



MEMBER'S HANDOUT

frameworks for discipleship





LEARNING OUTCOMES



At the end of this session you will understand:

1. The fundamental importance of discipleship.
2. The importance in forming disciples of:-
 - Clear discipleship vision and values.
 - A strong sense of community with appropriate relationships.
 - Good learning approaches.
 - The dynamic of engaging in God's mission
3. Biblical, historic and published resources on discipleship

You will be encouraged to apply these insights to:

Developing discipleship in those who are part of fresh expressions of church

RECOMMENDED READING



Graham Cray, *Disciples and Citizens*, IVP 2007
Steven Croft, *Growing New Christians*, Marshall Pickering 1993
Steven Croft, *Making New Disciples*, Marshall Pickering, 1994
James Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship*, CUP 1992
Jim Gallagher, *Soil for the Seed*, McCrimmons, 2001
Barbara Glasson, *Mixed-up Blessings*, Inspire 2006
Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, Brazos 2006
Alan Jamieson, *A Churchless Faith*, SPCK 2002 (contains an excellent summary of Fowler's stages of faith)
Laurence Singlehurst, *Loving the Lost*, Kingsway 2001
Graham Tomlin, *Growing people of virtue*, in *Hard Questions*, edited by Steven Croft, Church House Publishing, 2008
Sylvia Wilkey Collinson, *Making Disciples*, Paternoster 2004

RECOMMENDED DVDs

Mark Greene, *Imagine how we can reach the UK*, LICC 2006 (Excellent on whole life discipleship)
Rob Bell, *Nooma 008 Dust*, Zondervan 2005
Just Worship Volume1, Armadillo 2004



PART 1 THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP

The word Disciple, *mathetes*, means learner or follower. 2000 years ago Jesus called his first disciples using two simple, but life changing words, Follow Me (Mk 1: 16-20, Mt 4: 18-22, Lk 5:1-11). 2000 years on Jesus continues to extend the same challenging invitation.

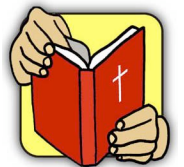
In 21st century Britain fresh expressions of church have a vital role to play in inviting people to respond to the call of Christ and then helping them grow in the journey of discipleship.

A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.

- ***It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples.***
- ***It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.***

Discipleship is vital for both the individual and the community. It is on the journey of discipleship that people come to faith, engage in ministry and mission and grow in holiness. Mature church develops as disciples grow and prayer, ministry and giving are released. As fresh expressions of church grow people of virtue, society itself is changed and transformed.

'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.' Matthew 28:19-20a



In English translations of the Great Commission there are four verbs:-

1. Go (therefore)
2. Make (disciples)
3. Baptise
4. Teach



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In the Greek there is only actually one verb, one imperative which governs the other three. Make disciples (one word in Greek). For the risen Jesus in Matthew's gospel the making of disciples was the prime objective given to those who would found the church.

***'When dealing with discipleship, and the related capacity to generate authentic followers of Jesus, we are dealing with that single most crucial factor that will in the end determine the quality of the whole – if we fail at this point then we must fail in all the others.'* Alan Hirsch**

Why is discipleship so crucial?



Watch Chapter 9 of Expressions: The DVD2

In buzz groups around the tables imagine or describe a member of your own fresh expression of church or the one you hope to begin – or else imagine a member of their current church.

Then say why you think discipleship is important and what the key challenges will be in your own situation for the person you have imagined.



PART 2 DISCIPLESHIP VISION AND VALUES

If fresh expressions are to live out the Great Commission and be fruitful discipleship communities five things need to be present.

- A shared vision for discipleship throughout the community
- Clear discipleship values.
- Appropriate and supportive relationships.
- Relevant and engaging ways of learning with accountability that facilitate growth.
- Ways of engaging in God's mission and reflecting on that engagement

The Target



A

B

C

D

E



Whole life discipleship

We believe that the Jesus who calls us to follow is Lord; Lord of all. Writing to the Philippians Paul deliberately asserts the lordship of Christ over and above the lordship of Caesar.

'Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' Phil 3:20

As a Roman citizen Paul makes clear that he owes his primary allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. His purpose is to bring the truth and values of Jesus into every aspect of life.

If Jesus is truly Lord of all there should be no sacred/secular divide, and so it follows that there are no aspects or stages in life that matter to God and others that don't. From the very beginning new disciples should be helped to develop whole life discipleship.

Whole in the sense of:-

1. Lifelong. No matter how young or old we are there is always the need for learning, growth and development. ("I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" Jn14:6)
2. Complete. The offering of our whole lives to Christ (Romans 12.1-2)
3. About every part of our life and worked out just as much in our home, work, leisure, finances, world and ethical issues as it does to prayer, bible study or the sacraments. ("I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly" Jn 10:10).

