

Chapter 5: Making New Disciples

When Jesus called fishermen, He didn't say, "Come, attend my events." He said, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people." That is the heart of youth ministry: not merely gathering students, but forming followers who make more followers. Discipleship isn't a side project; it's the mission. The question is not only, "How many came?" but "Who is coming to Christ, being baptized, growing in His Word, and helping others do the same?"

Making new disciples begins with a clear gospel, continues with simple next steps, and multiplies through a culture of invitation and empowerment. It is fueled by the Holy Spirit, clarified by faithful preaching, protected by wise systems, and modeled by leaders whose lives say, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

1) Clarify the gospel and the response

Students hear competing "good news" every day: self-creation, achievement, acceptance through performance. The gospel is startlingly different: God created us for Himself; we have sinned and cannot save ourselves; Jesus lived perfectly, died sacrificially, and rose victoriously; through repentance and faith in Him we are forgiven, made new, and brought into God's family. The response is not "try harder" but "trust Jesus" and follow Him as Lord.

Keep the gospel central and simple. Avoid moralism ("Be better!") and vague inspiration ("You got this!"). Call students to turn from sin and trust in Jesus. When you invite a response, be clear and kind. Offer two pathways in the moment: a prayer of surrender and a concrete next step (talk to a leader, mark a card, join a baptism class). Tony Evans reminds us that our authority rests in God's Word and the Spirit's work, not our personality. Make the cross and resurrection the center. Speak plainly. Trust God to do what only He can do.

2) Build a simple pathway: from guest to disciple-maker

Crowds don't become disciples by accident. A clear pathway helps you shepherd students from first visit to fruitful service. Consider this framework:

- First 48 hours: Connect
 - Send a personal text to the student and a brief, warm email to the parent. Thank them by name. Share the next gathering and how to get into a small group. An early human touch beats a generic mass message.
- First four weeks: Belong
 - Prioritize consistent small group attendance. Introduce two peers and one trusted adult leader. Give a simple "start here" guide: a readable gospel (like Mark), a basic prayer model, and a brief overview of your ministry rhythms. Create

predictable on-ramps: pizza-and-Q&A nights, newcomer huddles, and leaders ready to host.

- First semester: Believe and become
- Offer a four-week basics track: Who Jesus Is, The Gospel, How to Read the Bible, Prayer and Community. Share the gospel clearly in week two and invite decisions. Include a parents' note each week so home conversations continue. If a student trusts Christ, invite them into a baptism and next steps conversation. Pair every new believer with a mentor who meets three times in the first 30 days to establish habits.

- First year: Build others
- Help students discover gifts and join a serving team (greeting, tech, worship, kids, outreach). Train them to share their testimony. Invite them to pray for three friends, invest in those friendships, and invite them to group or a gathering. Create an annual student leadership cohort that models and multiplies this life.

Publish your pathway in one page for parents, leaders, and students. Simplicity wins. If it's too complex to explain, it's too complex to scale.

3) Create a culture of invitation, not just a program of events

Programs ebb and flow. Culture endures. An invite culture grows when:

- Leaders model it. Your team regularly names friends they are praying for and shares invitation stories (including the awkward ones). Maxwell's Law of the Picture applies: people do what people see.
- You lower barriers. Keep gatherings welcoming, predictable, and warm. Make the first five minutes of every night the easiest five minutes for a new student: clear signage, friendly faces, music that feels alive, and a host who explains what's happening.
- You teach a simple pattern. Pray for three friends by name. Invest in them weekly. Invite them to a next step. Include them once they show up. Celebrate every invite, not just the successful ones.

Normalize everyday mission. Instead of aiming for one mega-event, cultivate hundreds of small moments where students carry Jesus into hallways, group chats, lunch tables, and teams.

4) Preaching that invites and equips

Evangelistic clarity belongs in the weekly rhythm, not only in special services. Tony Evans urges us to preach the text with clarity and conviction, then call for a response. Each series should include:

- A clear explanation of the gospel and why it matters in the topic at hand (identity, anxiety, relationships).
- A moment to respond: raise a hand, come forward, or indicate on a card—then

quickly connect each student with a leader.

- A discipleship nudge: "Here's your next step this week"—a reading plan, a prayer challenge, a conversation with a parent, a serving opportunity.

Train your leaders to recognize and follow up in the moment. Create a simple response card or digital form that gathers name, contact, decision/interest, and preferred next step. Follow up within 48 hours with warmth and clarity.

5) Environments for seekers and skeptics

Not every student is ready for a sermon. Create spaces where questions are welcome:

- Q&A nights: gather anonymous questions, answer plainly, and admit when you don't know. Follow up privately with students who ask deeper or more personal questions.
- Alpha-style groups or "Explore Faith" tables: short videos or prompts, food, conversation, and no pressure to "perform" spiritually.
- Service first: invite students to join a service project; debrief afterward with Scripture and story, showing how mercy flows from the mercy we've received.

