

2008 Vision Night

Lessons We've Learned After One Year of Ministry in Small Groups

1. **It takes time to build honest, transparent, and authentic community in a small group.**
 - Most groups just forming community will take 6 to 12 months
 - Exceptions are groups that are birthed out of existing community, groups that form out of existing friendships, or groups that form with an intentional disciple-making plan
 - Serving the world together locally and globally helps immensely
 - Teaching the Word with authentic transparency and open discussion helps
 - Showing the Word by serving each other's needs definitely helps
 - Sharing meals, doing life together, and enjoying each others company beyond small group time helps as well

2. **Most small groups naturally drift toward an inward focus over time.**
 - That's why our fellowship must be around the Word of God to keep our focus upward and outward in order to realize that the small group is not about us.
 - Local and global ministry focus for each small group helps keep us from drifting inward

3. **Small Groups usually flow through stages to reach an intentional disciple-making stage and ultimate multiplication**
 - All groups need to be disciple-making outside of your group as you serve the world locally and globally, and within your group as you raise up new disciple-makers.
 - Disciple-making is not covering a curriculum, but one life investing in another life. Therefore some sense of relational community must exist for intentional disciple-making to begin within your group. This will take some time.
 - View Jesus' Timeline of disciple-making (see p. 5)
 - Jesus spent about a year in community with many disciples before he started his Intentional Disciple-making with the 12 apostles
 - He also appears to have spent a significant time with all 12, before he started spending more time with Peter, James, and John
 - He spent at least a year discipling the 12 before he sent them out on their own
 - View Ogden's Stages of Disciple-making in Jesus' life from Mark (see p.6)
 - In Transforming Discipleship, by Greg Ogden, he believes Jesus had four intentional stages that he took his disciples through to prepare them for disciple-making
 - Jesus was Showing, Sharing, Teaching, and Serving all the time with his disciples, even before He chose the 12
 - **Small Group Stages: Formulative Stage □ Intentional Disciple-making Stage □ Multiplication Stage (see p. 7)**
 - Small Group leaders need to identify where we they are in their intentional disciple-making plans for their groups
 - Once a Small Group multiplies, the stages begin over

4. **Groups need to develop a plan to begin intentional disciple-making within their group**
 - Good intentions are not enough
 - **A vision casting catalyst helps**
 - This could be a study like "Follow Me", a mission experience that you've had together, an overview of what disciple-making is all about, etc.
 - **An intentional multiplication date helps**

- Pastor David has established a date his group will multiply and everyone will need to be ready to lead a group at that point.
 - Multiplication dates give you a sense of urgency and a goal for which to be prepared.
 - **An intentional curriculum helps**
 - Even though disciple-making is not curriculum-driven, a good curriculum can help you be preparing everyone to lead.
 - Let the needs of the group determine the curriculum
 - See recommendations later in the outline
- 5. Intentional disciple-making within a small group best occurs with the same gender.**
- Men should disciple men, and women should disciple women
 - Same sex groups reach a greater level of honesty and transparency and help keep healthy emotional boundaries
 - It was Jesus' Model
 - We still need opposite sex' insights, perspectives, and gifts though, so some type of cross gender community is good. Even Jesus had it.
 - All in a small group can and should Show, Share, Teach, and Serve together even when you're doing intentional disciple-making by gender
 - View A Suggested Disciple-making Plan (see p. 8)
 - Same gender intentional disciple-making part can look differently in each group. There is not just one way to do it. Groups can continue to meet weekly in a co-ed experience and have disciple-making at another time, groups could meet by gender each week or every other week, or groups could form some type of combination of co-ed and same gender meetings.
- 6. Not all attendees of a small group will likely be ready for intentional disciple-making at the same time.**
- This shouldn't discourage leaders
 - We need to see where God is working and join Him with those whom are ready
 - Watch for the work of the Holy Spirit in individual's lives
- 7. Multiplying is difficult when you are experiencing true biblical community.**
- Yet, we must do it for the sake of the Kingdom. It was difficult for the early disciples. They needed persecution to finally move them out of Jerusalem and into the world.
 - Any of us can become the bottleneck that keeps our group from multiplying.
 - Individual members can be the bottleneck
 - Leaders can be the bottleneck
 - Staff can be the bottleneck by exercising too much control over when a group multiplies or by creating too encumbering a system to multiply leaders. From now on, we want you to decide when your group is ready to multiply and we'll resource you in any way we can help.
- 8. Groups that do not multiply within the first two to three years, will likely never multiply.**
- After a couple of years, it's sometimes best just to reform the group. The best way to do that is usually for the leader to leave and start another Small Group.
- 9. We need to unleash the Body at Brook Hills to start more small groups and go make disciples.**
- We need to be more organic in the way we start groups
 - We want anyone anytime anywhere to form Small Groups on their own. They can use the Message Discussion Guides (available on our website) to get started.
 - Our staff needs to be equippers, not administrators and managers