Values in Discipleship

Our values shape our behaviour, both individually and corporately. How we develop disciples will depend upon what we believe about discipleship.

What are your own values as a group or team?



1. ***Discipleship is a transformational journey with Christ.***
2. ***Discipleship is about the whole of our lives.***
3. ***Discipleship is relational.***
4. ***Discipleship involves learning and nurture.***

Discipleship as a transformational journey

Journeys in the ancient world had stronger elements of cost and danger than they do today. Think of the Exodus or of Paul's missionary journeys. Think also of the great Christian classic, Pilgrim's Progress in which discipleship is described in the image of a journey. Christian meets and grows through numerous hazards and temptations.

As we grow as disciples the form of journeying will vary. The writings of James Fowler and Alan Jamieson are very helpful in identifying 'stages of faith': we travel differently as we grow to maturity.

APPLICATION: VISION AND VALUES IN DISCIPLESHIP



In buzz groups around tables discuss these questions.

1. In our own church or fresh expression is discipleship as important on Monday as it is on Sunday?
2. How can your church or fresh expression equip the person you imagined for their mission and ministry in the whole of life and not just in the church?

Reflect with others on how the journey of discipleship is likely to unfold and develop for the person you imagined. What challenges will he or she face? What help and support will they need. Jot down your thoughts on the next page.



Discipleship ideas for your fresh expression/church situation:

PART THREE: THE WAYS AND MEANS OF DISCIPLESHIP

This section looks at the practical ways to encourage discipleship in fresh expressions of church and in established congregations. They have been present in a different "mix" throughout Christian history in (for example)

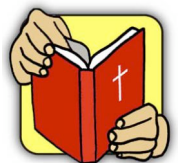
The early catechumenate: the two or three year process of initiation into the church developed in the first three centuries as people made the journey from pagan religion to Christianity.

The monastic movement. Monasteries were originally established as "schools of the Lord's service – places of discipleship.

The Methodist Class meetings in the early years of the Methodist movement as Wesley and others sought ways to enable the discipling and nurturing of many new converts with very little Christian background.

1. Prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit

"There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith saying, It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God". And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe". Acts 14. 22-23.





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Anyone who reads Paul's epistles regularly knows that his primary tool for encouraging and growing new Christians was his prayers both of thanksgiving and intercession. Prayer for new Christians for Paul is like a wrestling match or the pains of labour.

For examples see:

Ephesians 1.17-22; 3.14-22

Philippians 1.3-11

Colossians 1.9-14

Prayer is engaging in God's mission in the lives of new communities and new believers. The place to review your support for discipleship is to review your patterns of intercession. How do you pray for the people in your charge?

Prayer will also involve praying with people in times of ministry and personal prayer as well as intercession in their absence as they reach particular moments of crisis and growth. How will you do that in your own context?

2. Community, Mentoring and Mission

From the very beginning of His public ministry Jesus called his followers into a community of disciples. Peter and Andrew, James and John were called together and so began the journey of discipleship in community (Matthew 4:18-22).

When asked how her fresh expression nurtures disciples Barbara Glasson (the leader of the Bread Church, Somewhere Else in Liverpool) put it this way.

'Through friendship, laughter, being real with each other, finding a way in honest conversation, honouring questions, encouragement and mutual learning'



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Within most fresh expressions there is a strong emphasis on relationships, community and mutual accountability. There is a lot of eating, laughing, learning and praying together. The picture reflects that of Acts 2:42. The breaking of bread, sharing of lives and supporting of one another in mission are key values for many newly forming churches. They are also crucial for the forming of disciples.

In the forming of disciples the following relationships are key:

The small group.

These groups have different names and emphases. They are crucial for both learning and pastoral care. The Cell Group movement has much of value to offer for those looking to develop a fellowship of small groups (www.celluk.org.uk). For fans of the Methodist class system the Covenant Discipleship movement provides a contemporary application of the discipleship model so effectively developed by John Wesley (www.discipleshipresources.org). For those inspired by the Base-community movement that emerged from small discipling communities in Latin America, New Way provides training and resources (www.newway.org.uk).

The one to one.

Many fresh expressions are discovering value in one to one mentoring or apprenticing relationships. A good biblical model for this is provided by Paul and Timothy. This is especially valuable in missional church when someone new to the faith is paired with someone who has been journeying with Jesus for some time.

