

Ignite Discipleship Curriculum

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Week 1

INTRODUCTION

New Testament Discipleship

If we are supposed to go and make disciples, what does that mean? How can we teach others if we're unclear about what we're attempting to do?! In this session, we introduce discipleship - a biblical perspective and specifically a Description of a Discipled Person (DDP). We will also introduce the Journal.

For warm up, ask the class WHAT IS A DISCIPLE? Meaning, how would they define or describe a disciple? Make a list on a whiteboard and spend a couple of minutes talking about it. What characteristics did they choose & why did they choose them? Does everyone agree on all the elements listed? This is a warm-up discussion.

(potential Video Teaching on NT discipleship [here](#))

In an effort to stay on task, each church has to create a North Star of sorts, an aim: what kind of disciple are we (in this church) attempting to make?!

Description of a Discipled Person

Use your church's description, but this is the generally accepted Ignite outline for a DDP. If your church does NOT have a DDP, I encourage you to spend some time in the Throne Room and develop one prior to your course.

- A disciple slows down to hear the voice of God
- A disciple processes what they hear with God and in community
- A disciple responds to what they hear
- A disciple can teach others how to hear as well

This is an opportunity for you to talk about each of these elements in depth, if you so choose. Invite questions and solicit thoughts. Remember, this is a BASICS class, so break it down in digestible chunks and realize that it may be quite different than the working definitions your students have in their own minds.

Journals

As a way of interacting with God, Ignite recommends the use of journals for all disciples. There are a variety of ways to employ them and each disciple is encouraged to develop a practice that works best for them. At the minimum, have a place to write down what you hear from God and put a date on it! This will give you reference points in your discipleship journey.

Journal Discussion: None (it's week 1!)

Journal Prompt: Worship God in your journal this week. Use a psalm as a guide or inspiration - try Psalm 8, 65, 98, 145-146. *Encourage journaling at least ONCE this week.*

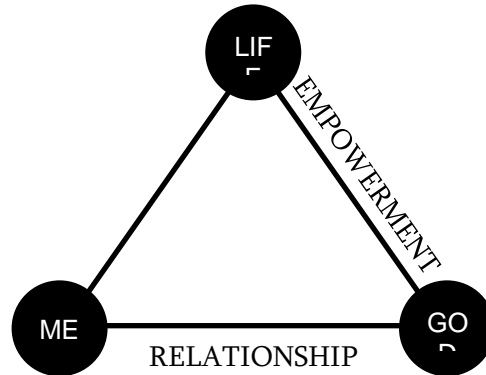
Week 2
WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

Review: Ask your class to recall as much about your DDP as possible. Re-write it on a whiteboard! You might want to ask if they have any questions or comments about it. Allow the conversation to flow for a few minutes. This is a great moment to reiterate WHY your church has written the DDP the way you have.

The Discipleship Triangle

Draw your version of the is the generally accepted pastoral people. Encourage this in their journals.

Discipleship Triangle. Below Ignite rendering for non-the class to draw & redraw



Label the triangle to suit your congregation's context & culture. Refer to it in your Sunday preaching. Help people be in the position and posture to hear God speak (a la John 10v27 *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*) Do your best to use the triangle to illustrate your DDP.

Suggestions:

- Talk about "climbing up the left side of the triangle" here and offer the alternative of receiving from God his direction and empowerment.
- Spend some time also defining/describing the corners (Me, God, Life) so your class understands what they are and how they interact.
- You may want to suggest some self-discovery to help them flesh-out the ME corner. Myers-Briggs (MBTI), OCEAN temperament (the Big Five), and StrengthsFinder are excellent aids to personal insight.

Ask the class....

Journal Discussion: What did worshipping God on paper feel like to you? Did it flow naturally? Did it feel awkward?

Journal Prompt: Spend another week in the journal worshipping, based on a different psalm. Encourage journaling at least TWICE this week. Let the class know that they'll be sharing in the next class.

