel called to full time ministry, each Christian continues to be a disciple throughout his or her lifetime. Growth in Christlikeness should be the constant goal in our life. We call this last part of the journey *Continual Education and Growth for Life and Service* in the Journey of Grace discipleship plan.

For mature members, there are a variety of strategies that local churches employ to help people grow for a lifetime, such as preaching in services, Bible study classes in the church or in small groups meeting weekly in homes or another location. But it is also the responsibility of each disciple to take advantage of all opportunities for growth, attending workshops, congresses, conferences, reading books and through other media such as radio, internet, among others. And the result of this continued growth should be service.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The School of Leadership is a resource that helps us train mature members and actively involve them in the ministries of the local church so that they can serve others according to their individual gifts and calling.

SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP PLAN

Basic Courses

Discovering My Vocation in Christ
The DNA of the Nazarenes
Worship as a Lifestyle
The Bible and Its Message
Principles for Christian Life

Ministry Specialty Courses

Ministerial Leadership

- Foundations of an Efficient Church
- The Church and its Strategic Development
- Spiritual Growth of the Leader
- The Leader as Spiritual Guide
- Reaching our Generation
- Dynamic Communication of the Word

Evangelism

- What is evangelism
- Methods of evangelism
- Church Planting Strategies
- The evangelistic sermon
- Evangelism and global mission
- Maintaining focus

Intercultural Missions

- Global Mission Foundations
- The Global Mission Scenario
- The Local Church: Support of Global Mission
- The Local Church: Hotbed for Global Missionaries
- The Formation of the Nazarene Missionary
- Practical Issues in the Cross-cultural Field

Christian Discipleship

- Biblical foundations of discipleship
- Wesleyan Discipleship
- Current Discipleship Strategies
- Organization of Nazarene Discipleship International
- Christian education for children
- Christian education in the 21st Century

Compassionate Ministries

- Biblical Foundations of Compassion
- History of Compassionate Ministries
- Compassionate Ministries in the Local Church
- Holistic Child Development
- Disasters: Prevention, Response and Follow-Up
- The Church and AIDS

Youth Ministry

- The Adventure of My Life
- Leaving a Trace
- Challenge to Conquest
- Taking Care of the Sheep
- In Construction
- Someone Listen to Me

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. List three reasons why it is beneficial for a volunteer to be trained in ministry practice by a more experienced leader.

2. Propose three internship activities for one of the ministerial specialties. Then share the ideas with the group of students and evaluate together whether they support the mission and ministry objectives of the local church.

3. Together, the entire class as a group, make a list on the board of possible teachers for each of the ministry specialties, taking into account that each one meets the required characteristics.

4. In groups of three students, investigate the ministerial careers that are offered in different modalities (in person, video conference, online) in the Nazarene institutions in your region.

5. Take some time to thank God for the opportunities to be trained for the ministry that the Church of the Nazarene offers us.

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Discipleship Resources:

www.NdiResources.MesoNaz.org

Final Evaluation

Time



COURSE: CURRENT DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGIES

Name of student: _____

Church or Center where studied: _____

District: _____

Course Professor: _____

Date of this evaluation: _____

1. What is the group goal?

2. Mention from lowest to highest the levels of commitment that must exist in the life of a disciple of Christ, for healthy growth.

3. Briefly explain what the Journey of Grace discipleship plan consists of?

4. What did you learn in the ministerial practices of the course?

5. In your opinion, how could this course be improved?

About this book

Current Discipleship Strategies provides a step by step guide for the implementation of the discipleship ministry in the church. One's discipleship ministry should be designed with objectives, plans, and strategies that encompass all of the congregation. This book explains how to accompany people as they go through the different stages of their spiritual development, with the aim of leading them to an increasingly deeper commitment to Jesus Christ, his people, holiness of life and the mission.



The coordinator

Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez has served for over 40 years as a preacher, lecturer, educator, missionary, administrator and editor of books for various church ministries. She has written books in the area of discipleship, church development, holiness living and Christian education. Since 1995, she has lived in San Jose, Costa Rica, where she serves with her husband at the Nazarene Seminary of the Americas. They have two children and four grandchildren.

School of Leadership

The School of Leadership program brings a fresh and modern approach to ministerial training. It includes a series of five essential courses that will serve as a foundation for fruitful ministry in the modern church. In addition, the program contains six series of Ministry Specialties, each consisting of six courses oriented to a specific area of ministry. Each book in the program is designed to speak to both new and experienced ministers, introducing ideas, tools, and resources to elevate the quality of their ministry in practical and relevant ways for today's church.

Essential Courses

- Worship as a Lifestyle
- The Bible and its Message
- Discovering my Vocation in Christ
- The DNA of the Nazarenes
- Principles for Christian Life

Ministry Specialties

- Christian Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Ministerial Leadership
- Youth Ministry
- Compassionate Ministries
- Intercultural Missions

To download digital copies, visit: mesonaz.org/en/package/school-of-leadership