6) Equip students to share their story and the gospel

Many students want to share but feel unprepared. Lower the complexity:

- The 3-minute testimony: Before Jesus, how I met Jesus, life with Jesus. Practice in small group. Give feedback. Celebrate the courage.
- The 3 circles or bridge: One simple tool for explaining the gospel with a pen and paper. Practice until it's muscle memory.
- Answering why: Help students articulate why they follow Jesus in one sentence. Encourage them to pair their "why" with an invite: "Want to come with me Wednesday and talk more?"

Maxwell's People Development (Level 4) is your goal: don't stop at students attending; train them to lead others to Jesus. When you equip students to witness, you're raising the lid on your ministry's impact far beyond your program hours.

7) Next steps that stick: baptism, Bible, belonging, blessing

New believers need foundations more than fireworks:

- Baptism: explain its meaning clearly and invite publicly. Offer a short class and a conversation with a leader. Encourage students to invite family and friends.
- Bible: start with a simple reading plan (for example, 15 days in Mark). Pair with a friend and a leader. Share one question and one insight each day in a group thread.
- Belonging: place new believers into a small group quickly. Give the leader a heads-up to offer extra support.
- Blessing: invite new believers to serve soon in age-appropriate ways. Serving cements belonging and accelerates growth.

8) Parent partnership in the disciple-making journey

Parents are your allies. Loop them in:

- When a student responds, reach out to parents (appropriately) with joy and next steps. Offer a brief guide for home conversations about faith and baptism.
- Host parent prayer and info nights. Share the pathway, safety, and how to talk with teens about faith questions. Invite their stories and concerns.

9) Pray like it depends on God, plan like it depends on you

Without prayer, evangelism becomes pressure. Without planning, passion fizzles. John Bevere's call to the fear of the Lord keeps our hearts tender: we share Christ because we revere God and love people, not to notch wins. Pray by name for friends. Set alarms to stop and pray daily for open doors and open hearts. Then plan faithfully: clear series, specific invites, trained leaders, ready next steps, scheduled follow-ups.

10) Measure the right things and tell the right stories

Attendance matters, but it's not the only barometer. Track next steps: first-time guests, gospel conversations, responses, baptisms, Scripture plans started, small group engagement, serving sign-ups. Review monthly with your team. Celebrate testimonies constantly—short, real, and God-centered. Stories teach your culture what you value.

11) Obstacles and how to overcome them

- Fear: students worry about rejection. Coach them to share simply, ask good questions, and trust God with the outcome. Role-play common moments and replies.
- Apathy: refocus on the gospel's beauty. Invite students to ask God to break their hearts for their friends.
- Complexity: simplify your pathway and tools. Clarity beats cleverness. Repeat the basics.

12) A student leadership pipeline that multiplies

Move students from attenders to ambassadors:

- Identify: who is faithful, available, teachable, and fruitful?
- Invest: meet monthly to train in prayer, character, gospel clarity, and relational skills.
- Involve: assign real responsibilities—hosting, follow-up calls, prayer team, outreach planning.
- Inspire: share vision, set reachable goals, and celebrate progress.

Maxwell's Law of the Process will keep you patient; growth is daily, not in a day. Tony Evans will keep you anchored; the Word and Spirit do the heavy lifting. John Bevere will keep you holy; awe before God keeps your motives clean. Hold these

together, and your ministry will not only gather—it will multiply.

Weekly Challenge (Week 5: Making New Disciples)

- Day 1: Prayer map
- Write the names of three students you're praying will meet Jesus. Pray for them daily this week. Send one encouraging, no-pressure message to each.
- Day 2: Your story in three minutes
- Draft your testimony (before/Jesus/after). Practice it aloud twice. Share it with a leader or friend for feedback on clarity and compassion.
- Day 3: Gospel tool
- Learn one simple gospel outline (e.g., a three-step tool). Share it once with a Christian friend to practice. Then ask God for an opportunity to share a piece of it with a seeking friend.
- Day 4: Pathway draft
- Sketch your guest-to-disciple pathway on one page (48 hours, four weeks, first semester, first year). Share it with your pastor for refinement.
- Day 5: Student multipliers
- Identify two students who could become evangelistic leaders. Invite each to coffee. Share vision, ask about their friends, and give them one simple goal for the next two weeks.

Deliverables to bring into the Conclusion

- Your one-page disciple-making pathway.
- Names of three students you're praying for and any updates.
- A written testimony (three minutes) and one gospel tool ready to use.
- A short plan to launch or strengthen a student leadership cohort.

Next Week Preview (Conclusion)

We will weave the five weeks together—Calling, Requirements, Responsibilities, Accountability, and Making New Disciples—into one integrated life and plan. You'll review your growth, solidify your practices, finalize a 90-day action plan, and prepare for the final exam that reinforces what you've learned.

