



The Cure...

Directions: *One teaspoon
ful every two hours.*

Discipleship

SHAKE WELL BEFORE USING

For the Common
Youth Ministry

Paul Turner

Acknowledgements

I want to begin by saying that this book, like most books, is a work of love. I have met a lot of great people along this path through these past 20 years in youth ministry. These people have encouraged me, prayed for me, rebuked me, disciplines me and most of loved me in spite of myself.

Thanks to the youth, youth staff and staff of Garywood Assembly of God. I could not begin to mention everyone but if you were in leadership during the D-Project years, you know how good God was to us.

Thank you to my kids who have shared me for the past 16 years with students in towns and camps across Florida and Alabama. My greatest role in life is being your father.

Thank you to my wife Kim, who has been my proofreader, secretary, and has worn too many hats to name. The greatest hat she has worn is being my friend and chief spiritual cheerleader. I love you very much.

Prologue

I can't remember exactly when it happened, but I just snapped. I had a realization. I was sick of preaching. My concern was, that if preaching was making me sick, what was it doing to my students. It seemed like a futile experience in regards to discipleship.

I came into my office after one Wednesday night as normal and plopped into my chair. I thought about all these messages I had preached. I had preached over 780 Wednesday nights alone not including weekends or camps over 15 years. That's a lot of messages. What had I accomplished? More importantly what part did it play in the discipleship process of the hundreds of students I had communicated with over the years?

I understand that we are sowers not growers, that's Gods job. I just wanted to be effective at making disciples and preaching alone was not cutting it. Fifty two Wednesdays a year equals 4,680 minutes (90 minutes a week), that's 78 hours filled with worship, preaching, and altar calls. Was there a better way to spend that time for a few weeks a year?

I love preaching the gospel, but at some point I started to feel like my preaching was getting in the way of discipling students. I had to do something different for my students, for God and for my own soul. I had to stop the meeting.

Meetings were getting in the way of our ministry to students and allowing ministry to flow through students. I was about to do something crazy by human standards. Wednesday nights were not going to be the same for a while and theoretical discipleship was about to take a radical u-turn.

What you have in your hands is an expression of that journey and what I learned about discipleship, youth ministry and myself. I hope in the process of reading this YOU will reflect on your time in ministry and how discipleship has been a part of it. Maybe you'll come to the same conclusion I have, it's time for a change.

Enjoy,

Paul Turner

Paul Turner
Disciple Project Ministries

Welcome to the Cure For The Common Youth Ministry

What exactly is this cure? It's not some strange remedy from a traveling snake oil salesman, it is first century medicine every youth ministry should take. Inside these pages are ideas, thoughts, concepts and principles that could change the way you make disciples and the way you do youth ministry all together.

One form of this medicine was a project we embarked on called The Disciple Project. It was a retreat from meetings and a passionate pursuit to fulfill what Christ asked of us in the Scriptures. So, what is the Disciple Project?

It's A Method

Like many youth workers I am always looking for the edge. How can I do what I do better? How do I connect with students? How can I reach more students? Ultimately, how do I glorify God through the ministry He has given me? And, like many youth workers, I spent many a Wednesday duct taping together a program that I thought would interest students. Thank God for Psalm 116:9 "The Lord protects the simple-hearted; when I was in great need, he saved me." This is not the end all be all of methods, but I hope you'll find it to be a fruitful strategy.

It's A Model

How much curriculum do you have on your shelf that you can customize? How much of it teaches core disciple values and gets students thinking long term about their faith? Most importantly, how much of those books challenge your students to get out of their comfort zone and live the gospel? What curriculum gives you options to do it as a weekend retreat, a month long discipleship experiment or a three month paradigm shift? Oh, and does the author sit down in your office with you explaining the program step by step, and giving you up to date, customized ideas? Ok, stop looking! It's not there! IT'S HERE!!

It's A Mandate

"Go into all the world and make disciples" is a cut and dry statement. Scripture is clear; disciples must be made, but how? The Disciple Project offers you a new way to measure spiritual growth in your students. Whether you are looking for something new or starting from scratch, the Disciple Project can be a resource to get your youth ministry on track.

"There is no peace in the border lands. The halfway Christian is a torment to himself and of no benefit to others." – Unknown

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A Cure For The Common Youth Ministry

Chapter 1: The Discipleship Dilemma: Do we need a youth group?

Why is it so hard to make disciples in the context of the church today? Why are many of our youth ministries sick, anemic and ineffective? This is the question of the decade. With students heading out of the church, across denominational lines, we are left scratching our heads. I believe there is another question at work. Why do we want to have a youth ministry or youth group anyway? Does your church need a youth group? Yes and no. Our churches need youth ministry where youth are in ministry. Facing the challenge of the question is the first step to stopping the exodus. Answering the question takes guts. Here are a few of the wrong reasons to have a youth group:

Because, Every Church Has One

I am not opposed to youth group, only ineffective youth ministry. Youth group is a staple ministry for most churches that desire to grow numerically. I think every church should do youth ministry but not necessarily have a youth group unless it has purposed to do more than have meetings. Students need and want to be connected with adults. Seeing mature believers model Christ in ministry and fellowship is an important part of the discipleship process. Didn't the Apostle Paul say, "Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ." I Cor. 11:1. Students need to be around mature believers in order to imitate them. Some students do not have godly parents and need godly examples. The adult Body, in addition to a student's own parents, can take an important role in a student's walk with Christ.

Churches usually have a philosophy for their youth ministry but a theology is needed well. We (the church) must articulate how this powerful, passionate group of young people fit in and flow with the entire Body of Christ. Students are not pawns in a marketing game for youth group domination. We are stewards of one of the earth's greatest resources, the American teenager. Let's not squander what few years we have with them. Let's make every meeting we have with them matter.

Let me challenge you to ask hard questions about your current group. Use the **Prescription Page** at the end of each chapter to struggle through these hard questions. Use the sheets for personal reflection and then with those who work with you (those brave souls) in your youth ministry. To go even deeper, try the discussion sheets in the back of the book with your students and see if they jar something loose that has been stuck in your ministry.

Keeping Up With The insert your rival church here

I have to tell on myself. I am extremely competitive. Every town has “the church”. “The Church” is where the youth or people are flocking. Our town was no different. I learned in my naive first years of youth ministry that big churches don’t necessarily play well with others.

