



MARS HILL CHURCH | community groups
Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started



table of contents

introduction to new christian discipleship	1.1
• the journey (1.1)	
• how to do it (1.1)	
• description of a disciple's life (1.2)	
identity	1.2
• conversation 1: testimony (1.3)	
• conversation 2: bible (1.4)	
worship	1.5
• conversation 3: continuous worship (1.5)	
• conversation 4: prayer (1.6)	
community	1.7
• conversation 5: walking in community (1.7)	
• conversation 6: walking in the light (1.7)	
mission	1.8
• conversation 7: evangelism (1.9)	
appendix	2.0



introduction to new christian discipleship

The goal of this handbook is to lay out several conversations to have with a new Christian. Ideally this path is walked down in a Community Group as well as in a “1:1” relationship.

Jesus said, “...make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20a)

At Mars Hill our mission is to see “lives transformed to live for Jesus.” By God’s grace Mars Hill sees people become disciples of Jesus all the time. The Christian life begins with God’s initiation to save us from sin, death, and Satan through Jesus’ perfect life, death, and resurrection. When God gives us a new heart that trusts Him and loves Him, we cannot help but want to know Him more, walk in His ways, and see other people transformed by the Gospel.

The Gospel of Jesus found in the Bible changes our life, and the truth and implications of the Gospel will give us much to repent of and provoke hundreds of questions.

the journey

Think about when you first believed the Gospel, or when you first “got the Gospel” and dedicated your life to Jesus. What’s the first thing you remember about being a disciple of Jesus?

We were thankful to Jesus: that He saved us from sin, ourselves, gave us life with Him now and in eternity to come, and we wanted to repent of our sin. In fact this is the essence of the Christian life. God saves us and we respond with our whole life as worshipful thanks to God. (Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 3:18)

Discipling someone is as simple and glorious as leading them in and to the Gospel all the time, and repenting all the time, becoming more and more like Jesus. We are disciples for life. Discipleship is the Christian life, discipling and being disciplined.

how to do it

Discipleship can be described as doing life together. A disciple is a learner, and what a disciple needs is someone to follow and learn from. Discipleship can look like a weekly meeting, one on one, but it should be more than just that. Ultimately we hope that discipleship takes place in the life of a community with someone taking point to mentor a new Christian, having some essential conversations about the Christian life.

Before we can begin to make disciples we need to know what a disciple is. We have four categories that are a “Description of a Disciples Life.”



DESCRIPTION OF A DISCIPLE'S LIFE

- 1. Identity:** *A disciple of Jesus finds their identity in Jesus and His work on our behalf. All of the Christian life flows out of who we are. Finding our identity in His story changes everything.*
- 2. Worship:** *A disciple of Jesus worships God in and with all of their life. All of life is worship. We either worship God or idols, but we never stop worshipping. Idolatry is the root of all our sin.*
- 3. Community:** *A disciple of Jesus lives in community just as God lives in community as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*
- 4. Mission:** *A disciple of Jesus is sent on mission to see people transformed by the Gospel just as Jesus was sent by the Father*

We have put together seven conversations that coincide with the “Description of a Disciples Life”. These conversations can be had on a weekly basis with the person you are discipling.

More than likely, the person you are discipling is going to have a ton of questions. Feel free to say, “I don’t know, that’s a really good question. Let me get back to you on that.” You don’t need to be a Pastor to disciple someone, as long as you’re willing to track down some answers to help them.

identity

The first thing we need in the Christian life is to know who we are.

Every person has the same “base line” identity. We all bear the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). But because of sin this image has been distorted. When we are saved from our sin we are given a new identity. We are no longer just image bearers of God; we become children of God. “But to all who did receive Him (Jesus), who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...” (John 1:12)

All of the Christian life flows out of our identity in Jesus. Here are some conversations to help someone understand their identity in Christ.



conversation 1: testimony

Our testimonies are one of the most powerful witnesses to the truth of the Gospel.

task:

The first thing you should do as you begin to disciple someone is to hear the story of how they became a Christian, what Jesus has saved them from, and what He has put on their heart to do.

Each of you write down your stories, answering these questions:

- 1. When and how did you become a Christian?*
- 2. What did God save you from?*
- 3. What do you want Him to do in your life and where do you need to grow?*

Then meet up and share your stories.

Be listening for key elements of the Gospel.

- *We are created for God and by God.*
- *We fall short and sin.*
- *We need forgiveness and reconciliation.*
- *Jesus is God and forgives sin through his death on the cross.*
- *We need to repent of sin and trust in Jesus through faith.*
- *Jesus gives new life with new desires.*

Be sure to ask questions about their understanding of the Gospel, especially if any of these elements are missing. We don't expect theological precision from a new Christian but these elements need to be understood clearly.



**Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started**

Questions to ask:

When you think about who you are, what pops in your head? (Point the new believer to their identity in Christ)

What is the most exciting part about being a Christian to you right now?

Have you shared your testimony with any friends or family yet?

