

Discipling Teens and Young Adults

Many church disciple-making strategies focus on discipling adults. However, thinking strategically, if we are not also intentionally discipling teens and young adults, we run the risk of having few adults to disciple in the future. This is because it is during the years of 13-25 that most habits and life-choices (including the decision to become a follower of Christ) are made. In this session we will seek to understand best practices and mistakes that are made in discipling teens and young adults, enabling you to create a strong disciple-making foundation in your young people even before they turn to adulthood.

Terry English is the Director of Training for Josiah Venture. As such he oversees the creation and rollout of ministry team and disciple making resources throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and also oversees evangelistic ministries and tools currently being used by over 400 churches. Prior to moving to the Czech Republic 20 years ago, he also worked with youth and student outreach ministries in the USA, UK, and Norway. While his focus is now on training local churches, he also continues to work with a local youth ministry in the Czech Republic so that he can keep his finger on the pulse of current trends in youth culture, and has recently helped his local church plant a new expression of church in Ostrava.

- I. Who are we discipling, and what is our end goal?
Paul sought to understand his audience, then used his understanding to share the Gospel in a way they could relate to. Shouldn't we do the same?
 - A. What is always true of young people, and what is true of young people today
 1. How the brain develops and what that means for the discipling process
 2. Changes in culture: gen X, millennials and the iGeneration - a quick peek, and how we should respond
 - B. The path of a growing disciple – from “Come and See” to “I am Sending You”
 1. 5 challenges that Jesus gave
 - a. Come and See
 - b. Repent and Believe
 - c. Follow Me
 - d. Follow Me and I will Make you Fishers of Men
 - e. I am Sending You

Discussion questions:

1. Based on what you have learned so far, are there any changes you would already make to your current disciple-making model to act more like Paul?
2. Why is it important to help young people develop strong spiritual disciplines?
3. Who in your local context needs to hear this?

II. Developing Strong Roots in the faith of Young People

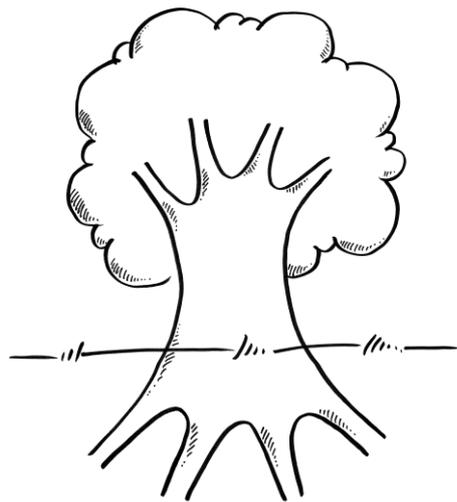
It is vital that young people develop strong roots in their faith, out from which we will begin to see spiritual fruit. Rather than focusing on “visual fruit” (short term behavioural change) we must equip young disciples to form strong spiritual roots and disciplines.

A. Spiritual formation – developing the roots

1. A life of Prayer
2. Rooted in God’s Word
3. Dependence on the Holy Spirit
4. Flourishing in the body (church)

B. Spiritual formation – nurturing the fruit

1. Trusting obedience
2. A bold witness
3. Loving service
4. Passionate worship



Discussion questions:

1. Does your local ministry context have a plan for helping young people develop strong roots?
2. Are there any changes you could make to be more effective in helping young people develop roots?
3. One of the roots mentioned is “flourishing in the body” - how does your local ministry currently integrate young people into the wider church community?

III. Tending the Soil

A. The role of (spiritual) parents

B. Relationship vs. Program

1. Discipling people needs to be personal and continuous (just as Jesus modeled)

C. Integration into the wider church community

1. Creating bridges
2. Sharing stories
3. Developing disciples before developing leaders
4. Handing over the keys – challenging, trusting and nurturing future leaders

D. The power of peers – equip to send vs. coral to protect

E. Keep your eyes on the prize! – a personal growing relationship with Jesus Christ!

Discussion Questions:

1. Is your current ministry more program based or relationship based? (ie. do the leaders of your ministry spend more time creating/leading a program, or being with the people who attend the program?)
2. What changes would you make to a program to help is create “active participants” rather than “passive consumers”?
3. How does your ministry equip young people to reach their peers?
4. What is one key takeaway from this session which would have the biggest impact on your ministry?

Suggested Readings:

Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ – Greg Ogden

Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids – Kara Powell and Chap Clark

Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church – Kara Powell, Jake Mulder

Adoptive Youth Ministry: Integrating Emerging Generations into the Family of Faith – Chap Clark

Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the Church – Kenda Creasy Dean

Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, Multiplying Influence, Defining Character – Greg Ogden, Daniel Meyer