Week 3

PROCESSING in COMMUNITY

Review: Redraw the Discipleship Triangle and ask the class to label the parts. Also restate the Description of a Discipled Person.

This week, we actually ask people to share what they journaled in the previous two weeks. In any small group environment, it is natural for members of your group to (a) offer solutions or (b) tell a similar story of their own while a person is processing their journal out loud.

We want to avoid this as much as possible, because it can stall the spiritual insight and short-circuit Holy Spirit's work. So we introduce some guidelines for the discussion segments.

Note: These came from comments made by the Ignite Leadership and have been reviewed by them; however, they may change! And you may have some of your own to add, depending on what's happening in your local church.

(Presence-Centered) RULES of ENGAGEMENT

1. Don't try to fix people. Holy Spirit is the fixer. Period. Do what you can to help your fellow disciple connect back to God.
2. Listen in two directions.
 - listen to what the person is saying
 - listen to what Holy Spirit is saying too
3. Questions are better than statements. Often the 2nd & 3rd questions we ask God are the richest. Some useful questions:
 - what happened?
 - why did that happen?
 - why did that happen now?
4. Pay attention to words that jump out at you. When someone is sharing from their journal, if a word or phrase captures your attention, ask God why it did.

5. If you think Holy Spirit might be speaking to another person through you, submit it to that individual to discern if He is speaking. *“I submit this to you to discern if it’s from Holy Spirit”*
6. Don’t compete in the room. One story at a time. Listen more.

Note: I think there are too many rules. How might they be wordsmithed down to 3-5?

Journal Discussion: Ask someone to share their thoughts on worshipping God in their journal. Bill Johnson (Bethel Church - Redding, CA) said that if he has 10 minutes to pray, he’ll spend the first 7 or so worshipping.

Journal Prompt: Choose one of your favorite Bible verses/stories. Journal about why it is important to you. How did it become a favorite? What stirs in you when you hear it?

Week 4
THE DISCIPLE’S IDENTITY

Review: See how many of the Rules of Engagement the class remembers and walk through them briefly again.

Identity

Today we address the issue of identity in the life of the disciple. Ignite culture reminds people of who they are - and whose they are - to keep us oriented toward Jesus and the Kingdom.

Redraw the Discipleship Triangle and highlight the ME corner. Underneath the corner, write “identity”.

Ask the class two questions:

1. What is identity?
2. Where does your identity come from?

Don’t let the conversation go on too long, but allow the class to think out loud about it. Churches often talk about identity without a strong idea about what the concept actually means.

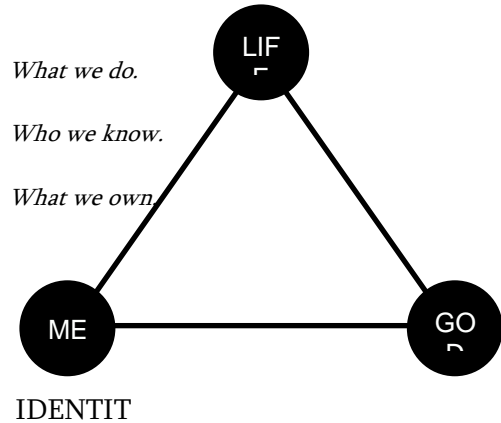
[\(potential Video Teaching on IDENTITY here\)](#)

When we don’t know our identity in Christ or lose our sense of it, we run the risk of defining ourselves by other means.

Typically, humans identify themselves by *what they do*, *who they know*, or *what they own*.

Ask the class when they meet someone new, what do they typically ask about the other person? What kinds of questions do they expect to answer?

