

ADULT DISCIPLE TRAINING FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS AND SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Dr. Teresa Roberts • 6 Sessions

**NEXT
LEVEL**  **ONLINE**

OZARK CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Adult Discipleship Training for Small Group Leaders and Sunday School Teachers

Session 1: Guiding Adults through the Discipleship

Introduction: Jesus was a small group leader.

Leading others in discipleship through leading small groups or teaching Sunday School and Bible studies is to join in the call to “Go and make disciples...” (Matthew 28:18)

Process of discipleship that parallels the example of Jesus with the 12 disciples

Phase 1: “Call”

- o Matthew 4:19 - “Come, follow me”

Phase 2: “Awareness”

- o 1 Corinthians 3:1
- o Hebrews 5:13
- o Ephesians 4:4
- o Matthew 21:16

How did Jesus disciple the 12 as they grew in awareness of God?

Phase 3: “Acceptance”

- o 1 Corinthians 13:11
- o Matthew 18:2
- o Hebrews 12:7
- o 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

How did Jesus disciple the 12 as they grew in acceptance of God and the identity of Christ?

Phase 4: “Independence”

How did Jesus prepare the 12 at this stage for the challenges ahead?

- o 1 Corinthians 14:20
- o Hebrews 5:11-14

Phase 5: “Reproduce”

Description of mature believer in John 13-17

- o John 13:14-15
- o John 13:34
- o John 14:1

- o John 14:15
- o John 15:4

His commands to the disciples after the resurrection

- o John 21:17
- o Luke 24:48
- o Matthew 28:18-20

Reflection:

- o As you disciple others, how are you being discipled? How do you need to continue to grow in Christ?
- o You are not alone in discipling others. Remember, "Surely I will be with you always."
(Matthew 28:20)

For further study of these stages of discipleship, see *Real-life Discipleship: Building Churches that Make Disciples* by Jim Putman

Session 2: The Importance of Community in Discipleship

Our God is a God of perfect community: One God in Three Persons

The call to discipleship is also a call to community

- o Ephesians 4

Barriers to Community

1. Individualism
2. Expectations
3. Fear of Unknown
4. Organization
5. Psuedo-Community

Opportunities to Build Community (see Julie Gorman's *Community That Is Christian* for a complete list)

1. Expect It
2. Cultivate Safety
3. Foster Cohesion
4. Active Involvement
5. Authority of Scripture
6. Know People

Dietrick Bonhoeffer in *Life Together* (the following quote was summarized in the video)

Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ...It means, first that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity.

Henri Nouwen in *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*

Community life is not a creation of human will but an obedient response to the reality of our being united. Many people who have lived together for years and whose love for one another has been tested more than once know that the decisive experience in their life

was not that they were able to hold together but they were held together. That, in fact, we are a community not because we like each other or have a common task or project but because we are called together by God.

Session 3: Understanding Small Group Systems

Reflect on your small groups by using a small group systems theory...recognizing the beauty and complexity of groups.

INPUTS

People!

- o Characteristics
- o Personalities
- o Needs
- o Attitudes
- o Values
- o Abilities
- o Skills
- o Knowledge
- o Stage of Discipleship

Time available

Resources available

Support (or lack of) from the larger community

THROUGHPUTS

Typical schedule of activities

Communication patterns

Roles of the members (formal)

Behaviors of the members

How conflict/solving problems is managed

Non-verbal messages between members

OUTPUTS

What is learned by the group members?

Did your group complete a task or project together?

How do members feel about the group and one another?

Are they growing in their discipleship?

Are they satisfied by participating in the group?

ENVIRONMENT

Location and space where the group meets

Seating arrangement

Time of day

Temperature, noise, smells, etc.

Reflecting on the complexity of groups helps us to address the things we can manage, make changes when we can, and help eliminate potential barriers to the group.

Session 4: Life Cycle of a Small Group

Introduction:

Phase 1: Orientation (the first 1-2 meetings of the group)

Phase 2: Exploration Phase (the 2nd-5th meetings of the group)

Phase 3: Power/Control Stage (starts in weeks 4-6 and lasts for approximately 6 weeks)

Phase 4: Emergence (Trust) Stage (begins after 10-12 weeks and can continue for a length of time)

Phase 5: Change (when the group has reached a plateau in growth)

NOTE: whenever you introduce change to the group, the group begins over at phase 1 and begins the life cycle again

Termination:

- o Celebrate well what has been accomplished as a group!

For further information on the stages of a group life cycle, see Julie Gorman's book *Community That Is Christian*

Session 5: A Teaching Pattern That Works

Introduction

How do we teach adult learners?

1. Adults need to know why they need to learn something.
2. Adults want to make decisions about what they are learning and when.
3. Adults have experiences they want to bring into their learning.
4. Adults are life-centered; they want to know how something will apply in their lives.