Conclusion

As you reach the end of this five-week journey, pause and look back at how far God has brought you. You listened for His whisper, clarified who you're becoming, turned vision into weekly rhythms, embraced guardrails that keep you healthy and honest, and fixed your eyes on making new disciples. This isn't just a course finished—it's a calling formed. What you've learned is not theory; it's a way of life that can reshape students, families, and a church for years to come. Take a deep breath, thank God for His grace, and get ready to walk forward with clarity, courage, and a servant's heart.

Week 1: The Calling

Summary: Calling begins with God's whisper and is confirmed in community. Samuel's listening posture, David's hidden years, and Timothy's mentored growth show that God looks at the heart, matures leaders daily (Maxwell's Law of the Process), and calls you to model speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Authority in preaching comes from God's Word empowered by the Spirit (Tony Evans), and holy awe purifies motives (John Bevere). Your identity is in Christ first; your ministry role is your assignment, not your identity.

A word to you: God has not overlooked you. Lean in, listen, and take your next small faithful step. Invite a mentor into your process, serve where you are, and keep your heart soft before God. If He called you, He will equip you. Say, "Speak, Lord; Your servant is listening," and watch Him turn hidden faithfulness into lasting fruit.

Week 2: Requirements

Summary: Who you are comes before what you do. A trustworthy youth minister is rooted in character and spiritual vitality, builds relational credibility, handles Scripture faithfully, lifts the leadership lid (Maxwell), guards emotional health, practices cultural wisdom and safety, and aligns with the local church. A simple rule of life keeps you near Jesus; clear boundaries and systems protect everyone; the fear of the Lord keeps you holy (Bevere); the Word keeps you anchored (Evans).

A word to you: Don't rush past the inner work. Choose integrity in small choices, craft a realistic rhythm with Jesus, and invite real accountability. Growth is not glamorous, but it is glorious. Build the trellis; the Vine will grow. Your future fruit is hidden in today's habits.

Week 3: Responsibilities

Summary: Responsibilities turn vision into a weekly rhythm: time with God, students, team, preparation, admin, and rest. Core work includes text-driven preaching that aims at transformation, small groups as the engine of discipleship, pastoral care and follow-up, partnership with parents, volunteer development, outreach and mission, and administration that serves love. Measure what matters—engagement and next steps, not just attendance.

A word to you: Keep first things first. Put prayer and people before pressure and polish. Plan your week, protect your non-negotiables, and build simple systems that free you to love. You don't have to do everything—equip others. God multiplies what you surrender, not what you control.

Week 4: Accountability

Summary: Accountability is a greenhouse for healthy growth. Live before God with awe (Bevere), stand under the Word (Evans), and invite honest mirrors around you (Maxwell's Inner Circle). Establish ethical, financial, digital, and safety guardrails; make outcomes serve people; confess fast and pursue restoration wisely; guard your energy and resist isolation; keep transparency with parents and students visible and normal.

A word to you: Choose the light. Build feedback into your life on purpose. Boundaries don't limit your calling—they protect it. When you stumble, tell the truth, accept help, and get back up. A teachable, repentant leader becomes a trustworthy leader.

Week 5: Making New Disciples

Summary: The mission is not crowds but disciples who make disciples. Clarify the gospel, call for a clear response, and build a simple pathway from guest to disciple-maker. Cultivate an invite culture, preach with evangelistic clarity, create seeker-friendly spaces, equip students to share their story and the gospel, secure next steps for new believers (baptism, Bible, belonging, blessing), partner with parents, pray like it depends on God, and plan like it depends on you. Develop student leaders who model and multiply mission.

A word to you: Keep Jesus and His gospel at the center. Pray by name for friends, share your story with courage, and give clear next steps. Celebrate every step toward Jesus. You are not alone—the Spirit empowers you, the Word guides you, and your church surrounds you. Multiply hope one student at a time.

Prayer Father, thank You for calling, shaping, and sending us. Give this servant a holy awe of You that purifies motives and anchors obedience. Root their identity in Christ alone. Fill them with Your Spirit to preach Your Word with clarity and compassion, to love students wisely and well, and to lead with integrity and joy. Guard their heart, mind, body, and relationships. Establish rhythms of Scripture, prayer, Sabbath, and community. Surround them with mentors and teammates who speak truth in love.

Protect their ministry with strong safety and stewardship, and make accountability a delight, not a burden. Lord Jesus, make them a faithful disciple who makes disciples. Save students by Your grace, strengthen new believers through clear next steps, and raise up student leaders who carry Your mission to schools, homes, and neighborhoods. Multiply what is surrendered to You. When days are hidden and hard, remind them that You see. When doors open, keep them humble.

When mistakes happen, lead them quickly to confession and restoration. May their life and ministry bring glory to Your name and good to Your church. We ask all this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