Do you have any fears about giving your testimony?

conversation 2: bible

Christian identity comes from finding our place in God's story. History really is His story. God's story is revealed to us in the Bible and therefore we want to get to know the Bible.

As we start walking with Jesus, we start reading our Bibles more. God most clearly speaks to us through scripture. Understanding the Bible is a process that will take the rest of our lives, but studying in community is very helpful. It is in Scripture that we find out who God is and who we are.

task:

First, make sure that the person you are discipling has a good Bible. We highly recommend the English Standard Version. The ESV Study Bible is a great gift to someone starting to read the Bible.

Second, pick out one of the Gospels. Begin to read through it together and meet to discuss it. Reading and discussing the Bible should be a fluid part of walking together and become a mainstay throughout your time together.

On the New Testament by Pastor Mark is very helpful for someone starting to read the Bible and answers many common questions.



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

conversation 2: bible (continued)

Questions to ask:

How are you doing believing the Bible is God's word?

What questions about the Bible can I try and help you with?

worship

Worship is much more than what we do on Sundays; it is why we were created. Sin is not ceasing to worship, but the worship of idols instead of Jesus, the true God. (Romans 1:20-28)

conversation 3: continuous worship

When we become Christians we want to worship Jesus because He is holy and has saved us from Satan, sin, and death.

All of life is worship. We may worship God, things, people, experiences, or ourselves, but we never stop worshipping. This is why Paul says "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)

But worshiping God is not just what we do to rightly walk with Him; it is also how we are transformed to be more like Jesus.

"And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Read these verses together to discuss

- *Read Romans 1:20-28*
- *Read Jeremiah 2:11-13*
- *Read Romans 12:1-2*



conversation 3: continuous worship (continued)

Questions to ask:

How does the idea that we never stop worshipping change the way you view your life?

What does idolatry look like in your life?

How do you deal with your sin / idolatry?

conversation 4: prayer

God talks to us primarily through his word, the Bible; we talk to God through prayer. Scripture is full of promises and truths about prayer. The key to understanding prayer is to pray like Jesus. Jesus talks to the Father as a son talks to his dad; this is the key to not over-spiritualizing prayer and to having humble confidence in prayer.

task:

Be sure to pray with the person you are discipling on a regular basis. Opening and closing your times together in prayer is something to consider.

Read these verses together to discuss prayer.

- *Matthew 6:5-15*
- *John 14:13-14*
- *James 1:5*

Questions to ask:

What does prayer look like in your life?

Do you find it hard to pray? If so why do you think that is?

How can I pray for you this week?



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

community

As image bearers of God (Genesis 1:26), we are made to be in community just as God is in community. Note the “us” in Genesis 1:26. Even in the perfect world Adam was created in, the one thing that was not good was for man to be alone. (Genesis 2:18)

Our sin had separated us from God and one another (Isaiah 59:1-2). But in Christ we are given a new identity individually and given a new identity communally. We are adopted into a new family: the Church. (John 1:12, Ephesians 4)

conversation 5: walking in community

When we become Christians we get a new identity individually, as children of God, and we get a new identity corporately, as we are brought into God’s family—the church.

task:

Read and discuss Acts 2:37-47.

Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. (There are no “lone ranger” Christians. We are all part of the body and when one part is missing the whole body suffers.)

Explain how Mars Hill Community Groups seek to embody these texts. ¹

¹ For help explaining this watch CG Training Video Part 5, DDL: Gospel Worship

Questions to ask:

What does it look like for you to be in community?

Can I help you get into a Community Group? (If they aren't in one already.)

conversation 6: walking in the light

We need the Gospel all the time because we sin. Learning what to do with sin as a new Christian is really important.

One of the first conversations a new Christian needs to have is about how God forgives past sin before we were Christians and future sin we commit after we become Christians.



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

task:

Read 1 John 1:5-10 and prepare to explain what it looks like to “walk in the light as He is in the light” and how “if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

True fellowship with God and with one another comes from “walking in light”—being honest about where we are at in our walk with God, knowing that we are forgiven and that we can be cleansed from our sin.

Meet up to read through 1 John 1:5-10 and to discuss this concept.

Questions to ask:

(Be sure to give examples and answers from your life. How confessing sin to others helped bring freedom and cleansing. Walking in the light yourself is the best way to teach this concept.)

How are you doing with believing that God forgives you?

What do you do after you are convicted of sin?

What does it look like for you to walk in the light in community?

mission

As image bearers of God we are sent on a mission—just like God. God is a sent and sending God. The Father sent the Son on a rescue mission for us, and the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit to help us and to glorify the Father and the Son.

The woman at the well in John 4:1-26 can't help but tell her friends, family, and neighbors about Jesus after meeting and talking to Him. In the same way, we get to share the good news about Jesus with everyone in hope that they too will give Him their sin and experience new life in Him.



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

conversation 7: evangelism

“Many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’” (John 5:39)

One of the very first things that will happen after someone becomes a Christian will be evangelism. Just like the woman at the well after someone encounters Jesus they will want to go back to his or her friends, telling them the good news about Jesus.