The 4-step teaching pattern HOOK, BOOK, LOOK, TOOK helps to address the needs of adult learners.

Step 1: HOOK

- o Gets attention
- o Surfaces a need
- o KEY 1: Don't assume someone has biblical knowledge
- o KEY 2: Select an activity in which everyone can participate

Step 2: BOOK

- o What does the text teach us about God?
- o What is the main point of the passage?
 - o Allow students to discover the text together

Step 3: LOOK

- o What does the text mean for today?

Step 4: TOOK

- o How should we apply the text in our own lives?

Example: The Parable of the Good Samaritan (some of the ideas listed below were shared on the video; additional ideas are added to provide more content)

HOOK:

- o Use the idea of enemies or neighbors to have a conversation
- o Watch a video testimony of someone who received help through a local ministry
- o Discuss a time when you needed help and how you felt to receive assistance

BOOK:

- o The text teaches us that God loves everyone
- o The main point: Go and do likewise
- o Have students research the road between Jerusalem to Jericho on a Bible app
- o Discuss the religious differences between Samaritans and Jews
- o Research the role of a priest and Levite and their rules about blood and death
- o Use images to help students imagine the story
- o Watch the story acted on video

LOOK:

- o Discuss who is viewed as a neighbor and an enemy in our current contexts
- o Imagine Jesus were to tell the parable today. Who would he use to be the different characters in the story?

TOOK:

- o Brainstorm ideas as to what it means for us to go and do likewise
- o Ask students to quietly reflect on a time they were not “neighborly” and how they would act differently in the future
- o Ask the students for ideas as to how the entire group could go and do likewise to a local group
- o Reflect on what attitudes and actions need to change toward those labeled as “enemies”

This second example was not shared in the video but is provided to give another example of using this pattern and to understand the different methods that can be used during each step.

Biblical text: Romans 1:18-32

HOOK:

- o Because the text talks about general revelation—that which God reveals in nature. Connect your students to what they have experienced in Creation
- o Show images of scenery or have students find a favorite picture on their phone
- o Discuss with students: Imagine if you knew nothing of God. What does Creation say about its Creator?

BOOK:

- o What the text teaches about God: God is the perfect and just Creator
- o Main point: The fact that the world exists and we exist in it, tells us that we owe ourselves to the God who made us. When we choose to accept a substitute for God, the result is degradation and disharmony that ruins lives.
- o Review the whole context of this text from Romans 1:18-3:20
- o Trace the argument that Paul is making by walking through a few verses at a time:
 - o vs. 18-20: godliness—rebellion against God; wickedness—rebellion against people—the opposite of God’s two greatest commandments to love God and love others
 - o vs. 21-23: list of what the world glorifies instead of glorifying God
 - o vs. 24-25; 26-27; 28-32: three statements outlining the consequence of failing to glorify God

LOOK:

- o Brainstorm responses to this question, “How do people justify immoral or evil behavior today?”
- o Discuss how these statements suppress the truth and then what consequences result from these lies
- o Identify for each statement a way that lie can be rejected with a scripture

TOOK:

- o Review the list from the previous step and ask students to reflect on this question: Are there any lies you are using?
- o Ask students to write down how they will address the lie by refuting it with the truth

Conclusion:

Your role as the teacher is not always to be the one talking. Rather, allowing others to participate allows for learning.

Remember that the Holy Spirit is the Teacher!

Resources to use in teaching and to train students to use to study the Bible:

- Concordances, Dictionaries, Timelines, Harmonies
 - Blueletterbible.com – Study
 - Biblegateway.com
- Images and Maps
 - FreeBibleimages.org
- Background to Biblical texts, Word Studies
 - OCC NextLevel
 - Bibleproject.com
- Proper interpretation and application of Bible stories
 - *The Bible Story Handbook* by John Walton and Kim Walton

Session 6: Leading Discussions and Roles in Groups

Introduction

How to guide a discussion

1. Plan
2. Start a conversation
3. Guide the discussion
 - a. Keep it “on track”
 - b. Contribute but not dominate
 - c. Allow “time” for pauses
 - d. Allow everyone a chance to respond
4. Listen well
5. Watch for “non-verbal” clues
6. Encourage participation from everyone
7. Conclude the discussion

Roles in Groups: How people participate in positive ways

- o Orienter
- o Initiator
- o Gate-keeper
- o Information giver
- o Encourager
- o Follower
- o Tension Reliever

Roles in Groups: How people may participate in challenging ways

- o Needy counselee
- o “Talker”
 - o Counselor
 - o Academic
 - o Opinionated
 - o Preacher
 - o Philosopher

- o Dominator
- o Spiritualizer

Leading discussion is an art more than science. Continue to practice. Allow people to participate in positive ways and address the challenging personalities when you need to with love and grace.

For further study on the roles people play in groups, see *How to Lead Small Groups* by Neal McBride

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