

The background of the entire page is a light gray grid with thin white lines. Overlaid on this grid are numerous small, circular clusters of stylized human figures. These figures are depicted in various poses and groupings, representing different types of social interactions: some are standing and talking, some are sitting at tables, some are walking together, and some are in physical contact like hugging or shaking hands. The figures are rendered in a simple, colorful, isometric style. The central text is contained within a white rectangular box that has a thin black border.

DISCIPLESHIP MAP

—
Transforming Discipleship

—
• disciples •

Discipleship Map

Group for Disciples

Equip Study Conference 2017



"Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshipping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25 The Message).



Introduction

The essence of disciple making is inviting people to discover and respond to God's invitation. It expresses the core of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). A disciple is the pupil, learner or protégé of a teacher or the apprentice under the tutelage of a specific master; the protégé learns their teacher's values, precepts and instructions. Therefore, a disciple of Jesus follows Jesus, desires to be with him and learns from him by hearing and acting on the Holy Spirit's voice.

Once a person has made a commitment to become a Christ follower, have they arrived? No, the adventure of becoming like Jesus has just begun!

The six qualities of a growing disciple are like the systems of a human body. Health in one area increases the well-being of the whole, while neglect in one area can have a wider effect. A healthy, growing disciple has vital choices to make so that inner transformation can be a reality.

Description of a Growing Disciple

How can we grow as his disciples?

The "Description of a Growing Disciple" (DGD) brochure identifies six key qualities of growing disciples. You can use the DGD brochure to help you gain a good grasp of what Jesus is calling you to become.

- Obtain a copy of the DGD brochure from Kindred Productions
www.kindredproductions.com
- Download a copy at www.equipstudyconference.mennonitebrethren.ca

Purpose and Format

The outline of this set of eight sessions is built on the DGD materials.

- **A journey, rather than a destination** – Remember, none of us have arrived. We are all on the journey. This material is intended to assist us in coming alongside others as apprentices of Jesus.
- **In relationship, rather than alone** – We suggest you use this material in clusters/ groups of three to six people for eight conversations between February and October. You may choose to connect with people with whom you already have a relationship or shared interests (e.g., your discipleship team or ministry team in your local church), or you may choose to begin this journey with a whole new group of travel companions.
- **Regularly, rather than infrequently** – Based on our experience, it's ideal if you schedule your meetings between every two weeks and once a month. If your meetings are too frequent, it won't give you time to implement your new discoveries. If they're too infrequent, it will be more challenging to build connection as a group. We suggest taking 45 to 60 minutes for each of these conversations. Alternatively, you may want to use this material in your existing group to add a discipleship conversation as a reflective piece to your existing study.
- **Transformation, rather than information** – The challenge isn't too little information, but too little application. The role of the person leading the group is not to have all the answers, but to facilitate discovery and learning.
- **Feedback at Equip Study Conference 2017** – Groups will have an opportunity to share their Discipleship Map experiences and discoveries at Equip Study Conference 2017.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 New International Version (NIV)

Session 1



A growing disciple is one who is being transformed in such a way that the deeds of Jesus, done in the power of Jesus, become an increasingly natural way of life.²

Introduction

- **Overview** – Review the purpose and format of the group.

Prayer:

- “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe” (Ephesians 1:17-19 NIV).

Participants:

- **Who?** – Take turns introducing yourselves. What are some of the ways you are currently involved in coming alongside others in their discipleship journey?
- **What?** – What are you hoping to learn and apply from this journey together?
- **When?** – When, where and how (in person, online, etc.) shall we meet for our next seven conversations?

Ground Rules:

There are some basic “ground rules” or group norms that will guide our conversations:

- What’s said here stays here.
- We will give each other grace and the benefit of the doubt.
- We’re all learners.
- We each commit to participating fully.
- We will arrive and leave on time. (We’ll start and stop on time.)
- Other....

¹Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*. (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1998), 273.

Overview:

We believe that Jesus continues to invite followers on a lifelong adventure where, as we follow him, our lives look more and more like his. We must ask ourselves, “Am I a growing disciple?” Like the first disciples, we need to allow Jesus to continually transform us. The best way to serve those we lead is to allow Jesus to transform us.