What we do. Among the first questions we ask someone we’re meeting for the first time is about their occupation. Depending on the circumstances, we might identify ourselves by certain hobbies we have (I’m a Harley-Davidson owner, I’m a basket weaver) or practices we engage in (I’m a jogger, I’m a cryer when I’m emotional). *When you are introduced to someone, how do you explain what you do?*



Who we know. This is a great way to gain acceptance by someone else - you know someone in common. Perhaps it is a follow up to, "What do you do?" If you know someone who works for the same company, its easy to mention to establish some common ground. In extreme cases, people blatantly name-drop to be impressive. *Have you ever used someone else's name to make an impression on someone else?*

What we own. This one is a little more subtle because we're taught not to brag. And yet its not uncommon to mention the type of car we drive. Or, we might mention our subdivision, street name, or zip code! Other times, we mention certain features we're proud of in our homes. *Name a moment where you wanted someone else to know about something specific you owned. Why was that important to you?*

When we're not pursuing God, we allow Life or "The World" to define us, or give us our identity. That's not only a moving target, it means that we're attempting to climb up the left side of the triangle. Next week, we'll cover how we find our identity in Christ.

Journal Discussion: Ask (but don't pressure) a disciple to share their favorite verse and what God *may* have said to them about it. Don't let it become a Bible study. Help them dig deeper as to what it means to them and what God might be communicating. Continually reinforce the Rules of Engagement.

Journal Prompt: Neil Anderson (*Victory Over the Darkness, Bondage Breaker*) writes extensively about Identity. He collected Bible verses that explicitly tell us who we are in Christ. Provide the list below to the class & ask them to read through the list several times during the week. One or more of the statements may resonate with you or catch your attention. Write them down and describe what the statement did to you. Did it choke you up or make your day? Did one or more make you uncomfortable? Speculate as to why and ask the Lord to teach you about them.

I Am Accepted
John 1:12
John 15:15

I Am Secure
Romans 8:1-2
Romans 8:28

I Am Significant
Matthew 5:13-14
John 15:1, 5

Week 5

THE DISCIPLE'S IDENTITY (redux)

Review: Last session we learned about typical ways we humans define or identify ourselves. Ask the class what the three most common criteria are when identifying ourselves to others?

Identity

Consider the following model where *identity* is rooted in our Beliefs & Core Values and expressed through our Attitudes and Behaviors. The challenge is that few actually take time and effort to think about what we actually believe or what we really value.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Beliefs} & & \text{Attitudes} \\ + & = & \text{IDENTITY} \\ \text{Core Values} & & \text{Behavior} \end{array}$$

Beliefs. Our beliefs are what we believe to be true or untrue about ourselves. Do you think yourself as attractive? Intelligent? Talented? Friendly? Introverted or Extroverted? These are just a few ways you see yourself. Too often those self-perceptions are distorted by events or traumas we experienced in our past. Someone criticized our appearance or decision we made that was not true. We began to believe a lie about ourselves.

To find our identity in Christ, we have to understand and claim true what God says about us. To that end, review the "I am" statements from the Bible assembled by Neil Anderson. We recommend Anderson's books Victory Over the Darkness and Bondage Breaker as resources.

Core Values. Our core values are the standards we choose to keep. They are usually at the heart of what motivates us and serve as tacit guides to our decision-making. One way to get at your values is to think about

what makes you very angry - a wrong you see in the world. That can often be an insight into a value. Most people will not fight over a vision for the future, but they most assuredly fight when their values are being violated.

There are dozens of ways to determine our values, if the internet has anything to say about it; however, we recommend starting with the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. In his worldwide research, Dr Shalom Schwartz (his real name, no Mel Brooks jokes, please!) Found 10 broad personal values that are likely universal in nature. This is a great place to begin if you've not spent much time or energy thinking about what you actually value.

We can have our identity in Christ because by his Spirit, he changes our beliefs and reframes our core values. Once we have a sense of what we believe and value, we can take them to the Father and work out who we are in the Throne Room. The significance of this cannot be overstated.

Our identity in Christ manifests when we align our thoughts, words, and actions with what God says about us in his Word. And what he says to us in the Throne Room

Journal Discussion: Ask the class if anyone would like to share which of the "I am" statements were meaningful to them and why.

