

Turning New Believers into Multiplying Disciples

This is an overview of the mentoring process, used to take a new believer through the transformation process into a multiplying disciple [Matthew 28:16-20]. Throughout the process, the mentor must be praying, building the relationship, and encouraging the disciple.

The Beginning: Lead a person to Christ and launch spiritual growth.

Prescreening: Learn the person's attitudes. Has he really accepted Christ and will he accept assurance of salvation? Is he hungry to grow closer to God and stronger in faith? Will he be faithful to do what you ask? Will he make time available for growth? Will he be teachable from someone like you? Useful tools include a teaching and devotion on assurance.

Vision: Cast the vision of Christian life and of becoming a multiplying disciple of Christ. Is he willing to allow the Holy Spirit to transform him and his life? Can he buy into the vision that following Jesus means learning to do ministry, including sharing the gospel message and helping people grow in faith? Useful tools include Trottman's "Born to Reproduce."

Diagnostics: Learn the disciple's spiritual strengths and weaknesses, and figure out how to start helping him. Make an initial assessment about love languages and personality profile. Useful tools include Groben's diagnostic tools.

Plug In: Establish the disciple as a member of the community of Christ. Baptize him publicly [and celebrate!]. Plug him into a healthy small group community. Engage him in a simple service ministry [e.g. helping on a logistics team or in the children's ministry]. Useful tools include a teaching and devotion on baptism.

Intimacy with God: The first priority has to be ensuring a strong and intimate relationship with God: this is God's priority for the disciple; it is the most urgent need of the disciple; and it is necessary for improvement in life and ministry.

Attitudes: Though spiritual growth is an act of the Holy Spirit, God asks us to cooperate, at least by being willing to be changed. Discuss with the disciple his attitudes about God, obedience and submission, Christ-likeness, and spiritual growth. Useful tools include teachings and devotions on sanctification and spiritual growth, intimacy with God, submission and obedience.

Disciplines: Spiritual disciplines are important for two reasons: they are a means of getting closer to God; and confusion or wrong attitudes about them often prevents intimacy with God. Discuss the need to connect with God through Bible work, prayer, spiritual pathways, individual worship, listening/discerning, and responding to Spirit promptings. Make sure he has a good study Bible in a modern translation. Useful tools include teachings and devotions on the need for Bible study, effective prayer, experiencing God's presence, devotion, solitude, and discernment.

Knowledge of God: Appreciation of God comes from knowledge of God. Begin teaching the disciple about who is God [the Father, the Son, and the Spirit] and what God has done for us. Also foundational here will be teaching on the veracity of Scripture. Useful tools include teachings and devotions on revelation, God, and Salvation.

Issues and Biblical Life: The second priority has to be coaching the disciple through life's challenges so he learns how to walk in the Spirit and live a biblical life of obedience and light. Only if the disciple is shining God's light can he have much to offer in ministry.

Urgent Issues: Though intimacy with God is necessary for improvement in the Christian walk, sometimes there are life issues that prevent intimacy with God. Therefore, it is necessary to discern which issues – repeated willful sins, spiritual or emotional bondages, and distracting life struggles – need immediate attention even as you begin the process of building intimacy with God. Useful tools include books, teachings and devotions on freedom versus license [or legalism], spiritual warfare and victory, and priorities.

Counseling: Throughout the mentoring process, the disciple will experience growth opportunities. These are moments to provide biblical counseling to ensure that growth. Sometimes these issues are about obedience, sometimes they are about learning how to be blessed, sometimes they are about problems in daily life. Useful tools include books, teachings, and devotions targeted at specific issues.

Christ-Likeness: As the disciple becomes more intimate with God, he will experience greater transformation into Christ-likeness. Help this process through counseling and intentional teaching about the Christian life. Teaching should include opportunities for the disciple to experience God, such as through mission trips, but also a thorough reading of the Bible and continued discussion of theology. Useful tools include books, teachings, or devotions on Christian characteristics, the Christian walk, God's expectations, and overviews of the Bible's structure and content.

Equipping for Ministry: The third priority is to equip the disciple to multiply himself through bringing a non-believer to Christ and mentoring that person to the same point of multiplication.

Attitudes: It is important that the disciple has a Christ-like vision for doing ministry. Useful tools to create conversations include Piper's *Let the Nations Be Glad*, McManus' *Seizing Your Divine Moment*, and Warren's *Purpose Driven Life*.

Skills: Though the primary "skill" is reliance on God, the disciple will benefit from learning basic skills in bible study, people evaluation, evangelism, mentoring, teaching, counseling, and leadership. Much of this he can learn from observing how his mentor treats him, but other useful tools include teachings and devotions on spiritual gifts, personality profiles, love languages, spiritual pathways, and using diagnostic tools, as well as books on specific areas of equipping.

Specific Training: Depending on the needs of the disciple and his chosen ministry focus, you might need to provide more extensive training in one of the above areas or training in a new subject, such as small group ministry.

The Launch: When he is ready [in *your* opinion], throw the disciple out of the nest.

Completed Training: It is time to loosen the bonds when the disciple is strong in his relationship with Christ and his walk in the Spirit, and he is trained and successfully beginning to do ministry. Essentially, when there is nothing left to prepare to teach the disciple, it is time to change the relationship. Give him a list of ten to twelve books to read over the next year, and push him out of the nest.

Continued Availability: Remain available to the disciple for consultation about ministry and life. Preserve the mentoring relationship, just in a different capacity.

Ongoing Coaching: Depending on the ministry chosen by the disciple, either continue to coach him in his ministry [if it aligns with yours] or help him connect with more appropriate coaches.