If several of our cities churches got together to create an event, “this church” had to have it at their place or at least have 80% control of the event. It looked like it was their event and we had the honor of inviting our groups. I became caught up in that unhealthy comparison game. I got out my ego-check list and began to mark through it:

- I can preach better than them -check
- I can program better than then- check
- I am better looking than them-check

Ok, the last one was debatable. None-the-less, I and a few other churches started to team up to beat “big church dude” with his big staff and his big budget with bigger events and not bother to invite them. We would laugh and cheer at our evil schemes. Ha! We showed him! Didn’t we? Not really. They barely noticed. It was like a fly hitting the windshield. We had lost the plot. Scripture commends us:

“ For we don’t dare classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. But in measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves to themselves, they lack understanding” 2 Corinthians 10:12 HCS

A brief warning, the disease of comparison can evolve quickly to envy and then devolve with equal speed into covetousness. Comparison steals our creative energy and escalates our dissatisfaction with what we have, where we are and who God has give us to minister to .

Before we consider duplicating the church down the street or considering new programs or ideas, we should take into consideration the personality of the leaders who run them, their demographics, their church make up, and in some cases their doctrine that drives it.

The time we spend in prayer and The Word will lead to a God given vision that will work where we are. God will gladly implant in us the strategies and programs that will work where we are. It’s not about how we compare to the church down the street but are we fulfilling out God given purpose and destiny in our town.

To Make Our Church More Attractive To Families

I'm used to getting yelled at in staff meeting because of kids who did not fit the model church goer. These students are referred to as "those kids". This groups consists of skaters, goths, rednecks, and in some places minorities. If you are reaching out to any of these sub-culture groups or worse, you are inviting them to church, be prepared for a rude awakening, your church may not want you to.

Seth Godin says of writing his book Tribes,

"If I had written a boring book, there'd be no criticism. No conversation. [Ask yourself:] How can I create something that the critics will criticize?"

If you plan on reaching lost kids, plan on getting criticized. Create a program worth criticizing. Jesus did. I am honored to be in His company.

I disheartened when one pastor (just about every pastor I served did in some way) conveyed to me, concerning outreach, that we should be careful about the image of the church.

In one such incident, I was chided for a group of skater kids and the danger of our culture creeping into our youth ministry. I nodded my head and politely listened to my Pastor tell me how these weird kids may have put off some people who were visiting the church. When he was done, I respectfully said, with a fire in my eye, "Sir, those kids you were talking about, were church kids and they are home schooled." The look I received was priceless.

Can I challenge you to slow the "machine" of church down long enough to see whether you are creating the disciples God so eagerly desires or are we just an assembly line producing bland-name (not a type-o) believers? Are we so concerned with our image to notice our failure to evaluate what we are doing and how we are doing it.

If the unexamined life is not worth living the unexamined youth group is not worth having. Failure to continuously ask questions about our disciple-making process will eventually lead to us scratching our heads 10 years from now. Eventually, our 5th graders will be in our church but we won't know who they are or why they are here and neither will they.

We should not be shocked if these same 5th graders become fruitless believers and shun any discipline when they are older. If we do not offer our students relationships and community framed in ministry and fellowship now, we will reap what we sow later.

I hope these rants don't scare you off. I hope you take them to heart. We have a discipleship dilemma and we are paying the price now for what we failed to do five, ten, fifteen years ago all for the sake of just having a youth group with no vision or pattern for making disciples or being to concerned about image.

Before we can offer solutions to our dilemma we must consider what we are relying on to make disciples. The following are snapshots of common methods youth groups use to disciple students. We should examine, discuss and debate these methods to ensure we are programming effectively to make disciples..

Meetings /Attendance as Discipleship

You may have heard the old analogy that we are no more Christian because we go to church than we are a car if we stand in our garage. Well, the same could be said of youth meetings. Just because our students attend meetings doesn't mean they are on any kind of discipleship track.

Youth meetings and the size of them are only a fraction of the discipling process. It was par for the course that I would be asked, how many students we had in our mid-week meeting, in staff meeting. There's nothing wrong with keeping track of numbers as long as numbers are not the only thing we are keeping track of.

It concerns me that I have never been asked, "Who are you discipling right now?" For some pastors, it is assumed that youth pastors are discipling students and for other pastors discipleship is not even on their radar.

In fact, I don't ever remember being asked how many were in any of our discipleship programs such as small groups or Sunday school. I make a point of this because it's an indicator of what we value. Some other questions I have never been asked:

"Do your students love each other?"

"How many of your students can share their faith?"

"Who was that student with the long hair? I'd love to get to know him."

"Would you like a raise? The church has too much money."

As you can see I am exaggerating, but I am also trying to make a point. If the only question we ask is, "How many were in youth the other night?" we are missing the point. The meeting is not THE discipling process. It is only a part. The meeting is the launching pad for the discipling process.

The youth meeting should be built for challenging, fellowship, and relationships. Our youth meetings should take on the characteristics of a Christian lab where a concoction of discipling techniques are introduced and experimented with, preaching included.

As in church, youth meetings are filled with seekers on all different levels of spiritual pursuit. Creating a discipleship map lets students know there is a path to follow and gives us a way to chart their growth.

The Death of Story

It seems that "testimony time" is all but dead. Why? Students have nothing to testify about except subjective experiences (great camp, good meeting, etc). I wanted to get back to our students telling stories and giving students the opportunity for these stories to unfold. I wanted to achieve the title of the Reba Macintire song, "Let's Give Them Something To Talk About.?"

Do you remember the 70 disciples who came back with great stories of healing and casting our demons. That experience did not happen in a meeting. When was the last time your kids stood up and told a story about what God had not done to them but through them? We decided to trade meetings for stories. I did not want our students graduating from High School without stories. Our students may never remember a meeting but they will remember The Taco Bell Revival.

One story I will never forget is when I had my friend Johnny Jernigan come to speak. We were launching The D-Project that night. He preached like a house on fire about sharing your faith. Instead of us just patting each other on the back and going home, we had other plans.

I had arranged to have some pizzas delivered but not for us. At the end of the night we asked how many students would like to go out and do what we just talked about? Dozens of hands were raised. We loaded up the vans with students and pizza and drove off to the Winn Dixie parking lot where we knew kids were hanging out. Well, the kids were not there that night but a pep rally had just ended over at one of the high schools. We drove up and out poured wild eyed, fired up students passing out pizza at a taco joint.