Therefore we should do whatever we can to help someone understand how to share the Gospel.

If the person is a Christian, they know the Gospel already. However, many of us are afraid that we will not “do it right.” The Samaritan woman was not theologically sophisticated, her message was simple—“He told me all that I ever did”—and people believed because of her testimony.

Successful evangelism is taking the initiative to share the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God.

task:

Share some examples of how you have shared your faith with friends and family.

Explain:

Successful evangelism is taking the initiative to share the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God.

Questions to ask:

Do you have friends or family that don't know Jesus yet?

What do you think it will look like to talk to them about what He has done in your life?

What are some of your fears about sharing your faith?



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

appendix

The following are additional resources for further study into the Description of a Disciples Life. These resources can be utilized in relationship or in individual study.

FOUR ASPECTS OF A DISCIPLE'S LIFE

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identity

All of the Christian life flows out of our identity in Jesus. Here are some steps to understanding your identity in Christ.

1. identity overview:

- *Watch CG Training Video Part 4, DDL: Gospel Identity (on marshillchurch.org or iTunes)*

2. the bible:

Christian identity comes from finding our place in God's story. History really is His story. God's story is revealed to us in the Bible and therefore we want to get to know the Bible: what it's about, how we got it, and why we can trust it.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

identity (continued)

2. the bible:

- *Read On the New Testament. (Can be read in one hour.)*
- *Read On the Old Testament. (Can be read in one hour.)*
- *Pick up an ESV Study Bible.*
- *Pick something to read with a friend and begin to read you Bible.*

The following are some wonderful truths about our identity in Christ. Read them slowly and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read (John 16:13). Then discuss them with a person from your community group or a mentor. If you are new to reading the Bible don't get frustrated if you have a hard time understanding. You will grow in understanding as you get the "Big Picture" more and more.

- *You are in the Good Sheppard's hand: John 10:27-30*
- *You are a new creation and righteous: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21*
- *You are Jesus' friend: John 15:12-17*
- *You are no longer a slave to sin, but a son of God: Galatians 4*

3. the big picture – finding our place in His story:

In God's story there are major themes that occur again and again throughout the Bible. Understanding the Bible is sort of like putting together a puzzle; you want to get the edges done first and then fill in the middle. Some pieces will seem bigger than others and without them nothing seems to connect. Hopefully this study will help connect some of those "big pieces."

We recommend the Doctrine Series for an introduction to the major overarching themes found in Scripture. Again, watch these and discuss them with someone from your community group or a mentor you are walking with. You are sure to have many questions answered and many provoked. These videos are a prerequisite to becoming a member at Mars Hill Church.



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

identity (continued)

3. the big picture – finding our place in His story:

- *Watch the Doctrine Series (on marshallchurch.org or iTunes)*
- 1. *Trinity: God Is*
- 2. *Revelation: God Speaks*
- 3. *Creation: God Makes*
- 4. *Image: God Loves*
- 5. *Fall: God Judges*
- 6. *Covenant: God Pursues*
- 7. *Incarnation: God Comes*
- 8. *Cross: God Dies*
- 9. *Resurrection: God Saves*
- 10. *Church: God Sends*
- 11. *Worship: God Transforms*
- 12. *Stewardship: God Gives*
- 13. *Kingdom: God Reigns*

worship

Worship is much more than what we do on Sundays; it is why we were created.

- *Watch CG Training Video Part 5, DDL: Gospel Worship (on marshallchurch.org)*
- *Read Romans 1:20-28*
- *Read Jeremiah 2:11-13*
- *Read Romans 12:1-2*
- *Watch sermon video, Continuous Worship : Idolatry (on marshallchurch.org)*
- *Watch sermon video, Continuous Worship: Continuous Worship (on marshallchurch.org)*

community

Our sin had separated us from God and one another (Isaiah 59:1-2). But in Christ we are given a new identity individually and given a new identity communally. We are adopted into a new family: the Church. (John 1:12, Ephesians 4)



Discipleship Guide:
7 Conversations to Get Started

community (continued)

These resources are best worked out in community:

- *Join a Community Group if not already*
- *Watch CG Training Video Part 6, DDL: Gospel Community (on marshillchurch.org)*
- *Read 1 John chapter 1 with someone else and discuss what “walking in the light” looks like in community and for you*
- *Watch sermon video, Epistles of John Series | 1 John (on marshillchurch.org)*
- *If you want to go further in your study, Total Church is highly recommended*

mission

As image bearers of God we are sent on a mission—just like God. God is a sent and sending God. The Father sent the Son on a rescue mission for us, and the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit to help us and to glorify the Father and the Son.

You are not on mission alone; you are on mission in and with a community. Therefore, it's best to discuss what mission looks like with your community group or a mentor.

- *Watch CG Training Video Part 7, DDL: Gospel Mission (on marshillchurch.org)*
- *Read Matthew 28:16-20*
- *Read John 17:15-19*
- *Read John 20:19-21*
- *Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27*
- *If you want to go further in your study, Total Church is highly recommended*