



**MARS HILL CHURCH** | community groups  
Apprentice Development Handbook



## introduction to apprentice development

The normal life cycle of a Mars Hill community group includes birth, growth, and reproduction. Rather than creating groups that will grow old and, likely, die as the group becomes overcrowded or as group members move away or enter new life stages, Mars Hill community groups are intentionally open to new members and intentionally reproductive. In this way, reproduction is the highest level of maturity for a community group, and should be planned for from the very beginning of the group.

Reproduction happens through a replication process in which an apprentice leader is developed within the group who will then be prepared to plant a new community group, usually with a core group formed from the original group. That new group will then grow, mature, develop an apprentice leader, and replicate again. As this process is repeated, the church grows simultaneously wider and deeper.

The multiplication of community groups increases the capacity for more and more people to experience the transforming power of Jesus, and to be loved and cared for by the church as it grows wider, while also enabling the church to grow deeper in community, as more leaders are developed and more members are equipped to care deeply for each other, serve each other with their gifts, and love and serve those around them who do not know Jesus.

The goal of this handbook is to teach community group leaders how to identify, invite, assess, and develop apprentice leaders who will, in time, plant reproductive community groups of their own.

### THREE STEPS TO APPRENTICE DEVELOPMENT

**1. Identify a potential apprentice.** *Remember, the group belongs to Jesus, not you, so pray that he would give you discernment to know who he is calling as a leader.*

**2. Invite the potential apprentice to consider it.** *Ask your potential apprentice to pray about stepping into leadership training. Keep praying, and follow-up in a timely manner.*

**3. Assess the apprentice.** *Even though you should know your potential apprentice pretty well by this point, it's important to do a formal assessment so that you can know how and in which areas to train your apprentice.*



## Identifying an apprentice

The first step in identifying a good apprentice is a humble faith that the group is not yours, but God's, and his plans for the group are better than yours. Therefore, from the very beginning, pray that God would give you the ability to discern who in your group he is calling to become a leader.

While there is no absolute formula for identifying an apprentice leader, there are several characteristics to look for.

- Loves Jesus (Jn. 14:15), loves the church (Jn. 15:12), loves the lost (Jn. 17:18)
- Understands the DNA of community at Mars Hill (Acts 2:42-47)
- Listens to others, includes others in conversation (James 1:19, Romans 15:1)
- Depends on Scripture (Dt. 8:3, 2 Tim. 3:16)
- Open about sin and repentance (James 5:16, Mark 1:15, Mt. 3:8)
- Eager to serve the needs of others (Rom. 12:1-13)
- Humble (James 4:6)

Also, make sure you don't simply look for someone like you. The body of Christ is immensely diverse, and so are those who he has called as leaders, so be open to consider people who are very different from you.

### **MULTIPLY YOUR EFFORTS!**

*In many ways, two (or more) apprentices are better than one, for you as a leader, for your apprentices, and for the legacy of your group. One advantage of having more than one apprentice is the simple economy of scale as you are able to multiply the impact of your time invested.*

*Additionally, creating a peer group of apprentices can provide an intensively dynamic growth community for the apprentices.*



## **inviting an apprentice**

As important as it is for you to prayerfully consider the identification of an apprentice, it is equally important that a potential apprentice prayerfully considers the call to leadership. First, and foremost, they should feel a call to leadership, but they may never feel called by Christ if they are never asked by you. So, begin by letting the individual know that you have observed certain leadership qualities in them, and invite them to consider, in prayer, if God might be calling them to become a leader. Continue to pray and then follow up in a timely manner.

Most people will have some questions and may even fear that they are unqualified or unprepared for the responsibilities of leadership. Discuss any of their concerns with them, and don't be afraid to validate their uncertainty as normal, a healthy check against their own pride, and a helpful indicator of the gravity of the role they are called to. But don't be afraid also to encourage them to persevere, as the call to leadership is worthy of pursuit, despite (or even, perhaps, because of) the high cost. Make sure they also understand that their apprenticeship process will help them develop their skills and confidence as a leader.