As I finished leading a young man in a recommitment prayer, I looked around the parking lot. I saw pizza flying, people praying and my 13 year old daughter sharing her faith. A few of those kids wondered who we are and what we are all about. Some of them even came to our outreaches. Now, that's a story I love to tell.

The D-Project gave us back our story. For the first five-ten minutes of each Wednesday night, for three weeks, we'd let a student share what was happening in their groups. I always loved it when the kids from the E-Team (evangelism team) got up to talk about sharing their faith or visiting the seniors in our church to pray for them. Their stories had an impact on other students.

Kids would genuinely be moved by what they had experienced the week before. I was blessed that our guests were hearing these stories. It is how I wanted them to see church. As a movement and not a meeting. Senator Bill Bradley defines a movement as having three elements:

1. A narrative that tells a story about who we are and the future we're trying to build.
2. A connection between and among the leader and the tribe.
3. Something to do - the fewer limits the better.

Don't give up. Give your kids something to do that is limitless. Your group has a story to tell. They just need a chance to tell it.

Participation as Discipleship

Some say a busy church is a happy church. While I might agree that a busy church keeps its people out of trouble, we must be concerned with what they are busy doing. I, like many of you, have graded myself on calendar efficiency. If the calendar is full and keeping kids safe, and out of trouble, you are doing a moderately good job.

The challenge of grading a student's walk with Christ by participation is this; students have less time than ever to participate in church activities. In addition to band practice, yearbook meetings and sports of all kinds; we want a student to add church activities to the list of things to do. May I suggest something? Tear up the calendar.

“Insanity!”, “Heretic!” you cry. Before we start building the fire to martyr me with; let's examine our theology and reasoning for busy calendars. Youth ministries often have many sub-ministries they want kids to be involved in such as drama team, worship team, etc. In reality, unless you have a great evangelism program drawing new and fresh students you are probably seeing the same faces at every event and ministry.

I am all about fellowship and students bonding, but a student who simply uses a talent or gift for God does not mean they are a disciple of Jesus. In fact, have you ever tried to discipline a worship team member or a drama team member because of some un-Christ like activities? Suddenly, this student is having a fit and a parent is up in arms over the fact that their very talented student cannot use their gifts for God and you are too mean or strict. You could call this Gifts Gone Wild.

Discipleship is based on relationship. Jesus had a great relationship with Peter. Who else could have said, “Get behind me Satan” when Peter balked at the eternal game plan? Participation is only an opportunity for discipleship. If they show up, we at least have a chance to take the next step up in the permission ladder; the ability to speak truth to students. This level must be earned and it must be nurtured. Nothing comes easy.

Altar Service as Discipleship

I love altar services. I have been a part of tremendous times of prayer, worship, weeping, and repentance with students. That is why I will treat this subject with great reverence and respect.

Whether it's at camp, a retreat or weekly meeting, a call to commitment is a pivotal part of allowing students to express what God is doing in their hearts. Some denominations focus on the altar more than others and that is neither good or bad. A weekly time of commitment is necessary for several reasons,

- students can have the opportunity to commune with God in prayer.
- students have the chance to express regret or remorse for sin.
- students raise the bar in their daily walk with Christ
- students can gain courage to live for Christ.
- students can enjoy the reality of their relationship with God.

There are three areas where we can get off track. **First**, we may not make clear reason why we are asking the student to come to an altar. If we are sharing a salvation message do we explain what that means? I don't try to make it hard for kids to come to the altar but I'm tired of seeing blank stares and fooling around. I try to be very specific. Jesus said, many are called but few are chosen. Jesus never had a problem thinning the herd (Luke 9:57-62)

The **second** area we often miss is follow up. We have allowed the emotion of the moment to be a stand-alone experience. Either we are afraid to challenge a student to go further or we have no plan of action to invite them to. Consider the *Parable of the Sower* as Jesus explained it:

Wayside Soil

“You, then, listen to the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word^[4] about the kingdom and doesn’t understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.

This is the one sown along the path.” Matthew 13:19,20 HCS

The scripture says it was “the evil one” who came snatched away the seed. The Devil takes advantage of every student who is in sin or bondage to pervert the salvation experience. The student does have to make a decision to follow Christ but the circumstances that student has lived in becomes a prism they view God through.

Rocky Ground

‘And the one sown on rocky ground—this is one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. Yet he has no root in himself, but is short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he stumbles.’ Matthew 13:20, 21 HCS

This could represent the altar or commitment time in your service. Commitment times are often euphoric and the desire to linger in them are strong. It is easy for a student to make their experience a tranquilizer from emotional pain rather than see it as nitros oxide to move their walk with Christ into overdrive.

Too many students (and adults) see the altar experience as an end rather than a means. I like to tell students after an altar time that if you have not purposed in your heart to change; all you’ve experienced is a good cry.

Altar time is not a perfect science. Follow up is important after these holy moments. We must tread lightly as the grace of God does it’s perfecting work.

Thorny Ground

“Now the one sown among the thorns—this is one who hears the word, but the worries of this age and the seduction^[5] of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” Matthew 13:22

HCS

So many kids start out great. A kid comes to the altar, has a powerful experience with God and three months or three days (in some cases, three minutes) later they are back in the muck. I wanted to scream with the Apostle Paul, “You foolish Galatians! Who has hypnotized you?” Galatians 3:1.

Altar times can be misleading. Students believe intently. They throw their whole hearts into the worship, the message and the commitment time. I have seen students come with great faith in God to forgive and heal but little faith in themselves to follow God afterwards.

I get it, these are teenagers. It’s up and down. Up and down is o.k. if it is up and down in the right direction, upward to a more mature faith.

If we have not offered some instruction about the altar and what it’s for, teens may look to the experience alone to change them. In some cases, kids use the altar like Catholics use confession. (I can talk, I was Catholic for 17 years) For teens, the altar can become a cathartic event rather than a spiritual encounter. I have seen kids become altar junkies, experience mongers. They get their weekly fix and live like the devil the rest of the time. I am not anti-altar or anti-emotion. I am just anti-let’s just leave it at that.

The Disciple Project puts students in a position where God’s power is not optional but imperative. Jesus said,

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8,9

The power of God has purpose. One of those purposes is that we become witnesses for Him. The weekly outreaches of The D-Project show students that ministry to our friends and community cannot happen without power. Power that only makes us feel good is like letting gasoline run out on the ground instead of in the tank.