Over the next seven conversations, your group will be exploring the qualities of a growing disciple and how we come alongside others. Jesus commissioned us to disciple others to “obey everything God has commanded us” (Matthew 28: 19, 20). Dallas Willard observes, “Christians generally don’t have a plan for teaching people [to] do everything that he commanded. We don’t as a rule even have a plan for learning this ourselves, and perhaps assume it is simply impossible.”²

The Description of a Growing Disciple (DGD) synthesizes the teaching of Scripture about discipleship into six essential qualities, giving focus to our ministries and highlighting manageable goals. The DGD helps leaders create a culture of lifelong spiritual growth; a doable, holistic picture of spiritual health; essential ways to mature; and worthwhile opportunities to grow. As a result, Jesus followers are better prepared and supported to pursue a lifestyle of spiritual transformation.

A growing disciple is someone who is...

1. Captivated and Committed – Relationship

- Scriptures: Matthew 22:36-40; John 21:15-17; Revelation 2:1-7; Luke 7:36-48

2. Thriving and Thirsting – Spiritual Self-care

- Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:3-11; Deuteronomy 5:33; John 15:1-8

3. Bonded and Building – Community

- Scriptures: Acts 2:38-47; Hebrews 10:19-25; I Corinthians 12:7-27

4. Inviting and Influencing – Witness

- Scriptures: Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Luke 19:1-9

5. Discerning and Disarming – Alignment

- Scriptures: Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-42; John 17:6-19; Philippians 3:17-21

6. Purposeful and Persevering – Finishing Well

- Scriptures: Philippians 3:7-16; Colossians 3:5-17; Hebrews 12:1-13

²Dallas Willard, “Spiritual Formation: What it is, and how it is done,” www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=58.

Are you a Growing Disciple?

What do we mean by “growing disciples”? Jesus approached Peter, Andrew, James and John with the invitation, “Come with me.... I will make you.... I will show you how” (Mark 1:17 The Message). These disciples learned by being with Jesus, who taught them formally and informally through shared experiences.

We believe that Jesus continues to invite followers on a lifelong adventure where, as we follow him, our lives look more and more like his. We must ask ourselves, “Am I a growing disciple?” Like the first disciples, we need to allow Jesus to continually transform us.

One of the responsibilities of spiritual leaders is to create environments where believers anticipate and plan for a lifetime of spiritual growth, where from new birth in Christ onward, our spirits have the potential of continual growth and renewal(1 Corinthians 4:16).

Reflection, Self-assessment and Discussion

(circle the response that describes you)

1. Captivated and Committed

- Confident of a saving relationship with Christ
- Nurturing a growing love for God
- Committed to this relationship, even when things are hard

sort of... Definitely!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Thriving and Thirsting

- Feeding on God's Word
- Learning to pray
- Practising other spiritual disciplines
 - Journalling
 - Various forms of fasting
 - Silence and solitude

sort of... Definitely!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Bonded and Building

- Seek out accountable relationships
- Using my spiritual gifts
- Stewarding my time and resources

sort of... Definitely!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Inviting and Influencing

- Able to share my faith
- Developing friendships with non-Christians
- Praying and seeking friends
- Demonstrating Christ's love in practical ways

sort of... Definitely!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Discerning and Disarming

- Portraying the spirit and values of Jesus
- Persuing a peacemaking lifestyle
- Addressing injustice
- Caring for the environment

sort of... Definitely!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Purposeful and Perserving

- Regularly assessing growth in all five qualities
- Seeking assistance from fellow travellers
- Pressing on to greater faithfulness

sort of... Definitely!
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Session 2

Quality 1: Captivated and Committed – Relationships



Scriptures: Matthew 22:36-40; John 21:15-17; Revelation 2:1-7; Luke 7:36-48

God's Initiative: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19 NIV).

Description: A person who believes in Jesus increasingly loves him with “heart, soul, mind and strength,” and is committed to growing as a disciple, regardless of the cost.

Evidence:

- Understands the scriptural basis for, and is confident of, a personal saving relationship with Christ.
- Feels a growing love for God, which motivates increasing obedience.
- Expresses faith and is keen to talk about life in Christ.

Reflection and Self-assessment:

(check all that apply)

My understanding of a saving relationship with Christ could be described as follows...

- ☐ I don't really understand how to begin such a relationship.
- ☐ I understand, but I am not sure of where God and I are at.
- ☐ I understand, and I am confident that I am a child of God.
- ☐ I can explain how to become a Christ follower to another person.

My relationship with Christ can be described as...

- ☐ Respectful but distant.
- ☐ He's an acquaintance I see every couple of weeks.
- ☐ I can't wait to spend time with him.
- ☐ I'm committed to him, no matter what.

If you were eavesdropping on my conversations...