At whatever point the individual is open to considering the apprenticeship, invite them to complete the CG leader application so that the initial administrative checks can be completed.

## **assessing an apprentice**

The formal assessment of an apprentice begins with a leadership application made by the apprentice. The leadership application gives the apprentice an overview of the role and requirements of a Mars Hill community group leader, and explains the general milestones of the apprenticeship. The apprentice will also answer several questions used to assess character, integrity, and spiritual maturity, and will submit a background check consent form.

During the application process, special attention should be paid to the applicant's view of church leadership and understanding of Mars Hill's community group DNA. Additionally, no applicant should proceed into the apprentice process who is not a faithful Mars Hill member who submits to church leadership, faithfully stewards time, treasures, and talents, and continually seeks to grow as a faithful disciple of Jesus.

Because a community group leader carries a significant responsibility for the shepherding of the members of their group, it is important that each apprentice is assessed by an approved Mars Hill leader. The Apprentice Assessment that follows should be used as a guide for assessing an apprentice's readiness for leadership, and for developing an apprenticeship plan.



## how to use the apprentice assessment

Before you can truly assess the readiness of an apprentice for leadership, you must know your apprentice well on a personal spiritual level. You should get to know your apprentice well through community group interaction, but you also should intentionally pursue opportunities to deepen your relationship outside of the group.

There are three parts to the Apprentice Assessment: (1) a description of the Core Competencies of a community group leader, (2) an Apprentice Assessment Worksheet, and (3) a Training Glossary to guide the growth and development of your apprentice.

The Apprentice Assessment Worksheet is organized into 6 sections, summarizing each of the 6 core competencies of a community group leader (Disciple of Jesus, Biblical Foundation, Character, Shepherding, Missional Vision, and Leadership). For each section, you will evaluate the maturity of the apprentice on a sliding scale.

To determine the maturity of your apprentice, compare the description of the Core Competencies to what you know about your apprentice.

Use the Training Glossary to recommend growth opportunities in the “Action Plan” section of the Apprentice Assessment Worksheet. The goal is to target areas of immaturity with effective training tools that will help the apprentice to grow in competence.

When you have finished your assessment and completed the Worksheet, you can then complete the Apprentice Development Plan that you will share with your apprentice to help guide his development into leadership.

### **ASSESSMENT STEPS:**

- 1. Get to know and disciple your apprentice*
- 2. Know the Core Competencies of a community group leader*
- 3. Use the Apprentice Assessment Worksheet to measure the maturity of your apprentice in the Core Competencies*
- 4. Use the Training Glossary to identify appropriate training tools*



## core competencies

We have identified 6 core areas of competence to give you a measuring stick for assessing your apprentice's readiness for leadership. The core competencies are: Disciple of Jesus, Biblical Foundation, Character, Shepherding, Missional Vision, and Community Leadership. Within each area of competence are sub-categories that list the marks of maturity for the category.

Use this tool to guide the assessment of your apprentice(s) and to complete the Apprentice Assessment Worksheet.

### Disciple of Jesus

#### Gospel Identity

- Expresses identity as nothingness without Christ and wholeness in Christ
- Practices confession sin personally and in community
- Identity expressed through dependence on Scripture

#### Gospel Worship

- Worship expressed in humble acceptance of God's love with a clear conscience
- Exposes and dismantles personal idols
- Credits Christ for successes in life
- Seeks God's purposes in suffering
- Life marked by prayer and thankfulness

#### Gospel Community

- Expresses/demonstrates a deep love for the Church
- Aware of spiritual gifts and serves out of strengths
- Seeks to include others in community; not exclusive
- Shares life with others through humble honesty
- Seeks opportunities to care for the practical needs of the Body

#### Gospel Mission

- Understands God as sent and sending
- Expresses a deep concern and love for the lost
- Knows culture, seeks to take Christ into culture
- Cultivates relationships with the lost
- Seeks opportunities to care for the practical needs of the lost



## Biblical Foundation

### **Authority of Scripture**

- Submits to Scripture in matters of doctrine and practice
- Demonstrates a solid understanding of the Old Testament and New testament
- Leads others to seek wisdom and understanding in Scripture