In this model, the role of youth pastor is transformed from Circus Ring Leader to a spiritual guide; helping keep the power of God in the tank and our kids on the road of faith.

Good Soil

“But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and understands the word, who does bear fruit and yields: some 100, some 60, some 30 times [what was sown]” Matthew 13: 23

The key word in this verse is understands. It's hard to understand the gospel when the gospel is tied in with religion (us reaching God), church tradition and an American "God's Guns and Guts" culture.

Students understand the feeling of a weight lifted through forgiveness but do not understand or grasp the long-term love affair God wants to have with them. I am in constant awe of the what Jesus did for us but I am forever trying to understand it. Understanding is a long term, life-style commitment. Discipleship is about continuing to understand. It is understanding that a life with Christ does not end at the altar, it begins.

We should be dismayed, but not be surprised that so many walk away from Christ. Jesus saw crowds of people shout Hosanna when they thought he'd be a quick fix to Israel's occupation, but when it came to the cross, only his mother and John were standing there.

We should praise God for the good soil and not curse the ground when it does not produce what we think it ought to produce. We plant and water but God brings the growth, be patient.

Third, if we do not offer mentoring or accountability to the new believer, we are stocking the aquarium with dead fish. After the altar we must not ignore them. To not follow up sends the message, "Well, you are on your own now. Good luck." This is the equivalent of giving birth to a child and leaving it alone to feed itself, cloth itself and protect itself.

All of the above spiritual reproductive responsibilities are the burden of those who invite others to Christ. We are inviting students to a relationship with us as well as our Savior. We must carve the time into our schedules to be with those who are most spiritually vulnerable. I believe this is why many students fall away from our groups; they simply have not received the spiritual nurturing required.

The D-Project put kids in small groups with caring adults doing ministry according to the level they can handle it. Subsequently, kids do not get lost in the shuffle of midweek meetings. They are not wondering why other kids don't sit with them or what lame game are we going to play. Moving kids out with ministry facilitators gives kids the best chance to walk in a disciples shoes and us the best chance to help them walk out their faith.

We cannot make students do anything. It is they who responded and they who have to take steps to grow in Christ. It is our responsibility to offer them a place where they can learn to crawl, stand, feed themselves and eventually be able to walk on their own.

One final word about the altar; I would never turn away a student from the altar. I would never say, "I am not going to pray with you unless you are serious." This is not about judging whether a soul is saved or unsaved. It is a heavy burden to make that kind of call. The call to discipleship is a far less ethereal proposition. You are either in or you're not.

Let's not be the motive police or religious tailors measuring students to see if they are good or holy enough. Let the agape love of Christ be our standard. Pray and verify their commitment. Never raise the bar higher than God intended and never lower it below where God expects. God knows it has been too low for too long.

Altar calls, participation, and attendance are external measurements of success and poor rulers, in and of themselves, for measuring authentic discipleship. Let's continue to seek a Biblical view of what Jesus saw and expected from a disciple who would follow Him.

Prescription Plan

At the end of every chapter we going to ask you to hop on the table, stick out your tongue and say, “Ahhhhhhhhhhhh”. The exam will be in two parts. The first part of the exam focuses on your personal spiritual health. We cannot teach others to take the cure if we have avoided taking it ourselves.

The second part of the exam asks you to ask yourself hard questions about the spiritual health and direction of the youth ministry you lead. The point of this exercise is not to expose some terrible illness or flaw but may reveal areas where prevention is the best cure. Don't be nervous, it will only hurt a little (that's what they all say).

Chapter 1

Personal Examination

1. Why did you get into youth ministry? What were your dreams? How's that working?
2. What is your is your idea of a disciple? How close is this to Scripture?
3. Who is discipling (accountability, challenging, etc) you right now? Why is this an important component to leading and discipling others?

Group Examination

1. Why does your church (area, city, etc.) need a youth ministry? Need you?
2. Which of the “common” ways described in chapter one do you lean on most to disciple students?
3. Divide your group by name into the soils described in Matthew 13:3-23, Mk. 4: 2-20 and Luke 8:14-15. Where are most of your students? Is your current programming addressing these needs? What needs to change? Teaching? Servant Projects? Small Groups? Sunday School?

Chapter 2: Not Another Program

The worst mistake we can make with any new program is to believe that it, by itself, is the cure for what ails us. We cannot make the mistake of leaving out the most important part of discipleship: relationships. Like a doctor who administers too much of drug or the wrong kind of drug; we should take care in promoting and installing any new discipleship program.

If we are blinded by the potential of a new programs ability to reach more students; we will tend to forget about the individual and focus on the group. Here are some medical mishaps to watch out for when installing any new discipleship program. We should adopt the doctors oath, “Do no harm”, when we care for the individual soul.

Medicine Mishap #1 Desperation

In cases where a patient is diagnosed with a terminal disease and all traditional medicine has failed them, they may latch on to anything that claims it is a cure. It is often the same response in youth ministry. When we see our group slowly dying we latch onto anything that may help save it.

The program highlighted in this book, The Disciple Project, is not the cure for your youth ministry. The weekly opportunity for students to live out their faith inside and outside the traditional youth meeting is like strong strong medicine for the spiritually weak and anemic. Don't look at this book as another gimmick to get more students when you are already struggling to disciple the ones you have.

Adding more students to an already sick group means new students will simply catch what has made your youth ministry sick in the first place. Take the time to diagnose and treat the students you have. A healthy youth ministry will be able to receive new students and pass along healthy discipleship habits. Use the Disciple Project as a launch pad to begin programming out of conviction, not desperation.

Medicine Mishap #2 Promises, Promises

This medicine mishap may be more dangerous than the others. Like a doctor cannot make promises with experimental medicine, we also cannot guarantee a programs success for overall spiritual health. Discipleship is very much experimental in and of itself because people react differently to it.

Some people are allergic to street witnessing and have a violent reaction to scripture memory. You may have to decide how much of this program your students need. We give options in the back of this book that will help you decide which segment of the Disciple Project is the right approach for your group. The D-Project let's you do a weekend format, a one month format or a three month format.

In other words, don't over medicate your students to the point of exhaustion and don't under medicate them to the point of no effect. Balance is the key when launching any new program.

