

The 5 Stages of Discipleship

A Spiritual Formation Grid

“That we may present everyone mature in Christ...” – Colossians 1:28

STAGE 1

Step	Description	"Disciple" Action Steps	"Discipler" Action Steps	Key Resources	Key Scripture
0	Conversion!	Receive Christ, believing in His name, that you may be adopted into the family of God- John 1:12	Celebrate!		
1	Understand the New Nature	Be able to articulate what it means to be "born again," and the implications for life now and eternal life	Tell them how the Gospel has changed you, and about your confidence and hope of eternal life after death	Bunyan, <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> ; Keller, <i>The Prodigal God</i> ; Fitzpatrick, <i>Found in Him</i> ; Piper, <i>Finally Alive</i>	II Corinthians 5:17-21; John 3:1-36 ; Romans 6:1-14; Ephesians 2:1-10 ; I John 3:1-10; I Peter 1:3-25
2	Practice Regular Worship	Understand the nature of the church, the community in Christ, and begin attending church regularly	Invite them to church, sit with them, introduce them to others. Discuss what it means to "worship" God, and the implications of being part of the community in Christ.	Dever, <i>The Church</i> ; Rainer, <i>I Am a Church Member</i> ; Whitney, <i>Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life</i> , ch. 5	I Peter 2:1-10 ; Acts 2:37-47 ; Ephesians 2:18-22, 4:1-16; John 4:1-25; Colossians 3:12-17
3	Write Your Personal Testimony	Write your story	Tell your story, assist in the writing of their story	https://www.navigators.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/navigators-stories-of-redemption.pdf	John 9:1-41
4	Make a Small Group Connection	Look for opportunities to meet regularly with other Christians, and commit yourself to a small group	Help them understand the importance of a small group connection, and show them opportunities to become involved.	Bridges, <i>True Community</i> ; Bonhoeffer, <i>Life Together</i> ; Stedman, <i>Body Life</i> ; Crabb, <i>Soul Talk</i>	Hebrews 10:19-39 ; Romans 12:9-18
5	Share Your Personal Testimony	Take the step of telling someone outside your inner circle about your conversion, and consider being baptized, telling your story there as well.	Tell them about an opportunity you have had to share your faith, and how you overcame your fear. Discuss the importance of baptism.		Romans 10:5-13 ; Acts 2:22-41
6	Know Your Identity in Christ and How to Walk in Victory	Be able to answer the question, "Who am I? Now that I am a new creation in Christ, how do I view myself, and what difference does it make? How do I walk in victory over sin and temptation?"	Help them understand the new lens through which they look at themselves, and frees them from the tyranny of seeing themselves through the eyes of others rather than Christ. Also show them how to walk in victory over sin and temptation.	Geiger, <i>Identity</i> ; Bridges, <i>Who Am I?</i> ; Kruger, <i>Identity Theft</i> ; Sampson, <i>Known</i> ; Neil Anderson chart, "Who I Am in Christ" Gurnall, <i>The Christian in Complete Armor</i> ; Evans, <i>Victory in Spiritual Warfare</i>	<i>Identity</i> : Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 43:1-7; Romans 8:1-39 ; Ephesians 1:1-23; <i>Warfare</i> : Ephesians 6:10-20 ; Colossians 2:6-15; Hebrews 2:5-18