- ☐ You'd wonder if I knew Jesus at all.
- ☐ You'd recognize that I am a loyal church member.
- ☐ You would wonder why I can't stop talking about Jesus.
- ☐ You would wish to hang out with me and Jesus to get to know him the way I do.

Looking at my responses, I can see that...

- ☐ I'm ready to begin growing in this quality.
- ☐ I have made a good start and want to continue developing this quality.
- ☐ I want to spend some time with a mentor whose life demonstrates this quality.
- ☐ It's time to celebrate what God has done in my life and possibly assist someone who's ready to grow in this quality.
- ☐ Other: _____

Session 3



Quality 2: Thriving and Thirsting – **Spiritual Self-care**

Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:3-11; Deuteronomy 5:33; John 15:1-8

God's Initiative: “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life” (2 Peter 1:3 NIV).

Description: A person who determines to abide in Christ and is committed to cultivating a growing relationship with God, even in adverse circumstances, so that faith grows progressively more vibrant.

Evidence:

- Learns to study Scripture, inductively and devotionally.
- Becomes devoted to knowing God through the Bible and prayer.
- Chooses to practise a variety of spiritual disciplines for training in godly character.
- Prioritizes time to nurture a deepening relationship with God.

Reflection and Self-assessment:

(check all that apply)

Making time to grow my relationship with God...

- ☐ Doesn't seem to happen for me.
- ☐ Is something I'm struggling with, but want to do.
- ☐ Is becoming a habit.
- ☐ Is a life-giving part of my regular routine.

I read my Bible...

- ☐ Occasionally, but I don't really get anything out of it.
- ☐ In church and/or a small group.
- ☐ As part of my devotional time with God.
- ☐ Like I would enjoy a good meal.

Regarding prayer...

- ☐ I really know how to pray.
- ☐ I pray mostly when I have something I need.
- ☐ I'm learning to talk to God about almost everything.
- ☐ I love to spend time listening to and talking to God.

Looking at my responses, I can see that...

- ☐ I'm ready to begin growing in this quality.
- ☐ I have made a good start and want to continue developing this quality.
- ☐ I want to spend some time with a mentor whose life demonstrates this quality.
- ☐ It's time to celebrate what God has done in my life and possibly assist someone who's ready to grow in this quality.
- ☐ Other: _____



Session 4

Quality 3: Bonded and Building – **Community**



Scriptures: Acts 2:38-47; Hebrews 10:19-25; I Corinthians 12:7-27

God's Initiative: “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5 NIV).

Description: A person who engages with a community of faith, in small group and larger contexts, and develops as a contributor to the health and effectiveness of a local congregation.

Evidence:

- Learns to live the Christian life in community with other believers, giving and receiving a maturing level of discipling, accountability and support.
- Displays an unfolding awareness of a unique identity in Christ and joyfully uses spiritual gifts to serve.
- Practises generosity with time and resources.

Reflection and Self-assessment:

(check all that apply)

My understanding of a saving relationship with Christ could be described as follows...

- ☐ Self-motivation and effort.
- ☐ Openness to the input and support of at least one other person.
- ☐ Dependence upon my participation in a small group to help me.
- ☐ Actively seeking out other Christians to help me grow and be accountable.

My relationship with Christ can be described as...

- ☐ I really don't understand spiritual gifts very well.
- ☐ I have no idea what spiritual gifts I might have.
- ☐ I am aware of some of my spiritual gifts but haven't found a place to use them.
- ☐ I am growing in serving my church and community with my unique blend of gifts and passions.

If you were eavesdropping on my conversations...

- ☐ My schedule and/or finances are out of control.
- ☐ I drop whatever is in my pocket in the offering now and then.
- ☐ I am learning to set aside time and money for God's work.
- ☐ I am discovering joy and freedom in the area of stewardship.

Looking at my responses, I can see that...

- ☐ I'm ready to begin growing in this quality.
- ☐ I have made a good start and want to continue developing this quality.
- ☐ I want to spend some time with a mentor whose life demonstrates this quality.
- ☐ It's time to celebrate what God has done in my life and possibly assist someone who's ready to grow in this quality.
- ☐ Other: _____

Session 5



Quality 4: Inviting and Influencing – **Witness**

Scriptures: Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Luke 19:1-9

God's Initiative: “No one can come to me unless the Father...draws them”
(John 6:44 NIV).

Description: A person who develops an invitational lifestyle in everyday relationships, contagiously attracting others toward Christ.