Medicine Mishap #3 Too Much of a Good Thing

You've heard that if a little is good then a lot must be better. Over programming your group is as equally hazardous as under programming. Setting up any discipleship programs needs to be done in moderation.

I have seen youth pastors lead their groups to two extremes. On one side of the fence is the all or nothing group. Youth leaders in this groups suck all the fun out of their youth program because they believe it's the spiritual thing to do. The fun side of the fence is a group too busy having fun to notice the other group is not having fun. In fact they are too busy having fun to notice they are losing students.

The fun side of fence doesn't want to offend the "deeper" side or be looked at as a kill-joy. The serious side defers fun for orthodoxy. Many of the students on the fun side of the fence are prone to boycott spiritual things and force their youth leader to stick with candy and desserts rather than meat and potatoes. The serious side force feeds their group until they have to do the Heimlick Manuever on them.

Either group is out of balance and must be stabilized for spiritual maturity to take root.

If you read the label of most prescriptions they have instructions for taking the medicine. Here are some tips you might find on a bottle of Discipleship:

Take in small doses.

Discipleship is a journey. Swigging the whole bottle hoping for a Jekyll and Hyde transformation will lead to disappointment. Scripture continually emphasizes that life with God is a growing experience (Colossians 1:9,10, 2 Thessalonians 1:3) and fruitfulness is a process, not an event or a program.

Take two pills and call God every morning.

Pill number one is the program pill. We should create programs to facilitate **the second pill**, relationships. The core of the discipleship process is relationship. Jesus never started programs such as:

- The Muddy Eyes Healing Ministry
- The Pharisee Bashing Club or
- The Transfiguration Altar Society.

Jesus called his disciples to Himself, not to a program. We should take the program pill to create an arena of ministry and relationships. A lack of balance creates strange side effects such as disinterest, fatigue or possibly an addiction to the program itself.

Keep meeting with students individually for lunch, prayer and accountability all the while allowing their input to feed the disciple making process. Make sure you call students to just say “hi” and “I’m praying for you” instead of needing them to do something for you.

Know when to stop taking (or giving) the medicine.

Do you ever feel like your youth meetings are a doctor’s waiting rooms, filled with sick kids waiting for you to say open wide and spoon feed them some horrible tasting medicine? Our ministry becomes short sighted if we view our students as sick kids instead of doctors in training.

We should always be seeking to train up students to carry the Cure (Jesus, not the program) to the world and not have them running to the youth group or youth pastor every time they have a runny nose.

For our group, the Disciple Project was more like a M.A.S.H (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital). We went where the fighting was so the wounded did not have that far to travel.

The D-Project is not a model to be implemented every week, indefinitely. The model is designed as a short-term wake up call to what your youth ministry could be like. It’s a kick-start to a stalled or dead battery youth ministry. Even the well established, growing youth ministry can glean a few ideas from The D-Project to better develop the disciples in their group.

Watch for side effects both good and bad

I stopped working with a youth program recently because the medicine I suggested made them sick(er). For better or worse they were already taking a prescription from another leader. Some leaders are doctors and others just play one on t.v.

I love medicine commercials. Companies like Phizer build up all the things their medicine will do for you and then very quickly and in small print let you know what could happen to you if do take this medicine. Here is a brief list of side effects for a particular medication:

- nightmares
- sleep driving
- insomnia
- compulsive gambling (no lie)
- dry heaves
and yes, even
- death

We have to face it, sometimes the cure hurts worse than the disease. We tend to look at the negative or the backlash of our decisions but we must look at the upside. When we did the Disciple Project here were some of the positive side effects we experienced:

- Unity
- New Friendships
- 100 % participation (those who showed up participated)
- New Youth Staff jobs (besides keeping kids quiet)
- Student Leadership increased
- People were ministered to
- God was glorified

There were some negative effects, but they were minimal. If a group rejects your solutions don't be discouraged, it may be the wrong time for the right program. Be patient, be prayerful.

Get a Second Opinion (and a third and a fourth)

My encouragement is to begin slowly. Build consensus and momentum before launching any discipleship program. Make sure you have built a team of parents, students, interested adults, your pastor and God Himself. Talk with other youth leaders in your area and see what is working and what is not.

Your greatest asset are your students. The four most important words to them will be What Do Youth Think? Let students create the outreaches, choose the kind of groups they launch and even the time lines for doing it. Ownership is one of the big keys to overall success.

One of your goals should be to launch your program with the greatest amount of power, enthusiasm, and momentum to maximize your efforts. Be sure you have:

- Measurable goals
- Starting and stopping points
- A consensus of agreement and permission
- A time of review
- A Plan B in case the program flops.
- A Biblical outlook towards discipleship and
- A healthy, disciplined life of your own.

Many of these topics are covered in the pages to come. With these in place you will have the greatest chance of a long term, healthy, discipleship program with fewer doctor visits.

Prescription Plan

Chapter 2

Personal Exam

1. How much time do you spend in prayer before launching a program or campaign?
2. Describe a desperate moment you've had lately for your youth program. What or who were you desperate for? Was it a survival desperate or a revival desperate? What's the difference
3. How much pressure do you put on yourself to make students spiritually grow? Is this natural?
4. What was the last program you tried that failed? Succeeded? How do you handle failure and success? Why is this important to maintaining a healthy perspective towards your youth ministry?

Group Exam

1. Review your past calendars of events, programs and activities. Are they balanced? Did they produce what you thought they would produce? Why or why not?
2. What are your churches expectations of your youth program? How close are your expectations and theirs? What are the major differences? What do they have in common? Does this make programming hard? Why? How can you meet in the middle?
3. Have you ever "overmedicated" your kids with programs? What were the side effects?
4. Describe what a balanced (activities and discipleship) youth ministry looks like. How close is your youth ministry to looking like this this? What changes can you make today that would strike the balance you are looking for?
5. A program we have installed that is not working and should be cancelled is _____

Chapter 3: A Cure for the Common Program

Youth Group or Youth Church?

Unfortunately, youth group may be the most fun your students will ever have in church. When they grow up and move on to “big” church many are taught to not rock the boat, sit and listen, and pay their tithes. Youth group is fun. It should be fun. We make it so fun that grown up church becomes a place they want to avoid rather than embrace.