### **Doctrine / Theology**

- Understands and can explain Biblically-sound doctrine
- Able to discuss core theological convictions

## Character

- Humble, not prideful
- Worthy of respect; without any character defect
- Sincere; earnest, honest, authentic
- Self-controlled; without addictions
- Not greedy; not pursuing dishonest gain; financially content and upright
- Sound Biblical theology held with deep conviction
- Sexually pure
- Trustworthy
- Lives in loving relationship with others

## Shepherding

### **Relationship Building**

- Relates to others on an appropriate, personal level
- Deliberately seeks to deepen relationships spiritually

### **Sin / Idolatry**

- Able to identify sin and idolatry in self and in others
- Helps others identify sin and idolatry in themselves

### **Confession / Repentance**

- Leads others in confession
- Helps others pursue repentance

### **Spiritual Disciplines**

- Understands spiritual disciplines as grace-based rhythms of abundant life
- Life marked by regular practice of spiritual disciplines
- Leads others in practice of spiritual disciplines



## Missional Vision

### Missional Alignment

- Understands God as sent and sending
- Understands Mars Hill's mission to live for Jesus as a city within the city, knowing culture, loving people, and seeing lives transformed to live for Jesus.

### Missional Ownership

- Takes seriously Jesus' command to make disciples
- Demonstrates a deep love and concern for the lost
- Actively pursues missional relationships
- Embraces Biblical ecclesiology as being inherently sacrificial, corporate, and missional
- Takes ownership of the mission of Mars Hill in spheres of influence

## Administrative Leadership

### Group Facilitation

- Leads focused, fruitful conversations
- Asks purposeful questions
- Encourages respectful group interaction
- Includes all group members in conversation

### Hospitality

- Has identified a host and host location
- Has a plan for welcoming and following-up with new people

### Leader Identification / Development

- Has identified committed core members
- Has established leadership roles for group members
- Seeks to identify new leaders
- Invites, challenges, and equips others to lead

### Group Growth

- Has a plan for inviting and welcoming new group members

### Group Reproduction

- Has a plan for group replication

### Personal Plan

- Has created a plan for personal growth as a leader.

### Group Plan

- Has created a group strategic plan that complements the neighborhood plan

### Neighborhood Plan

- Understands the neighborhood strategic plan



### Disciple of Jesus

A disciple knows Jesus, is being transformed to be like Jesus, and is devoted to building up the body of Christ, owning the mission of Mars Hill by living in community with Christians and by loving mission to non-Christians. (See p. 2.2 for more)

- Fully Capable     Sufficiently Prepared     Needs growth     Unprepared

Action Plan

### Biblical Foundation

A mature disciple submits to the authority of Scripture in all of life, demonstrates a solid understanding of the Bible, it's core theological themes and doctrines, leading others to seek wisdom and understanding in God's word. (See p. 2.3 for more)

- Fully Capable     Sufficiently Prepared     Needs growth     Unprepared

Action Plan

### Character

A mature disciple's character is marked by increasing Christlikeness, . (See p. 2.3 for more)

- Fully Capable     Sufficiently Prepared     Needs growth     Unprepared

Action Plan

### Shepherding

A shepherd loves people and seeks to deepen relationships spiritually, by leading others to find their identity in Jesus by exposing idols, confessing and repenting of sin, and pursuing renewal through spiritual disciplines. (See p.2.3 for more)

- Fully Capable     Sufficiently Prepared     Needs growth     Unprepared

Action Plan

### Missional Vision

A leader understands and owns the mission of the church to proclaim the gospel to the lost, and encourages others to take ownership of that mission. (See p. 2.4 for more)

- Fully Capable     Sufficiently Prepared     Needs growth     Unprepared

Action Plan

### Administrative Leadership

A leader carries out administrative authority, facilitating relational dynamics, owning and leading the mission of the group to show hospitality, love the city, and cultivate a reproductive community. (See p. 2.4 for more)

- Fully Capable     Sufficiently Prepared     Needs growth     Unprepared

Action Plan



## training glossary

This training glossary suggests resources and growth exercises that can be used to develop an apprentice's maturity and competence in the core competencies.