Evidence:

- Knows the importance of sharing faith and how to introduce a person to Christ.
- Learns to pray for and relate redemptively to non-Christian peers.
- Becomes a compassionate witness, demonstrating Christ's love by meeting practical needs and enthusiastically participating in group efforts to draw others to Christ.

Reflection and Self-assessment:

(check all that apply)

My non-Christian friends and work colleagues...

- ☐ Would be surprised to find out that I am a Christian.
- ☐ Know I am a Christian and that I go to church.
- ☐ Have engaged in some spiritual discussions with me about Christ.
- ☐ Are curious about Jesus because of my influence.

Regarding prayer for those who don't know Jesus...

- ☐ I pray occasionally, especially when a friend or neighbour has a crisis.
- ☐ I have one or two non-Christian friends whom I pray for regularly.
- ☐ I am committed to praying for a missionary family and their ministry
- ☐ My non-Christian friends and I have conversations about ways I can pray for them and the ways God answers.

When someone seems ready to become a Christ follower...

- ☐ I would call on a pastor or someone else to talk to them about it.
- ☐ I would invite my pastor or another leader to be part of our conversation.
- ☐ I would try my best to help them, but I'm not sure I would do it right.
- ☐ I would gladly walk alongside them through this decision.

Looking at my responses, I can see that...

- ☐ I'm ready to begin growing in this quality.
- ☐ I have made a good start and want to continue developing this quality.
- ☐ I want to spend some time with a mentor whose life demonstrates this quality.
- ☐ It's time to celebrate what God has done in my life and possibly assist someone who's ready to grow in this quality.
- ☐ Other: _____



Session 6



Quality 5: Discerning and Disarming – Alignment

Scriptures: Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-42; John 17:6-19; Philippians 3:17-21

God's Initiative: “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13 NIV). “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...full of grace and truth” (John 1:14 NIV).

Description: A person who is being transformed into the spirit and character of Christ, able to interact with religious, political and societal systems with increasing discernment, giving primary allegiance to God's kingdom by being “in the world, but not of it.”

Evidence:

- Knows God's values and orients life around them.
- Increasingly portrays Christ's spirit of humility and meekness.
- Gains confidence in evaluating and relating to the surrounding culture, “obeying God rather than others” (Acts 5:29).
- Pursues a grace-dispensing, peacemaking lifestyle, which addresses conflict, oppression, injustice and the needs of the poor.
- Endeavours to prioritize the concerns of God's kingdom over national concerns.

Reflection and Self-assessment:

(check all that apply)

In my relationship to my culture...

- ☐ I'm a lot like everyone else and unsure about what Jesus would do.
- ☐ I live a pretty separate life, protecting myself from the evil influences around me.
- ☐ I tolerate the world around me and get involved only when I have to.
- ☐ I have a pretty clear sense of how to think about and engage in the world I live in, with Jesus as my example.

When I encounter people who are in conflict or when I am in conflict with others...

- ☐ I tend to figure out who is wrong and engage in battle against them.
- ☐ I try to stay out of it.
- ☐ I pray for peace.
- ☐ I try to do what I can to encourage both sides to seek a position of peace, even if it means they must sacrifice some of their rights.

My response to injustice or people in poverty is...

- ☐ Minimal to none.
- ☐ I was involved a bit in the past.
- ☐ I send money and pray for those who are doing this kind of ministry.
- ☐ I am presently involved in helping at least one person or group.

Looking at my responses, I can see that...

- ☐ I'm ready to begin growing in this quality.
- ☐ I have made a good start and want to continue developing this quality.
- ☐ I want to spend some time with a mentor whose life demonstrates this quality.
- ☐ It's time to celebrate what God has done in my life and possibly assist someone who's ready to grow in this quality.
- ☐ Other: _____



Session 7

Quality 6: Purposeful and Persevering – **Finishing Well**



Scriptures: Philippians 3:7-16; Colossians 3:5-17; Hebrews 12:1-13

God's Initiative: “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6 NIV).

Description: A person who sees discipleship as a lifelong journey of increasing responsiveness to God, a relationship with Jesus as our greatest treasure and heaven as our real home.

Evidence:

- Has assurance of salvation, but presses on to mature in each of the qualities of a growing disciple.
- Regularly assesses their formation into the image of Christ, being content, but not complacent, with progress.
- Learns to live all of life in partnership with God.
- Celebrates the high points and joyfully carries on despite discouragement and failure.
- Seeks assistance from God and fellow travellers.
- Is dedicated to “finishing well.”

