

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership
Leader's Guide

EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 4: FOLLOW-UP METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Exploring Discipleship. This series of lessons studies the spiritual formation of a follower of Jesus Christ – the process referred to as discipleship. The discipleship process occurs after someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ, beginning with a desire to live out God's plan for their life. When we undertake the task of helping a new believer to grow in their faith, we are said to disciple them. This material will benefit anyone wanting to disciple others, especially those who are practising evangelism, following up with new believers and helping them grow in their faith. Discipleship is the duty of every believer, especially those in spiritual leadership!

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 4: FOLLOW-UP METHODS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to help participants structure a follow-up appointment with new believers.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson is aimed at those who will soon be discipling new believers with whom they have shared the Gospel. This is a process for which all believers should be prepared. When developing a discipling relationship, we must be careful not to treat a new believer like a project rather than a person. Try to model ways to create authentic relationships with the participants of this lesson. How can you as their leader get involved in their lives, and show interest in who they are as people? This will model what real relationships should look like and help your participants to do the same.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ Have you ever participated in follow-up with a new believer? What did you do? How did it go? What would you do differently next time?
- ❖ Have you ever been made to feel like a project that someone was trying to complete rather than a person? What were the circumstances? How can you avoid this mistake with those you are discipling?
- ❖ What worries or apprehensions do you have about making follow-up appointments with new believers?
- ❖ What do you think a new believer in Christ needs most in the few weeks following their conversion?



STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **Discipling a New Believer:** If you have been engaged in evangelism, you may have observed someone become a Christian. Once this happens, it is critical for this person to find a community of other believers where they can receive teaching and instruction.
 - If you have arrived at this point in the discipleship process with someone, you should be very excited. It means that they have understood the message of salvation and have made a decision to live their life according to their new faith in Christ!
 - You may already understand the importance of developing a relationship, praying for them and with them, and helping them connect with other believers. However, scheduling a follow-up meeting is of utmost importance. If they are a friend or someone that you are well acquainted with, this may not be considered a formal meeting, but there should be some planned structure to it.
- ❖ **The First Follow-Up Appointment:** It is important to 'check in' with a new believer within the first day or two after their decision to follow Jesus Christ. You may call this a follow-up appointment or use a less formal phrase to describe it.
 - Have a clear objective for this appointment. There must be some planned structure for this meeting to be effective and to give the new believer specific things to think about.
 - Some suggested questions to ask during the first follow-up meeting:
 - Do they understand that Christ is now the center of their life?
 - Have they thanked Christ for coming into their life?
 - Have they read John 1-3 (or another similar Bible passage)?
 - Do they have any questions?
 - Suggest another Bible passage to read, or a goal for their spiritual growth.
 - Be relaxed and genuine.
 - Remember that this person is not a project.
 - Share parts of your life with them so they can get to know you too.
 - Make sure that you pray together.
 - Demonstrate that prayer is a priority by praying together before you start to talk and again before you leave each other.



- **Be Biblical.**
 - Highlighting a few key passages each time you meet will demonstrate the importance of God's Word. It might be something you are reading or learning, or something you were taught when you were first disciplined.
 - Always go to the Bible for answers on how to live and grow in Christ.
 - Don't shy away from straight talk. If there are issues that need to be addressed in the new Christian's life, don't be afraid of that discussion. Make your stand on sin clear. Help them deal with matters of sin by gently exposing them to what God's Word says about it, and how God's forgiveness applies to it.

- **Be aware of the time.** If the person has other obligations to keep, cut the time short.
 - Always be punctual. Set a time and stick to it.
 - Do not hurry away if the person wants to take more time. The new believer will probably be more open to talk about personal problems now than prior to the follow-up. Be open and ready.
 - Let the new believer know that you enjoyed your time together.

- **Communicate your desire to meet again to talk more about God and the Christian life.**
 - Set a specific time and place for the second follow-up appointment.

- ❖ **Setting Group Follow-Up Appointments:** If you have a number of people who are ready for further follow-up, you may decide to meet with them as a group. This may occur if you are sharing the Gospel with a number of people regularly who have some shared identity (such as a university campus, or within one geographical area).
 - You can use the first personal appointment as a bridge to group follow-up.
 - Without the support of other believers, very few Christians grow to spiritual maturity. It is important to involve new believers with other Christians because most of their friends are probably non-Christians.
 - Remember that how you live is a better witness than what you say. So, if there is opportunity for the new believer to be with you when you share God's Word with someone else, invite them along.
 - Always close a follow-up meeting with prayer.

- ❖ **Prayer:** Effective follow-up with new believers requires love, reliance on God and prayer. Just as we read the example of Paul praying for His disciples ([Philippians 1:3-6](#)) and Jesus praying for His disciples ([John 17](#)) we should pray for those we are teaching and guiding.



DISCUSSION

- ❖ What verse or thought would you want to communicate most to a new believer in the first follow-up appointment? What resources could you use to help you with this?
- ❖ Where are good locations to hold follow-up appointments? What can you do to help the new believer feel comfortable?
- ❖ What are some of the mistakes you might make? (Smothering a new believer with heavy doctrine or daily meetings, making a new believer afraid or uncomfortable, not being punctual, not allowing them to ask questions or express doubts or fears, not taking the time to get to know them, etc.) How could you avoid these mistakes?
- ❖ How can you win the trust of the person you are discipling? What are some ways you could bond with them?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Pray for each participant that they would have love for the people they will disciple, and that God's love would be seen in them. Pray that they would be able to form relationships of integrity that help new disciples grow.