Use this tool to create a development plan for your apprentice(s), by including appropriate training as an "action plan" when you complete the Apprentice Assessment Worksheet.

### Disciple of Jesus

#### Gospel Identity

- Watch CG Training Video Part 4, *DDL: Gospel Identity*
- Read book, *How People Change*
- Seek out 1-3 Christians for regular confession
- List areas of struggle and develop plan for putting sin to death
- Commit to a daily Scripture reading schedule
- Commit to memorize key passages of Scripture

#### Gospel Worship

- Watch CG Training Video Part 5, *DDL: Gospel Worship*
- Read book, *How People Change*
- Watch sermon video: *The Rebel's Guide to Joy* series
- Watch sermon video: *Christ on the Cross* series
- Read book, *Humility* by CJ Mahaney
- Watch sermon video, *Pray Like Jesus* series

#### Gospel Community

- Watch CG Training Video Part 6, *DDL: Gospel Community*
- Watch sermon video, *Epistles of John Series | 1 John*
- Take a spiritual gifts assessment
- Perform group role of "welcome wagon"
- Invite group members to be a part of your life
- Identify a practical need you can meet for someone, invite others to join you

#### Gospel Mission

- Watch CG Training Video Part 7, *DDL: Gospel Mission*
- Read book, *Breaking the Missional Code* by Ed Stetzer and David Putman
- Read book, *Total Church* by Steve Timmis and Tim Chester
- Identify 3 common interests you share with your neighbors
- Identify 1 person you will pray for and build a Christ-centered relationship with
- Identify a practical need you and your group can meet in your neighborhood



## Biblical Foundation

### Authority of Scripture

- Analyze gaps in Biblical understanding and create a reading plan
- Read book *Reading the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart
- Follow-up with individuals' prayer requests by sending a note with appropriate Scriptural encouragement

### Doctrine / Theology

- Watch sermon video: *Doctrine* series
- Read book *Concise Theology* by JI Packer

## Character

Recognition of sin in a Christian is, of course, to be expected, as we know that our sanctification is not complete. Rather than perfection, a Christian's character should be marked primarily by a humble spirit that welcomes correction, is quick to repent, and seeks to keep short accounts of sin. Serious character flaws should be exposed as sin, and should be an occasion to minister to a brother in his blindness, rather than seen as a "growth opportunity." Sanctification is wholly the work of the Spirit.

## Shepherding

### Relationship Building

- Confess inappropriate views of others; pursue repentance
- Take on role of group coordinator, assigning roles to others and equipping them
- Identify 3 relationships and seek to deepen them spiritually

### Sin / Idolatry

- Read book, *How People Change*
- Read book *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
- Watch Training Video: *Spiritual Warfare* Series

### Confession / Repentance

- Lead group in confessing idolatry
- Invite 1-3 people into discipleship relationship

### Spiritual Disciplines

- Identify 3 areas in your life that are out of balance and begin practicing appropriate spiritual disciplines to address the imbalance
- Invite a group to join you for two weeks in the practice of a particular spiritual exercise



## Missional Vision

### Missional Alignment

- Read the gospels and Acts
- Write a Biblical defense of Mars Hill's mission statement

### Missional Ownership

- Initiate a discipleship relationship with another Christian
- Identify the non-Christians God has placed in your life and detail how you will build missional relationships with them
- Identify one way you can own the mission of Mars Hill in your spheres of influence

## Administrative Leadership

### Group Facilitation

- Lead group in a participation event
- Lead group in a service event
- Lead group in fellowship

### Hospitality

- Organize and lead a hospitality event
- Perform group role as "welcome wagon"
- Identify a host location

### Leader Identification / Development

- Seek core group members
- Establish leadership roles for group members
- Invite someone into the apprenticeship process

### Group Growth

- Compile a group strategic plan

### Group Reproduction

- Create a replication plan

### Personal Plan

- Create a plan for personal growth as a leader.

### Group Plan

- Create a group plan that complements the neighborhood plan

### Neighborhood Plan

- Become familiar with the neighborhood plan