Reflection and Self-assessment:

(check all that apply)

When it comes to assessing my spiritual progress...

- ☐ I seldom think about it.
- ☐ I think of it sometimes, but nothing much changes.
- ☐ I think of it occasionally and try to make changes.
- ☐ I do it fairly regularly and intentionally make changes.

When I get discouraged about or fail in my spiritual growth...

- ☐ I feel that it is useless and have difficulty getting back up.
- ☐ I try to get back up, but feel guilt most of the time.
- ☐ I take a while, but eventually recover.
- ☐ I confess, draw on God's grace, and get back on track fairly quickly.

When I am going through difficult times, my most common way of dealing with it is...

- ☐ I close down, keep to myself and sometimes pray.
- ☐ I let someone know I'm struggling.
- ☐ I go to family members or a close friend for primary support.
- ☐ I go to my small group community for support.

Looking at my responses, I can see that...

- ☐ I'm ready to begin growing in this quality.
- ☐ I have made a good start and want to continue developing this quality.
- ☐ I want to spend some time with a mentor whose life demonstrates this quality.
- ☐ It's time to celebrate what God has done in my life and possibly assist someone who's ready to grow in this quality.
- ☐ Other: _____



Session 8



Review and Take-aways

A growing disciple is someone who is...

1. Captivated and Committed – Relationship

- Scriptures: Matthew 22:36-40; John 21:15-17; Revelation 2:1-7; Luke 7:36-48

2. Thriving and Thirsting – Spiritual Self-care

- Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:3-11; Deuteronomy 5:33; John 15:1-8

3. Bonded and Building – Community

- Scriptures: Acts 2:38-47; Hebrews 10:19-25; I Corinthians 12:7-27

4. Inviting and Influencing – Witness

- Scriptures: Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Luke 19:1-9

5. Discerning and Disarming – Alignment

- Scriptures: Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-42; John 17:6-19; Philippians 3:17-21

6. Purposeful and Persevering – Finishing Well

- Scriptures: Philippians 3:7-16; Colossians 3:5-17; Hebrews 12:1-13

Reflection, Self-assessment and Discussion

(circle the response that describes you)

1. Captivated and Committed

- Confident of a saving relationship with Christ
- Nurturing a growing love for God
- Committed to this relationship, even when things are hard

sort of... Definitely!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Thriving and Thirsting

- Feeding on God's Word
- Learning to pray
- Practising other spiritual disciplines
 - Journalling
 - Various forms of fasting
 - Silence and solitude

sort of... Definitely!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Bonded and Building

- Seek out accountable relationships
- Using my spiritual gifts
- Stewarding my time and resources

sort of... Definitely!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Inviting and Influencing

- Able to share my faith
- Developing friendships with non-Christians
- Praying and seeking friends
- Demonstrating Christ's love in practical ways

sort of... Definitely!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Discerning and Disarming

- Portraying the spirit and values of Jesus
- Persuing a peacemaking lifestyle
- Addressing injustice
- Caring for the environment

sort of...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Definitely!

6. Purposeful and Perserving

- Regularly assessing growth in all five qualities
- Seeking assistance from fellow travellers
- Pressing on to greater faithfulness

sort of...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Definitely!

Your Learning Experience

- What are a few of the meaningful things you learned during these conversations?
- How have you already seen progress in implementing your learning?
- What changes (or challenges) have you seen in your journey of following Jesus, as well as in your involvement in leading others and creating environments that promote growth and transformation?
- What story or encouragement would you like to share about someone in your group?
- What help or support do you need to continue to move forward in your own journey and/or in leading others?
- How will you be praying for yourself in this? How can others pray for you?

What's Next?

- Feedback at Equip Study Conference 2017 – Groups will have an opportunity to share their Discipleship Map experiences and discoveries at Equip Study Conference 2017.
- Complete the online evaluation and feedback at www.equipstudyconference.mennonitebrethren.ca

Online Evaluation and Feedback

Overall Rating

Overall I would rate the usefulness of the group (mark one):

Not Useful

So-so

Useful

Very Useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- What benefits or learning did you receive from your participation?
- What suggestions do you have to improve the experience of the group?
- What were your expectations of this group (i.e., what you wanted to learn, the format, etc.)?
- To whom would you recommend this type of experience?
- Would you be interested in hearing about future opportunities to participate in group learning and conversation on this or other topics?
- What else would you like to comment on?
- May we share your comments/feedback with others (e.g., in a blog post) and attribute them to you?