Revd Andrew Jones from Grace Church Hackney explains their approach:-

'We try and pair up people in discipleship relationships. They typically meet once a week to read the Bible together, pray and talk about issues they face. It's usually a more mature Christian meeting with a new or not-yet Christian. The shape of the relationship is worked out by the pair.'

Service side by side in a mission team.

We grow in one way when we are face to face in a small group setting. However we grow in another way in service as we work side by side with others in simple practical tasks and in Christian ministry. The members of your own team will be growing in discipleship in different ways as you explore or begin a fresh expression.



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The wider Church

Christian disciples are, and need to understand themselves to be, part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Many fresh expressions are small communities. These can offer great depth of relationship but breadth is also important. Whilst getting on with the relatives in any extended family can be challenging it is essential in all forms of church, that we seek to honour both the mandate of Jesus to "love one another" (Jn 13:34-35) and the prayer of Jesus "that they may all be one"(Jn 17:20-23). The wider church for all its faults and failings has a lot of wisdom, prayer and support to offer fresh expressions as they seek to grow new disciples.

In all these relationships there is a common need for 'safe space' in which to grow and time for the growth to happen.

Space to jot down thoughts for further reflection:



3. Learning and Nurture.

Disciples learn and are nurtured in many ways. These include:-

- Prayer.
- Worship.
- Holy Communion.
- Spiritual exercises and rhythms.
- Pilgrimage.
- Reading and study.
- Reflective living.
- Encouraging people to discover and use their gifts.
- Engaging in mission and service.
- Suffering.

'Although some may have a gift of teaching which they frequently use..... all members of the community have a responsibility for enriching and contributing to the upbuilding of others. This is achieved in part by the exercise of their spiritual gifts and the example of their faithful, Christlike living. Learning thus becomes a mutual, collaborative affair. Sylvia Wilkey-Collinson

Good teaching and learning matters – not least because of the missional mandate of Jesus!

***'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'* Matthew 28:19-20a**





Fresh expressions have typically grasped the need to be open, welcoming communities but there is more than openness needed when it comes to making disciples.

'the discipleship for which Jesus called was both open and committed. For many people today (including Christians) these two are a contradiction in terms' Professor James Dunn

Within open, welcoming fresh expressions there is a need for teaching and learning that is challenging, if disciples are to grow to maturity. Teaching that is based on the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 28: 20) and understood in the light of the whole of scripture. It needs to be linked to obedience and accountability.

Examples of Learning Materials

Within fresh expressions different approaches are being taken to teaching and learning. Some are making use of published resources whilst others are developing their own materials and approaches. Whatever approach is adapted it is important that intentional learning reflects the values explored earlier in this unit.

Within the Christian community both the individual disciple and those in leadership have a responsibility for learning. Discipleship has often been taught by an expert, but in fresh expressions there will be greater emphasis on 'side to side' learning. The need is for a co-produced learning culture in which disciples take their own learning seriously, leaders seek to facilitate good learning and the two collaborate together. Leaders do have a responsibility for ensuring that learning has substance as well as style and honours the creeds, theology and tradition of the wider Church.

There are many excellent published teaching/learning discipleship resources. The Fresh Expressions website and Share carry reviews of many of them. Here we highlight six different resources that embody different approaches to discipleship formation.



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1. Emmaus.

One of the best selling resources, Emmaus is a thoroughly biblical resource that strongly embraces an understanding of discipleship as a journey. There are three stages to Emmaus.

- Stage 1: Contact. A book on making contact and building relationships.
- Stage 2: Nurture. A 15 session course on Christian belief, growth and life.
- Stage 3: Growth: 15 short courses for ongoing growth and discipleship which help participants to apply their faith and live whole life Christianity.

For young people the excellent Youth Emmaus is also available in two stages.

www.e-mmaus.org.uk

2. Foundations21.

A significant new resource from the Bible Reading Fellowship. Foundations 21 is a purpose built, web based, discipleship course that covers most of the Christian basics and aims to bring people to a place where they can identify their key gifts and ministries.

A particularly innovative and inspiring feature of the course is the quiz at the beginning that enables participants to identify their Gospel Learning Style. The site has four gateways - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – through which participants enter the rooms (sections) of the course. The 12 rooms take people through key foundations of discipleship.

www.foundations21.org.uk

3. Beta.

Utilising a fascinating blend of biblical material, theology, and psychology, with a variety of methods of teaching and reflecting, Beta is an holistic, ten week course that links Christian faith with personal development and pastoral care. It aims to help people to:-

- Understand more fully what it is to be Christian
- Become more whole
- Grow in Christian community

The tone of the course is decidedly therapeutic. Emphasis is placed on the importance of relationships (including our relationship with God) and the need for healing and wholeness in ourselves and in our relationships.

