

Discipleship Landmarks

Using this Training

This introduction is for training leaders who want to start a new group. If you are leading a group, go straight to D1.

Discipleship Landmarks Training

A Kingdom-Apprentice is a fruitful, confident and obedient disciple of Jesus who is committed to fulfilling Jesus' command to make multiplying disciples. Our DNA (or values) is **Good News, Listen, Obey and Multiply**.

This training is designed to be used by any kind of group, including on-line groups. It can also be used by an individual. This training describes 4 types of group: Growth Groups (D5), Discovery Groups (D5), Mission Communities (D14) and Apprentice Training Groups (D15).

Nearly all the stories are taken from the Gospels, using Luke wherever possible, and most are short quotes from Jesus himself. The reason for this is to make the training as easy as possible for those who either cannot read, or do not have a bible. If they have just the New Testament, or just the Gospels, they have all the material they need. If they have only Luke and John, they will have most of the stories. If they have only their memory, they will still do very well.

The first few trainings include some stories from surahs in the Quran for use with Muslim groups. You can omit these for Christian groups.

The Discovery Principle

Jesus said, "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me." (John 8:28)

If Jesus did not add His own words of explanation and preaching, then neither should we! We call this "Discovery" – we don't allow preaching or explanations. We let Jesus do the teaching and let the person we are sharing with "discover" for themselves what Jesus is saying to them. You can explain the meaning of words, but *not* the meaning of the story.

To help a person discover the meaning, we ask questions to help them see **Good News** then **Listen, Obey and Multiply** (our DNA).

If they ask a question, see if the answer is in the passage, then read that part of the passage again and help them discover the answer themselves.

If they ask you something that the passage does not explain, say "I haven't come to tell you what to believe, but to help you discover Jesus for yourself. I can come back to share more stories that will help you discover the answer to your question."

This isn't just a new method of teaching, it is a deep Jesus-centred principle that should affect all our spiritual teaching, no matter what the context is. The role of the teacher is to bring the bible stories that help a person to discover the truth.

Group Questions

Whatever type of group you lead, we use the same 4 DNA questions:

Good News Questions

Ask a *personal* question like:

“What *good news* is in this story?” or “What do you *like* about this story?”

Don’t ask an *academic* question like:

“What do you *think* about this story?” or “What do you *understand* from this story?”

If they are unsure how to answer, offer to read it again.

Listening Questions

We want the person to think about each part of the story by asking listening questions, such as:

“Is there anything else you think is good news in this story?”

“What do you think Jesus meant by...?”

“Why do you think Jesus said this?”

“What does this tell us about people's nature (or character)?”

“What does this tell us about Jesus or God’s nature?”

Listen to the Holy Spirit for questions to ask. Try to ask a listening question about each part of the story where you think there is good news. But don't make it heavy, or like an exam. Don't worry if they don't see the same revelation that you have seen.

Obedience Questions

Once people have thought about the detail of the story, ask Obedience questions, like:

“What does Jesus want to say to you personally through this story?”

“How will you obey?”

If they answer in an impersonal way, saying what people ought to do, try to get them to say how they will respond personally and specifically.

Multiplication Questions

Finally, ask these two Multiplication questions, something like:

“Is there someone you would like to share this story with?”

“Would you like to invite them to come next time we meet to share the story together?”

Living the Story

Jesus said to go and make disciples. To make a disciple you must be a disciple, because we reproduce what we are, not what we say. If you are training apprentices to start groups and multiply, it is essential that you are also leading your own Discovery Group with non-church members.

So for each story you teach from the D-Path, you need to be living the story yourself. In other words, you need to have prayed through the story and listened to what Jesus wants to say to you and obeyed it. We need to share the story from our heart into the heart of the person we are sharing it with. Prayerfully go through the notes and questions for the story. Understand how the questions relate to the passage and the training title. Then prepare your own *listening* questions to ask.

Learning The Stories

We strongly recommend that both the trainer and group members learn the stories by heart so Jesus can keep speaking to you through them and you can be more confident and effective when you share the story.

Most stories can easily be learnt word-perfect, but for the longer stories, being able to retell the story in your own words is sufficient.

Use a modern easy to read bible, not the King James!

If any members do not have a bible or cannot read, you can read the passage out loud and let the members record it on their phones.

Whenever you teach a story, if it is something Jesus said, start it with "**Jesus said:**". That way the person learning will know that these are the words of Jesus.

Use actions to help people remember the story. Get the members to copy your actions.

Recite the story from memory twice and then say to the group, "**Tell me the same story**".

For a longer story, use this learning tool:

- Get the members to say every detail they noticed in the story.
- If they miss anything ask questions to see if they remember the detail.
- Recite the story from memory twice more.
- Say, "**Tell me the same story**" until they have got it right.

Starting a Discovery Group

Discovery groups are for outreach. They are very easy to start if you take this approach:

- First learn the D1 stories and practice sharing them to a friend.
- Go into the community with an experienced Discovery Group leader (or a courageous friend).
- Meet someone and say, "Hello. What is your name? My name is.... Do you have a few minutes for me to share a story about Jesus with you?"
- Tell the story all through, without adding your own words, or explaining it.
- Then go straight to the 4 DNA questions...

When training new Apprentices, first demonstrate these steps using role-play, then get them to role-play the steps. New apprentices usually add lots of their own words, and end up making it more difficult. Correct them until they do it exactly as instructed. Once they are confident, they can find their own natural style.

Jesus said, "Love each other as I have loved you" so when we share Jesus stories, we do so - in the same way that Jesus loves us - heart to heart, bringing the father to them.

When sharing Jesus with someone, we have precious seed to plant in their heart. We need to plant it like seed - with care and love, not just emptying a barrow load of teaching.

After Each Discussion

After the discussion, turn the passage into a prayer for the group members. Then take time to love each other through listening to their concerns and praying for each other.

Agree the date and time for the next meeting and share the story you will discuss next time.

Encourage members to read and pray over the story on their own each day before the group meets to discuss it. This makes a huge difference.

Can you copy the bible and D-Path training to people's smart phones?

Or can you make copies of the D-Path training to give to group members?

Or can members photograph or WhatsApp the story?

Or can they record it being read?

4 Group Rules

These Group Rules have been found to be essential for happy and fruitful groups. Whenever starting any kind of new group, share these Group Rules with the members:

1. No Church

We are not wanting to start a church, or get anyone to start going to church, or to leave their church or mosque.

We are just sharing Jesus stories, so people can become better Christians or Muslims.

2. No Preaching

Members should not preach or teach other members. If people want to hear preaching they can go to church or the mosque!

Each person can share what they think, and no-one should try to correct them or say they are wrong. We do not meet to argue with each other, but to listen to and learn from each other and from Jesus. Children's groups may need help and reminding not to preach or be bossy to younger children.

3. Answer only from the passage

When discussing a passage we ask you to limit your answers to what is in the chosen passage. If people start quoting other scripture, or what they have read or heard from other places, they will sound like an expert and put off those who do not have that depth of knowledge. We need to learn from Jesus, not from our traditions.

4. Go at your own speed

There is much that Jesus can teach us through each of these stories, and sufficient time and attention should be given to each story, before moving on to the next. If you progress too quickly without ensuring that the

hearers are being obedient to what they are learning, you will train them to be disobedient! They will think that hearing or understanding is all that matters, and that obedience is optional.

Do not wear people out with difficult passages or long meetings (1½ hours is a usual meeting length). You do not need to understand everything, just leave out passages or stories you find too difficult.

Each group must be free to decide when, where and how often they meet and what stories they discuss. They can disband and form new groups if they choose to.