

Disciple-making At Bethesda

Bethesda's mission is to glorify God by making disciples by evangelizing the lost, establishing the new believer, equipping that believer for service, and enabling that person to disciple others.

We are called to be a movement of disciples who make disciples from generation to generation, and each of us is a part of that!

Disciple-making can be done one-on-one, in small groups, or large groups. It is intentional and is always rooted in Scripture. It demonstrates the love for one another that Jesus taught and modeled. It equips people to live out God's purpose for them and recognizes the necessary dependence we have on the Holy Spirit.

The disciple-making process is:

- To help individuals recognize where they are in relationship to Jesus and what they need to continue growing closer to him in their journey of faith.
- To remind us that Jesus calls us, as individuals and as a congregation, to a mission beyond ourselves to help the people around us – in our circles of influence, across the street in our greater community, and around the world – experience and believe Jesus and receive the gospel for themselves.
- To help us all recognize that we're in different stages and working through different experiences and recognize that we are in this together – supporting, encouraging, and learning from one another.

We hope the following descriptions will help people in our congregation be aware of where we are in relationship to Jesus and help us recognize what we need to continue growing in Him. Most of us will experience aspects of multiple stages at the same time, and few of us will progress neatly from one to the next.

Exploring Christ *#Explore*

People exploring Christ are usually insecure in the steps they are taking to seek who God is, and they need nurturing and attention from someone more mature in their faith. They may be skeptical or eager to know more. They need someone that can answer questions and give spiritual guidance appropriate to who they are and where they are. A mature Christian needs to come along side of them in love and encouragement.

As people explore Christ, they may:

- Investigate and ask questions
- Challenge or express skepticism
- Begin reading the Bible
- Engage in service to others

As we reach out to and interact with people at this point in their journey, we:

- Introduce people to Jesus, to Christian community, and/or serve alongside them as caring neighbors.
- Demonstrate compassion and care in our interactions
- Talk about our faith and/or express belief in Jesus within the context of our lives
- Trust the Holy Spirit to guide us, as we compassionately and respectfully answer their questions and give the reason for the hope we have in Christ

Following Christ #Follow

We see people living in daily relationship with Jesus. They believe and are beginning to nurture their new relationship.

People following Jesus:

- Actively read God's Word and seek to develop the heart and mind of Christ.
- Understand their identity in Christ and seek God's will for the decisions they make.
- Develop a prayer life that deepens in substance and commitment.
- Listen to and depend on the Holy Spirit in their daily life.
- Serve others within or outside the church.
- Hunger and thirst for more.

As we serve people in this part of their journey of faith, we:

- Introduce them to and help them become familiar with God's Word and how to study the Bible
- We nurture them conversationally, relationally, and/or formally in spiritual practices (devotions, journaling, prayer, witnessing, etc.)

Abiding in Christ #Abide

Abiding in Christ is knowing God and not just knowing about Him. People begin to put others before their own interests and develop a desire to serve others, and in so doing, find strength and wisdom from the Holy Spirit. The love of the Father flows through them to others for His purpose.

As people learn to abide in Christ, we see:

- A growing ability to feed themselves from Scripture.
- Them anchored in God's grace. They are transitioning from striving to please God toward resting in the relationship they have with him. They know they are loved and out of that love want others to know him.
- A growing awareness and experience of walking in the Spirit, allowing God's truth to shape their lives more and more and growing in their awareness of God's guidance and activity in their lives.
- A desire to have an impact on others.

As we serve people in this aspect of their faith, we:

- Help them recognize and live out of their identity in Christ.
- Help them recognize their spiritual gifts and the ways God is working in and through their unique personality and experiences.
- Help them see people the way God sees them and to relate to them in gracious and compassionate ways.
- Help them become more proficient in reading, understanding, or teaching Scripture.
- Equip them to talk with others about their faith and experience with God.

Out of their love for God, Disciple-Makers use their gifts and talents to multiply the character and priorities of Christ in others. Those that have been disciplined now go on to make more disciples. This Disciple-Maker brings the Great Commandment and the Great Commission together for a substantial impact.

As people live as disciple-makers, we see:

- A desire for purity in their walk with the Lord and repenting as a continual part of living daily for Christ.
- An intimate dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- An impact on those outside their own congregation.
- A Christ-centered and others-centered focus to serve God as He builds His Kingdom in us, across the street, and around the world.

We support and encourage them, as they discover their call and as they engage in opportunities to serve others in Jesus' name as God provides and directs.