- We want to spend our time leading coaching sessions with three or four leaders at a time where we help one another develop intentional disciple-making plans for our groups, and where we learn from one another regarding effective leadership of our groups.
- We'll still seek to create connection opportunities for those wanting to get into groups.
- We'll be more available for one-on-one support meetings
- We'll create an annual Making Disciples Conference each year to equip all small group leaders to succeed in disciple-making, no monthly meetings
- Centralizing attendance takes a lot of time and resources
 - We'll equip someone in your group to use Small Group Toolbox to keep up with your attendance and communicate with your group, but we'll not be keeping up with attendance in the office.
 - We'll provide sign-in sheets for On-Campus groups to use
 - We'll survey the church at worship a couple of times a year to register and gauge small group participation.
- We'll advertise a Small Group when a small group leader goes through a simple interview with us, signs the deacon covenant, and agrees to attend coaching opportunities

10. There are legitimate times to close a small group and no longer advertise it for new participants.

- **When internal group dynamics need attention**
- **When intentional disciple-making begins within the group**
- **When a multiplication date has been set**
- Sunday morning Small Groups and Community Groups generally need to remain open to serve as a pass through to on-going Small Groups

11. Childcare with very many young preschoolers is extremely difficult in most homes.

- Therefore, we'll give on-campus adult space as a priority to adults with very young children, seniors who have physical handicaps, single parents, and other special needs

12. Any of us are capable of falling out of leadership if we're not maintaining intimacy with Christ

- Intimacy with Christ and abiding in Him must be our first focus as leaders
- Keep Christ's vision for your life in your eyes- To know Him and become like Him (Philippians 3:10)
- "The heart is deceitfully wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9)
- "Every inclination of man's heart is evil" (Genesis 8: 21)
- Spiritual Warfare is real so we need to be diligent and alert in prayer, confession, and accountability

13. We can influence the many, but we can only disciple a few

- My opinion and Ogden's in Transforming Discipleship, is that disciple-making best occurs in small group community verses one-on-one relationships
- One-on-one limits the exercise of the gifts of the Body in disciple-making
- One-on-one limits the insights and encouragement of others
- One-on-one encourages a hierarchical structure verses mutual encouragement and instruction that can limit multiplication. The student seldom feels they are as far along as the teacher and therefore ready to go make disciples.
- One on one was not Jesus' method, nor probably Paul's method either

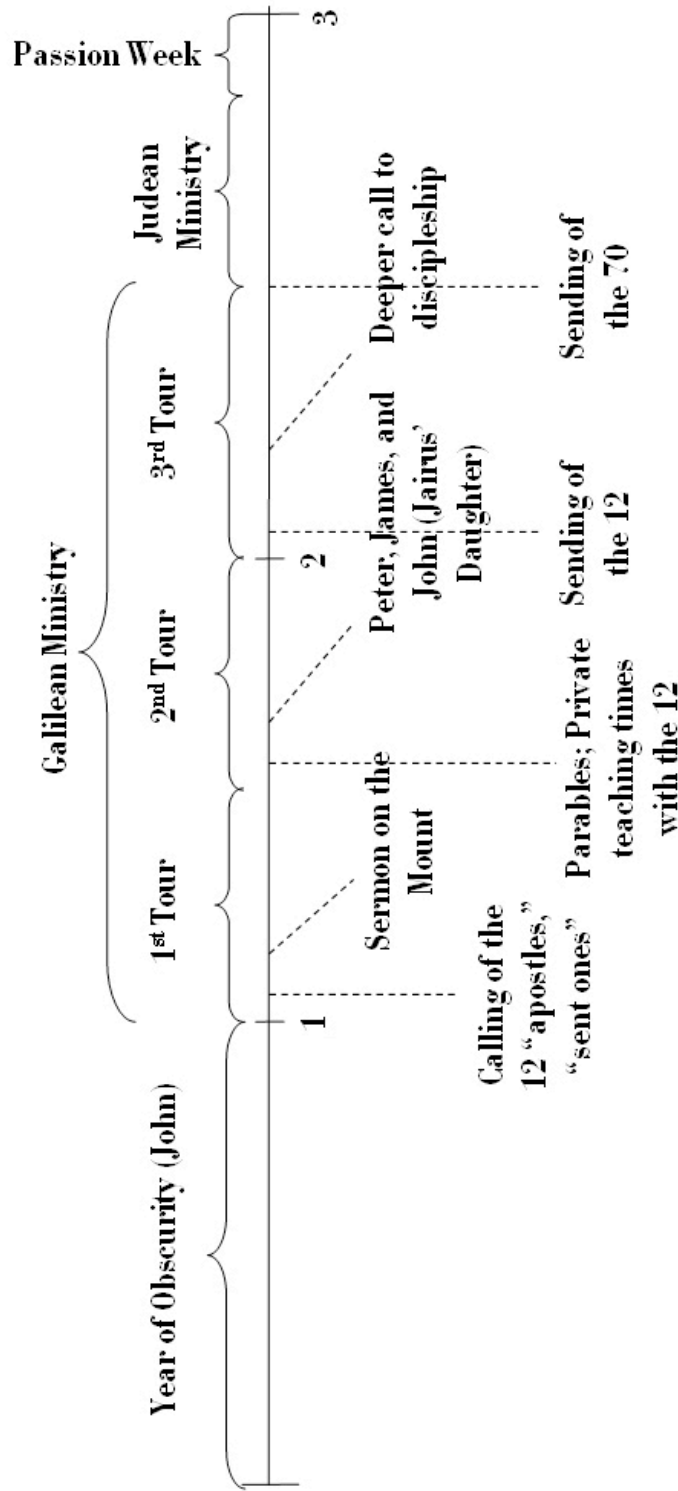
14. There is not a 'one-size fits all' curriculum or method to intentionally make disciples within your small group.