Journal Prompt: It is worth staying with the "I am" statements another week. Ask them to take one or more of the statements they chose last week and ask the Lord if there is any insight he'd like to give or comment about them he'd like to make.

Week 6

Practical Matters: Inverted Triangle

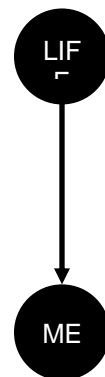
Review: Write IDENTITY on your whiteboard and ask the class what comprises Identity (Beliefs & Core Values). Then ask how we express our Identity (Attitudes & Behaviors). Then ask a couple of questions:

- Do they have any questions or comments about Identity or the diagram?
- Have any in the class seen behavior or attitude that showed a person's identity?

Real Life

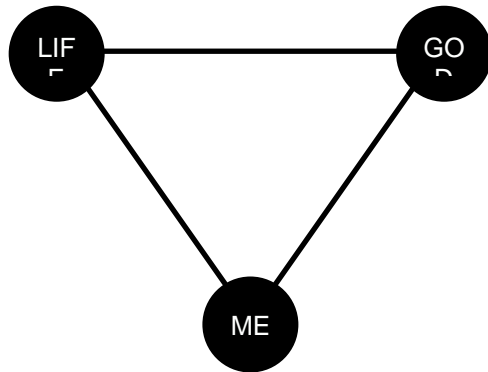
Sometimes life feels particularly difficult, even crushing. Circumstances spark powerful emotions and our Inner Voice will take over - usually repeating lies we believe about ourselves, recordings put in our heads by others:

*Something is wrong with me.
It cannot be fixed... I cannot be fixed!
I am fundamentally flawed!
I'm not lovable.*



The downward spiral begins. We stop listening for God (I mean, why would He speak to such a hot mess?!). We stop praying for anything. God might speak to others, but we believe we are disqualified. And while we believe God is real, we become comfortable living as functional atheists. Ask the class to think about seasons of life when they quit praying. What was happening? If one or two are willing to share, invite them to do so.

What if there was something else happening or another way of understanding the events of your life? Perhaps, within the pressure your Life and God were *attempting to get your attention?*



Reorient

You most likely need to reframe the challenge you face. Our first advice is to check your circumstances and how you're feeling against God's Word. Try these passages:

Romans 8v14-17
2 Corinthians 6v18
Ephesians 1v5
Ephesians 3v24-29
Ephesians 4v1-8

Remember, you are a daughter/son of God! Would he treat you poorly?! (See *Matthew 7v10-11* for confirmation to this rhetorical question). Most often, we have to reframe - edit the story we tell ourselves - in order to reorient ourselves back to God and step back into the Kingdom. Here are a couple of steps we can take.

(potential [Video Teaching on REORIENTING here](#))

To overcome negative feelings and the downward spiral, reorient toward the Kingdom with these steps:

3. Name it. What happened? What am I dealing with?
4. Why? What are you actually feeling? What is the emotion?
5. Reorient. What does God say about the emotions you're feeling? Open your bible and see what the Word says about that emotion? What is God telling you as you spend time with him?

The final step may take a bit of time as the Lord guides you. This simple practice will re-orient you back toward the Kingdom of God and likely keep you out of trouble or unwise action.

Keep in mind, God has chosen you! He wants to walk you through this! This is again the nature of a good father.

Journal Discussion: Ask the class what they think God said about the 'I am' statements last week. This one is particularly open-ended so that the class gets used to driving the conversation themselves.

Journal Prompt: Describe a time when you felt like the Lord was attempting to get your attention about something. Do you see the inverted triangle at work or something else? If you're feeling pressure or personal discomfort over an issue/event in your life currently, ask the Lord to give you some insight. Write about how you could reorient yourself back toward the Kingdom.