When I first begin training a youth ministry in Disciple Project principles, I try to use terms such as Body of Christ, the church, community of believers, saints, and other biblical expressions that clue students in that they are a spiritual body called the church. I am building a big picture, spiritual identity so that if they lose their youth group identity they will not lose their eternal identity.

I’m not trying to split hairs or use clever semantics to justify my position. I truly believe there is a difference between a youth group and a youth church. I have listed below what I feel are the major five differences between the two. I have also added a **Youth Group vs Youth Church** hand out in the resource section of this manual so you can teach it to your students, small group, or adult leaders.

Characteristics of A Common Youth Group

Common Youth Groups Exist for Themselves

Youth Group by obvious definition is a group of youth. Youth Group could be described as a place to gather, eat, meet friends, sing a few songs, eat some more, and go home. Some of the unfortunate labels youth group has attracted over the years are

- self-centered
- cliquish
- unfriendly and
- spoiled

Youth Group with this mentality sees guests as intruders into there already established web of relationships. Youth Group mentality believes they don’t need any more “friends.” The goal of The Disciple Project is to remind students that their gathering has purpose and goals. One goal is for guests to see a living Christ in a loving community.

Christ met unbelievers where they were. He realized what many Christians today still don’t seem to understand. Cultivators have to get out in the field. According to one count, the gospels record 132 contacts that Jesus had with people. Six were in the Temple; four in the synagogues and 122 were out with the people in the mainstream of life. — J.K. Johnston

The youth group meeting is the least of all places you may minister to students. Schools, hangouts, movie theaters and sporting events are probably more the norm. Have you ever been hesitant to invite new kids to your youth ministry? Are your students open enough, loving enough, and ready to welcome new students? An open mind is part of the difference between a youth group and a youth church.

Common Youth Groups Make Human or Moral Standards the Only Standard

A youth group that gets kids to jump through a number of hoops or just follow the logistical plan for the night, are settling for less. We cheat our students when we lower the bar and ask them to take the road most traveled. For any group to function there must be an agreement on standards, on what is acceptable and what is not.

If you and your student leaders set the standard high, your youth group will take notice and rise to the occasion and begin the journey to youth church. I am not saying to create a bunch of rules for the sake of making rules. Create standards that make sense and foster mutual respect.

I had a few kids over the years who just couldn't pull it together. They thought everything was a joke/ They quit laughing when I told them to take a month off. I told them if they missed youth, call me back at the end of the month. I also told them that if they did not miss youth they probably weren't suppose to be here. Sounds tough, I know. Some called me back and some didn't, but everyone in the group knew I meant business.

Standards such as no cellphones on during service, no sitting in each other laps and no physical contact will not win you any friends; but students will see a new posture. Simple measures like this create an atmosphere of "I am not wasting my time with God."

In balance, don't make the youth meetings about keeping the rules. Share your heart in a loving, positive way with guests and your own students that this meeting is not about rules, it's about the Lord. Creating and keeping standards communicates our value of worship, the Word, and the Lord Himself.

Common Youth Groups Have Random Activities

Youth calendars are littered with activities in hopes of keeping students out of trouble or parents happy or both. The Bible does not say, "Go into all the world and keep students busy." The purpose of our planning is relationships. The planning process takes into account the lives we speak into. Calendar or meeting planning accounts for the various levels of spiritual maturity within the group.

Activities have different objectives. Some activities are for fun, some are for outreach, some are for spiritual rest (I mean the students rest not ours) like camp and retreats . Activities are not bad in and of themselves. The question is whether our calendars have intentionality.

Sometimes all a full calendar produces are casualties. Asking or expecting students to attend everything means your discipleship programs will be hit and miss, pick and choose. Our time with students is limited. We should make the fun nights fun and the discipleship events meaningful. Students are busier than ever today and our meetings should respect their time.

The Disciple Project asks a youth ministry to step away from the traditional youth meeting for a season and use that one central meeting night as a night of outreach, ministry and prayer. Each week builds upon the last and creates what many youth groups do not have, something to talk about.

Do your meetings create a buzz? By today's standards, the traditional youth meeting creates a buzz if someone hooks up with someone else or a couple of guys get in a fight. Some youth groups should change their name to TMZ or Showbiz Tonight because it is all about the drama. The Disciple Project creates ministry memories and a narrative for your kids to explore.

When you change the way you meet you are changing the perception of what the church is. If sitting in a seat, listening to a message, were the right metaphor to describe the Body of Christ; we would never have had a book in the Bible called The Acts of the Apostles.

Changing the perception of the church from meeting to movement gives kids something to talk about. Are your meetings buzz-worthy?

Common Youth Groups Are Held Together by Common Interests Only

If I could obliterate one phrase from the youth ministry universe it would be, “*Who’s going?*” - “*Who’s going to camp?*” “*Who’s going on the retreat?*” “*Who’s going to small group Bible study?*” Students have the herd instinct. They care about who they are going to sit next to, room with, and talk to. Students judge the value of the experience by who is there. While most adults would not admit to having this same instinct, think about the last time you walked into a big group and looked for a place to sit. Did you look to see who who was there before you looked for your seat? If so, welcome to the herd.

On Facebook I have received my fair share of **Join My Group** requests. Here is a brief list of groups that my friends have joined:

- Bama Rabbi Bama Football Page (1,025 joined)
- Invisible Children (2,516 joined)
- All Students In Florida Against Budget Cuts (2,516 joined)
- I want to punch the SHAMWOW guy in the throat (230 members)
(although I see this number going up in the future)
- Envision Nepal (515 members)
- Lovers of Milo Hamburgers (1,276 joined)

Some of these groups are funny and others represent a cause. Some people are group-aholics and casually join any group. There are others who pause and wonder if this is a group they really want to join. It’s not much different when we invite others to join our youth group.

This begs us to ask the question: Is our cause compelling enough for students to join?

Scripture paints a picture of a group of people who were bonded together beyond common interest. They had a common passion and a common experience.

“Now all the believers were together and had everything in common. So they sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need. And every day they devoted themselves [to meeting] together in the • temple complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved”*

Acts 2:44-47 HCS

What turned a group of people with common interests (social/ethnic) into people with common values (spiritual) that translated into everyone pursuing a common cause (glorifying God)? No human standard could do it then and no human standard can do it now. Teenagers can have their social needs met anywhere, including online. A cause, on the other hand is best experienced by like-minded, passionate, and dedicated people.