www.beta-course.org



4. *A Passionate Life /Life Shapes.*

In the book *A Passionate Life* the authors Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad argue that we remember what we see for longer than what we hear. They then introduce eight shapes to explain and commit to memory eight facets of discipleship:-

1. A circle of repentance and faith.
2. A semi circle of rest and work.
3. A triangle of relationships.
4. A square of priorities.
5. A pentagon of ministry.
6. A hexagon of prayer.
7. A heptagon of life.
8. An octagon of peace.

www.lifeshapes.com

5. *Disciple*

Widely used in the Methodist Church but not so well known elsewhere, *Disciple* is an in depth 34 week course that aims to nurture disciples through bible study. The course certainly responds to James Dunn's call for committed discipleship. There is material for weekly meetings and daily study and reflection material. Those who complete *Disciple* will have gained a comprehensive biblical understanding of discipleship (both Old and New Testaments are studied in depth). The amount of material means that this is not a course for the faint hearted. For the super keen there are also *Disciple 2* and *Disciple 3*.

www.disciple.gb.com

6. *Glad You Asked*

This is an introductory course that uses key questions people ask about Christianity to help group members explore the faith. Very much in tune with the post modern/spiritual age, the course starts where people are, respecting their understandings and beliefs and then inviting them to consider the claims of Christianity. It adopts a circular rather than linear approach to learning. It is particularly suitable for students. When using *Glad You Asked* careful thought needs to be given to follow up discipleship material.

www.gladyouasked.org



As these short reviews show there is a great range of materials available. In choosing resources to use it is important to consider the context, needs and stages of faith that one is seeking to respond to.

Do it Yourself

Many published resources began life as home produced courses in local churches. More and more fresh expressions are developing innovative approaches for teaching and learning in the area of discipleship. In time more and more of these will, we hope, appear on Share.

For those seeking to develop their own learning resources there are some key questions to consider. Is the material used:-

- Biblical.
- Culturally relevant and engaging.
- True to the Christian tradition.
- Whole Life
- Both open and challenging

Does the approach to teaching and learning:-

- Cover different learning styles
- Provide for substance as well as style – in age when café church is cool we don't want to feed people cappuccino froth!
- Allow for co-produced learning
- Encourage the development of reflective disciples who take responsibility for their own discipleship

When developing materials it is always worth asking a trusted Christian friend to critique that which is being produced.

APPLICATION: WAYS AND MEANS



In the first application session you should have worked through your vision and values for discipleship and growth to maturity in your fresh expression of church. Keep the person you imagined at the beginning of the session in your mind. Now look at the specifics of how you are going to help them to grow. The following sections will be useful:

- How will you pray with and for people as a result of this session?
- How will they be supported in their growth by being part of a real community?
- Will small groups be important and how will you seek to structure them?
- Will one to one relationships be important?
- How will you encourage intentional learning and teaching? Will you use published material or develop something yourself?

At the end of the application time you should have a skeleton plan which can be worked on further in the weeks to come.



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Space for Skeleton Plan:



FURTHER REFLECTION

Journal

Take some time to do some reflection in three areas:



Write an account of the things which have helped you to grow in your own discipleship. Try not to write the things that you think ought to be helpful but the things which have actually led to significant growth. They may be tasks, chance encounters – whatever God brings to mind. What lessons do you learn for how other people grow in their discipleship?

Take a few minutes to write down how you think you may have played a part in someone else's growth. Which areas do you think you are particularly gifted in this area? How does God most seem to use you?

And finally, look back at the notes on praying for others and look up some of the passages in the epistles. What changes would it be helpful to make to the way you pray?

Reading

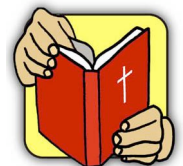
Either do some research into the discipleship resources online or by looking at the books and look more closely at something you think you might use or



Look at Alan Jameson's seminal book, *A Churchless Faith*, and write a short review for the rest of your team.

Bible Study

Look closely at the story of the call of the first disciples in Mark 1.16-20. What do you learn about the way Jesus calls disciples and what discipleship means?



Read carefully through Romans 12 and summarise the discipleship lessons for the rest of your team.



Team Work

Meet as a team and follow through and develop the outline plan for discipleship that you began to work out in the session. Go back over your answers to the questions in the two application exercises and fill them out in more depth. As an outcome summarise on one side of A4:



- Your vision and values in making disciples in your fresh expressions of church
- The way in which you will pray for new Christians
- The use you will make of small groups and mentoring
- The way in which people will connect with the wider body of Christ
- The discipleship learning resources you will use
- Anything else which seems important in taking this plan forward