- Different groups will accomplish it differently. However the elements of Show, Share, Teach, and Serve need to be present, some type of small group community needs to exist, and an intentional disciple-making plan with the same gender needs to occur.
- **Curricula that we recommend to assist you:**
 - **ABIDE Small Group Study, available on our website**
 - **Discipleship Essentials, by Greg Ogden**
 - **Campus Crusade's Ten Steps To Christian Maturity**
 - **Master Life, by Avery Willis (published by LifeWay)**
 - **How People Change, by Paul David Tripp & Timothy Lane**
 - **For the Love of God, by D. A. Carson (Two volumes)**
 - **Step by Step Through the Old Testament and New Testament, published by LifeWay**
 - **David's Secret Church OT Survey and NT Survey**
 - **Various Biblical manhood & womanhood curricula**

15. God is faithful and exceedingly able to lead us in making disciples of all nations for His Glory!

- All He needs is available vessels. He'll lead us through the process if we'll engage our life in His mission for us to go and make disciples of all nations!

Jesus' Timeline of Disciple-Making



Created based on A.T. Robertson's, *Harmony of the Gospels*

Ogden's Disciple-Making Stages

Living Example Stage – “*I do, you watch*”



Proactive Teaching Stage – “*I do, you help*”



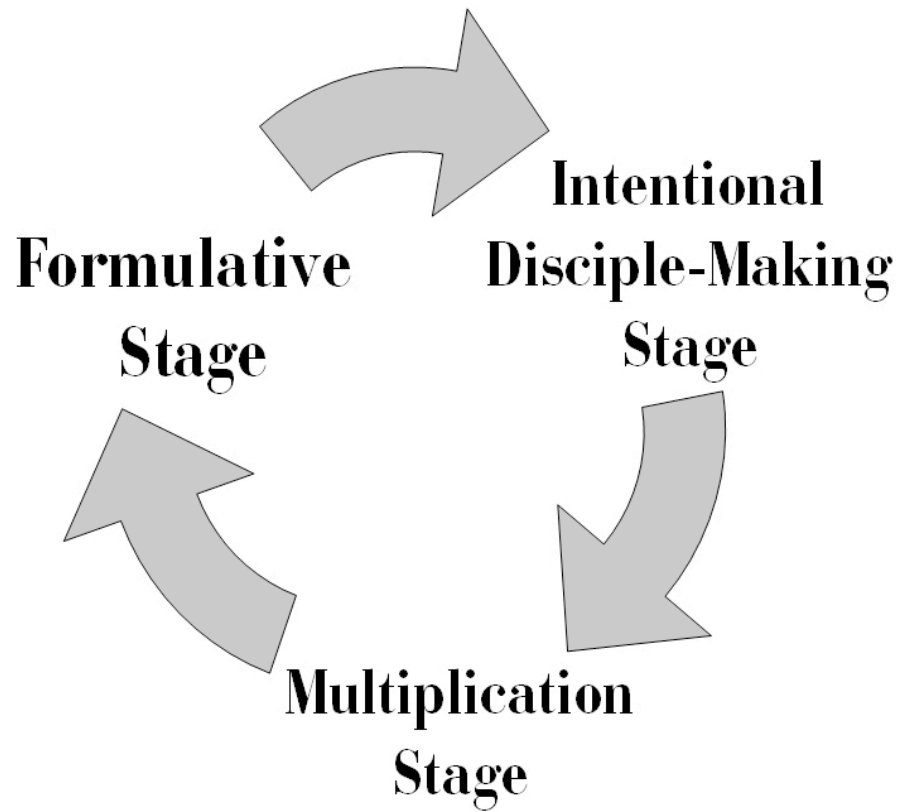
Supportive Coaching Stage – “*You do, I help*”



Ultimate Delegator Stage – “*You do, I watch*”

Greg Ogden, Transforming Discipleship

Small Group Stages



A Suggested Disciple-Making Plan