Meeting the social needs of the youth groups I’ve pastored has never been a problem. Being faithful to preach the word has led many of our students to share a common faith by the grace of God. But, when we took our kids on missions trips, to homeless shelters, or to anything that put our students in contact with the hurting or the lost, that is when the cause of glorifying God with our good works exploded within us.

The more our kids are meeting the needs of others, the closer they are to the heart of God. Let’s make gathering for common interests the launching pad to a common cause.

Common Youth Groups Invite Students to Be One of Them

Youth Groups can be a tight knit collection of students. This can work for or against your ministry. They can be so close they become agents of change. These groups can also be so close they unintentionally create an exclusive clique rather than an inclusive Body.

The major difference between a youth group and a youth church is that youth groups have logos and t-shirts to explain who they are and a youth church has people who live what’s on the t-shirt.

The Disciple Project is about action. Our weekly meetings sent this message: if you attend our meeting during this period of time, you will see believers acting on their faith.

It is my fear that to many youth groups leave their students, after four years, with a cool youth group t-shirt and a few retreats rather than a vibrant faith.

Our groups went out every week, for three weeks a month, and did something that mattered. Our students served, they shared, they visited and prayed with the older saints in the church, and many other activities.

All this activity became a catalyst in the hearts of our guests. They wanted to be apart of something in motion. This is exactly what I wanted. Before letting them just jump in I invited guests to hang with me for three out of the four weeks of the month so I could get to know them. I wanted to help them understand the why behind the what and introduce them to the Savior who struck the spark within us .

If our guests wanted to join our Body, we welcomed them into the class, and then the following month we helped them find an actions group that fit them. I wanted our guests to see a Body of believers where all the parts were working and say, “This is the kind of faith I want.” Chair-sitting is not nearly as appealing.

Be Uncommon: The Youth Church

The Uncommon Youth Church Exists to Glorify God

Listen, I’m no dummy. I don’t pretend to believe that all my students or your students show up for the right reasons. I cannot change their motives, but I can create an atmosphere that says, “Let’s get down to business with God”. That does not mean we have to suck all the fun out of our night. It does mean we have to be choosy about what our night’s focus is.

For some, it’s easier to echo the sentiments of the doubters, ‘they are too young’ or ‘we can’t expect much from them, they are only teenagers’. It’s harder to raise the bar and expect great things from our students. Raising the bar involves a deeper investment and the risk of disappointment. Jesus chose the latter but in the end, his endeavor was rewarded.

As believers, teens are part of the body of Christ. There is no Body of Christ Jr.. We can glorify God at any age and the best way to do that is to act on what we believe. Consider these Scriptures:

- *“Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and temporary residents to abstain from fleshly desires^[32] that war against you. Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles,^[35] so that in a case where they speak against you as those who do evil, they may, by observing your good works, glorify God^[36] in a day of visitation.” 1 Peter 2:11-12 HCS*
- *“In the same way, let your light shine^[3] before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16 HCS*
- *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory.” I Corinthians 10:31 HCS*

- *“He said this to signify by what kind of death he would glorify God.^[13] After saying this, He told him, “Follow Me!”^[14]”* John 21:19 HCS

God allows even the type of death we suffer to glorify Him. I could go on but you get the point. We individually exist to glorify God. When you get all these individuals who are working on glorifying God together, you have The Church.

Ultimately, our youth ministries do not exist to bring glory to the name of our church, the type of denomination we belong to or even our own personal reputations. We exist to glorify God. I can't think of a better way, for us as leaders, to glorify God, than to assist students in transforming more into Christ's image.

The Uncommon Youth Church Has the Bible As It's Standard

Paul says in Colossians *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly”*. Early in my ministry I worried I was going to offend even our church kids by using too much Scripture. I thought it would bore them. I came to the conclusion that it's not an issue of too much Word, it was an issue of too little Word and too little of us applying that Word. Consider how students spend their time. Teenage Research Unlimited shares some data on primary activities among U.S. teens ¹:

Activity	12-17	Males	Females	12-14	15-17
Reading a book	55%	44%	67%	57%	54%
Watching rented videos	58	57	60	56	61
Going to movies	50	51	50	49	52
Exercising	64	64	65	59	69
Going to the mall	53	42	63	49	56
Downloading music	30	31	29	23	38
Playing video games	56	75	36	62	50
Going to library, museum, gallery	27	22	32	29	25
Playing sports	74	79	69	81	68

Students, like ourselves, determine what they are doing by what they value. How we use our time with them encourages or discourages students from making our program a part of their weekly routine. Our students receive so little in the area of Bible reading we can't afford to cheat them from week to week.

¹ Teenage Research Unlimited, Posted by ZDNet Research @ 2:10 pm, March 26, 2006, <http://blogs.zdnet.com/ITFacts/?p=10482>

This is another reason we committed to a season of The Disciple Project. If we planned any kind of service project, students found it easier to say they were busy. When we shifted our attention to doing the gospel with them on our main service night, it created a tension of choice.

I truly believe that if nominal kids get a taste of serving and doing, it will light a fire in them. Later in life, when my students are asked about their youth group years, I want them to reflect on the things they did and not just the messages they heard. I want them to remember doing what they heard (James 1:22)

Because The Disciple Project is seasonal, there are plenty of times for meetings and teaching. Combining the “come and see approach” and the “go and do approach” to ministry gives you a good, biblical balance of discipleship and meeting social needs

In addition, the three month lead in of teaching on what a disciple is gave the students a biblical worldview to operate out of. I used messages, small group meetings, etc to drive home the point.

The Uncommon Youth Church Plans on Purpose

Ask yourself this question, “What do I want my student to look like in four or five years?” Do you see it? Then plan it. Paul followed a heavenly vision that he could not disobey (Acts 26:19). The vision compelled Paul to write letters, care for the church, and visit them to share God’s purposes. Paul prayed, planned, prepared and produced what God had spoken to Him. When you get a vision for your group it will become contagious.

Groups that do not plan well, often have students, parents, leaders, or the church body scratching their heads, wondering ‘what is going on?’ The only thing worse than no plan is an ill conceived, under-promoted and under communicated plan.

If you plan to do the Disciple-Project, begin to block off dates, check the church calendar and book the van. A well prepared program can be sabotaged through poor planning. The D-Project will cause you to think, plan and pray ahead. To ease the planning process check out the D-Project Planning sheets in the resource section of this manual.