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Step	Description	"Disciple" Action Steps	"Discipler" Action Steps	Key Resources	Key Scripture
7	Practice Spiritual Disciplines	Understand and begin to practice the basic means of grace on your life: the spiritual disciplines. Identify specific ways you will consistently practice the disciplines.	Tell of your own experience with the disciplines, and help them establish specific, measurable, achievable goals to accomplish in the practice of the disciplines. Encourage them and hold them accountable to these goals.	Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life ; Ortberg, Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People ; ESV Study Bible; Youversion Bible App; "Scripture Study Questions" worksheet	<i>Disciplines:</i> I Timothy 4:7; <i>Scripture:</i> Psalm 1, 19, 119, Mark 4:1-20 , II Timothy 3:1-17, I Peter 1:22-2:3; Ezra 7:10; <i>Prayer:</i> Matthew 6:5-15 , John 15:1-11; <i>Fasting:</i> Matthew 6:16-18
8	Discover Your Spiritual Gifts	Become aware of the spiritual gifts and the Spirit's role in your life, and take a spiritual gifts assessment test	Provide resources to study the gifts, tell of your own experience in discovering your gifts, and provide and help them process a spiritual gifts assessment test.	Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts ; Schreiner, Spiritual Gifts ; Schwarz, The Three Colors of Ministry: "Uniquely You" (Below)	I Corinthians 12:1-31 ; Romans 12:3-8; I Peter 4:7-11
9	Find Your Place of Service	Based upon your spiritual gifts, experiences, training, and the need, find a place of joyful service in the church.	Help with their self-assessment of their gifts, abilities, training, and experience, and identifying areas of service in keeping with how God has designed and equipped them.	"Uniquely You:" https://uniquelyyou.org/catalog/online-profiles/combined-profiles ; Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life , ch. 7	Mark 10:35-45 ; Galatians 5:13; Philippians 2:1-11
10	Develop Godly Character	Identify the fruit of the Spirit and other essential character qualities that lead to personal flourishing and an effective witness, and develop a plan for continued growth in godly character.	Help them identify the qualities associated with godly character, understand the importance of character for their own lives as well as their witness, and encourage and challenge them as they seek to grow in specific, self-identified areas.	Sanders, Cultivation of Christian Character ; Merrit, Character Still Counts ; Bridges, The Fruitful Life ; MacArthur, The Pillars of Christian character ; Wilkin, In His Image	II Peter 1:3-15 ; Colossians 1:1-17
11	Be Equipped for Evangelism	Identify a practical plan for sharing the Gospel with others. Memorize key aspects of the plan, and practice sharing the Good News.	Share your basic Gospel plan of salvation, help them develop theirs, and listen as they share their plan with you and give feedback.	Fay, Share Jesus Without Fear ; Metzger, Tell the Truth ; Laurie, Tell Someone ; Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life , ch. 6	I Peter 3:15; Matthew 5:13-16, 28:18-20; II Corinthians 5:17-21 ; Acts 1:1-8; Mark 1:20

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STAGE 3

Step	Description	"Disciple" Action Steps	"Discipler" Action Steps	Key Resources	Key Scripture
12	Lay a Theological Foundation	Identify and develop a basic understanding of the essential doctrines of the faith. Learn the importance of doctrine, as it serves as a foundation for life.	Show them doctrine is not simply for head knowledge, but necessary for living out the Gospel to their own good and God's glory. Guide them in the study of doctrinal essentials, and clarify areas of confusion, ignorance or misunderstanding on doctrinal issues.	Grudem, Christian Beliefs ; Packer, Concise Theology ; Grudem, Bible Doctrine	<i>God: Isaiah 40:1-31; Christ: Phil. 2:1-11; Holy Spirit: John 14:15-31, 16:4-15; Sin: Romans 3:1-20; Salvation: Romans 3:21-4:8; Sanctification: Romans 6:1-23; Death: I Cor. 15:1-58; Christ's Return: Matt. 24:1-51; Heaven: Rev. 21:1-22:21</i>
13	Accept the Cost of Discipleship	What does it mean to "take up the cross daily?" Learn why suffering is an expected reality in the Christian life, and how to be ready to suffer, and evaluate current suffering in light of the promises of God.	Teach them that suffering is an anticipated reality in the Christian life, particularly persecution, and help them prepare to pay the cost of their convictions.	Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship ; Keller, Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering ; Lawson, The Cost ; Tada, When God Weeps	<i>Cost of Discipleship: Matthew 10:16-39; Mark 8:34-38; Suffering: Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4; I Peter 1:3-9; Romans 8:18-39; II Corinthians 4:1-18</i>
14	Practice Financial Stewardship	Understand the principles of wise stewardship of all God has entrusted to you. Form a budget, learn to hold your possessions loosely, be generous, and tithe. Create a plan for meeting the needs of the poor, and advancing God's kingdom.	Help them understand God has entrusted to them resources which are to be maximized for kingdom-building purposes, and discuss the practical implications as related to their time, talents and treasure.	Ramsey, "Financial Peace" Seminar; The Total Money Makeover ; Alcorn, Money, Possessions & Eternity ; Evans, Kingdom Stewardship ; Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life , ch. 8	<i>I Timothy 6:1-19; II Corinthians 8:1-9:15; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-24; Luke 12:16-21, 16:19-31</i>
15	Understand Missional Living: Love Your Neighbor as Yourself	Realize God has brought the people around you into your life for a reason. Your words and actions demonstrate the transforming power of the Gospel. Identify ways you incarnate the presence of Christ in your everyday world, and form a specific strategy for loving the "neighbors" around you.	Explain what it means to live every day "on mission" for God, bringing the presence of Christ to bear upon their sphere of influence, including identifying practical ways they can love their "neighbor."	Finke, Joining Jesus on His Mission ; Ogden, The Essential Commandment ; Hammond/Cronshaw, Six Postures of Missional Christians	<i>Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37; Mark 2:13-17; I John 4:7-21</i>
16	Understand Basic Discipleship Essentials	Learn what it means to "disciple" someone, and begin to develop basic skills necessary to enter into the role of discipler.	Tell them about your own experience in discipling others, and help them understand the basics of discipleship.	Ogden, Discipleship Essentials ; Putman, et. al., Real-life Discipleship Training Manual ; Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism	<i>Mark 1:16-20; 3:13-19; I Thessalonians 1:2-10</i>