Week 7

PRACTICAL MATTERS: Requests & Inquiries

Review: DRAW the inverted triangle on your whiteboard and label the parts. Ask the class what them what it represents (hint: its one way God attempts to get our attention). Then ask the class what the steps are to reorienting themselves back to the Kingdom when the triangle gets inverted OR ion they experience conflict.

Did anyone TRY the steps? How did it go?

Praying the Checklist

Often when we pray, we want to get to the material that is most important to us, asking for God's blessing or intervention. Hopefully by now, you realize the importance and advantage of worshipping God first in your prayers! And yet, asking God for things is something he wants us to do! Paul writes the Philippians:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4v6-7

Nevertheless, there are times when we are petitioning God and receive no word from him, even after long periods of time. There are a number of possible reasons for this. First, God may be saying a flat no. Second, God is simply saying “wait or not yet”. The Third possible answer is perhaps you’re asking the wrong way - you’re making a *request* when you should be *inquiring!*

Note: God is not looking for the right words to compel him into action (that’s an incantation & God is not subject to human whim, regardless of how pure or motives). Rather, the question is what is in our heart.

King David is most instructive here:

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?”

The Lord answered him, “Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands.”
2 Samuel 5:17-19

There are several times in 1 & 2 Samuel where David “inquires of the Lord” and a discernible pattern emerges. Notice here in 2 Samuel 5 that David does not ask God WHAT he should do. He was in his stronghold (reasonable to presume that he was with his advisors. These Hebrews devised a plan and then took it before the Lord. David had decided what the next step should be in his heart and inquired to make sure it squared with God! This is not a request!

Also notice the second question, “Will you deliver them...” This is a clarifying question, and frankly the more important of the two! The attack isn’t the crucial inquiry, its the victory in the battle!

If we are making a request of God, perhaps we need to make an inquiry instead! You decide what you should do then check in with the Almighty!

Journal Discussion: Ask the class to share a moment when they felt God was trying to get their attention. Was the inverted triangle useful in thinking about issues or events in their past? Prod further and ask if there is anything current someone is experiencing that they’d like to share.

Note: if someone is sharing about a current issue/event, it is natural for others (including the facilitator!) to want to offer suggestions. Refrain from doing so. Politely, but assuredly, cut any others off from doing so. Revisit the Rules of Engagement (Week 3) and remind everyone that Holy Spirit is the fixer.

Journal Prompt: Write about requests you’re making of the Lord. List them out. Are any better phrased as an inquiry? Interact with the Lord about them and remember that he is a good Father who wants to talk with you!

Week 8

PRACTICAL MATTERS: Unhurried
WRAP UP

Review: Ask the class to explain the difference between *Requests* and *Inquiries* in their own words. In the last week, which have they done more of, requests or inquiries? If they switched their approach, what did they notice or what happened?

Take your Time

Perhaps the greatest enemy of discipleship is hurry. There's no way around it, hurry is a breeding ground for impatience, misunderstanding, and distraction.

(Would love a video of the Grace River guy who waited some 60 days)

We often use phrases like “processing at the bottom of the triangle” or “sitting with the Lord”, but there is never any way of knowing how long that will take. Some days, the Lord speaks directly to you in the moment. Other days, its weeks or months before we get an answer or an insight.

This is why we emphasize the use of a journal. Even if you don't write out your prayers or questions, have a place where you can write down and date what you might hear from the Lord (week 1, remember?).

Ask the class what their experience has been when it comes to hearing from God during the course.

Journal Discussion: Spend the balance of the evening asking the class to share from their journals. As a church or a group, you may adopt a starting question: *What is the Lord saying to you this week?*

Note: some of your class may not be comfortable answering a question like that - they're either unsure if they heard anything or insecure to share. In those cases, modify your question: *Where do you think the Lord might be working this week?*

Review the Rules of Engagement (week 3) if you need to.

Allow the conversation to flow and don't be afraid of silence.

Journal Prompt: It is the last week so encourage your class to continue to interact with the Lord using the journal tool.