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STAGE 4

Step	Description	"Disciple" Action Steps	"Discipler" Action Steps	Key Resources	Key Scripture
17	Begin Discipling	Begin discipling someone, and see all of your relationships through the "formation scale" lens, as informally you can influence all in your sphere of influence to take one step further down the scale.	Encourage them to take initial steps to disciple someone.	Dever, <u>Discipling</u> ; Hull, <u>The Complete Book of Discipleship</u> ; Ogden, <u>Transforming Discipleship</u> ; Dodson, <u>Gospel-Centered Discipleship</u>	Matthew 28:1-20 ; II Timothy 2:2; Acts 18:24-28; II Corinthians 4:8-21; Philippians 3:17, 4:9
18	Recognize Various Worldviews, and Form a Christian Mind	Recognize there are competing worldviews in our culture, through which the world is viewed, opinions stated, and decisions made. Be able to articulate the worldviews, identify the elements of a Christian worldview, and determine how your perspective needs to change in light of it, and how you can effectively interact with those who hold other views.	Assist them in identifying the various worldviews held in our culture, recognizing the fallacy of worldviews other than a Christian perspective, and guide them in reshaping their perspective in light of a truth-based understanding.	Pearcey, <u>Saving Leonardo</u> ; Platt, <u>Counter Culture</u> ; Groeschel, <u>Winning the War in Your Mind</u> ; Sire, <u>Naming the Elephant</u>	Romans 12:1-2; I John 4:1-6; John 1:1-18 ; II Timothy 3:1-4:5; Colossians 2:1-3:4
19	Embrace God's Design for Marriage, Family, and Human Sexuality	Recognize God's design for relationships in the home, and the implications of His design for human sexuality. Identify practical ways to implement His design in your home, and have a plan for defending His design in a culture confused.	Share how you seek to honor God in your relationships in the home, including challenges, failures, and practical steps. Help them formulate an understanding of God's design for human flourishing as it relates to human sexuality.	Keller, <u>The Meaning of Marriage</u> ; Wildman, <u>First Ask Why</u> ; Tripp, <u>Parenting</u> ; Allberry, <u>Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With?</u>	Marriage: Genesis 2:18-25 ; Eph. 5:21-33; Parenting: Ephesians 6:1-4 ; Deut. 6:1-9; Sexuality: Genesis 1:26-31 ; Romans 13:13-14; Matthew 5:27-28, 19:3-9; Romans 1:18-32
20	Recognize the Importance of Bringing the Gospel to the Nations	Expand your vision of God's work in the world, and the role of each Christian and the church to bring the Gospel to the nations. Identify ways to actively support missions.	Expand their vision for God's work in the world, that they may catch a passion for and their role in bringing the Gospel to the nations.	Piper, <u>Let the Nations be Glad</u> ; Johnson, <u>Missions</u> ; Borthwick, <u>Great Commission, Great Compassion</u>	Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:1-8 ; Romans 10:5-17
21	Identify Your Life Purpose, and Possible Leadership Role	Ask what the next steps of obedience may be as you continue to grow in faith. Is God calling you to leadership, or some other way you can join Him in the work He is doing, to maximize your gifts, experience, talents and abilities for Kingdom advancement	Help them explore the possibility God is calling them to leadership in the local church, or to vocational ministry, or some other expansion of His kingdom-building ministry through them.	Terkeurst, <u>Far From Ordinary</u> ; Ward, <u>I Am a Leader</u> ; Guinness, <u>The Call</u> ; Costa, <u>Know Your Why</u> ; Platt, <u>Radical</u> ; APEST: https://5qcentral.com/product/apest-vocational-assessment/	Jeremiah 1:1-19 ; I Timothy 3:1-13; I Peter 5:1-11

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Step	Description	"Disciple" Action Steps	"Discipler" Action Steps	Key Resources	Key Scripture
22	Mentor Other Leaders	Find opportunities to mentor other leaders	Encourage and hold accountable one or more mentors in an ongoing peer-to-peer relationship for the sake of fellowship, accountability and continued growth.		Proverbs 27:1-17