Students should be an integral part of the planning and leadership of The Disciple Project. This is how they will own it. Let them create the action groups, the season you’ll do it in, and who should be the adult leaders of these group? My friend Tim of Endeavor Ministries says it all when he says, “Don’t have youth ministry. Have youth in ministry.”

The Apostle John said,

“I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” 3 John 1:4

Isn’t that what we want? Our children walking truth? The Disciple Project will announce to your community that your youth ministry can do more than car washes, bake sales, and yard sales.

The Uncommon Youth Church is Held Together By Shared Values

What is your group all about? Can your group describe in a just a few words what their mission is or do they have that deer in the headlights look about them?

Where youth groups have no plan for showing up, the youth church should have a simple proclamation for meeting and carrying on the work of Christ. Companies spend millions of dollars and hundreds of hours figuring out who they are and who they want the public to see them as. How much do we put into defining who we are.

We, the church, do not have to go far in finding our missions and purpose; we have Scripture powerfully illustrating who we are and why we exist. This does not mean we can't wrap it in contemporary language, but the message must remain the same.

What are the values of your church? As youth workers, we should always make sure we are doing our best to align our mission with the mission of the church we are serving. Our goal is never to intentionally be trouble makers (I can see those who know me well laughing right now). Discipleship is always a team effort of adults and youth working together in solidarity.

One of the mistakes I made early on in my ministry was having too large an influx of new, unsaved students. That is not to say I regret inviting them, only that I wish I had better prepared everyone for their arrival. Large crowds are great for excitement value but is a killer when it comes to blending church and unchurched teens. The challenge of evangelism and discipleship is grafting in these wild olive branches to the root of God's blessing (Romans 11:17).

In one church I served, we ran a bus ministry every week. These kids were street kids to the max. You know the saying, "It ain't a party until the cops show up"? Well, we must have partied quite a bit. There were fights and gang activity and general craziness. It eventually got to a point where we had to put the bus ministry to a vote among our student leaders (ownership) as to whether we should continue. To their credit, they voted to continue the bus ministry in spite of the challenges we faced.

When we eventually did stop the bus ministry, students who we had grafted in, found a way to come back. They had found a family. One young man even joined our student leadership team and eventually our adult team. Shared values are a powerful invitation to belong.

I would recommend staffing for what you want. If you want to attract large crowds, staff for large crowds so your group is not overwhelmed. You may even want to create a different night to reach your more radical students and work them in slowly to the rest of your group. This will give you a chance to get to know students and then process them through the discipleship program.

Caring for the lost is a Biblical value and our kids need to be trained in how it's done, why it's done, and then given the opportunity to get it done.

The Uncommon Youth Church Invites Members to Be Like Jesus

I may have given you the impression that I do not like Christian t-shirts or logos. On the contrary, if we lived up to half the t-shirts we owned the world would be a different place. Students can get caught up in the identity of our group and not know there is an identity in Christ.

In the beginning of this section we said that our group should exist to glorify God. The disciple building process compels us to ask ourselves some introspective questions:

- Are my students becoming more like Jesus or like me?
- If they are becoming more like me, am I becoming more like Christ?
- Do I plan with transformation in mind?
- Do I pray transformational prayers for my students?
- Do I preach transformational messages?

At the end of the day we must ask the hard questions. But, it is the hard questions that lead to a deeper, personal walk and ultimately a youth ministry that produces deeper disciples.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18 HCS

Prescription Plan

Chapter 3

Personal Exam

1. Would you describe your discipleship/christian walk as common or uncommon? Why? What makes it common or uncommon?
2. Have you ever been run through a program as a teen or adult that you became tired or bored with? What was it and why did it have those results?

Group Exam

1. Use the discussion sheets in the back of this manual to work through individually first and then with your group. You may see a difference between how you view the group and how the group views itself. That's normal. Starting here both you and your group can work towards the middle.
2. Which common trait does your group of student major in? Minor in?
3. Which uncommon trait does your group major in? Minor in?
4. Review your programming. Which area are you currently challenging your student to be more uncommon in?
5. How can you be more uncommon:
 - a) In your weekly meetings?
 - b) In Small Groups or Sunday School?
 - c) In event and activities?
 - d. In your personal relationships with students?

Chapter 4: An Uncommon Call: A Disciple's Core Values

Preparing messages on the run. Trying to create more elaborate messages than the week before, believing everything hung on me, this was my life. I was exhausted. I didn't want to preach any more. I was preaching under the conviction (or delusion) that my next message was going to do the trick. If I just exerted enough passion, have the right video clip, the right object lesson, God will have to honor this and students would come to the altar weeping, begging for change. There are only 2 things wrong with that idea:

- 1) *I was under the delusion that students came to hear me speak.* To be honest I was the accidental tourist who happened to show up and speak a few minutes during their social time. Now, don't get me wrong, I had great students, but to expect them to get excited about me speaking every week is a bit much.
- 2) *I expected preaching alone would produce disciples.* I had gotten caught in a cycle of preach it, teach it, and change will happen. I had become a bad weekly reality show and made our students voyeuristic zombies rather than adventuresome believers.

I became desperate to make disciples and not just converts. I decided that night, I would not preach for an extended period of time and I began to develop the Disciple Project. If I wanted to see this happen, I would have to change. I had to preach less, maximize our students time with their busy schedules, and trust God more for the results.

Reading Bonhoeffer's *Cost Of Discipleship*, a little book called *The D-Factor* by Liz West and Paul Hopkins and the Bible sparked new ideas and concepts in my hear. God took those two books along with Scripture and poured into my heart a vision to get students experiencing God and not just enduring Him.

I began to look at Scripture and what Jesus thought a disciple was and is. His call to discipleship was unorthodox and He was actually willing to turn some away if their hearts were not right. God turned my guilt and shame for what I was unable to do into a marvelous dream of what could be.

What Is A Disciple?

I'll be sharing with you five verses of Scripture that challenged me to change my thinking and ultimately the direction of our youth ministry. These verses are not the end all, be all of discipleship but they do give a clear expectation of what Jesus was looking for in those who would follow him closely. They are a primer for what we should be cultivating in our students.

Included in this explanation is a word I have grown to love. It is an old English word called praxis. Praxis is the practical application of an object or principle. I have assigned a word, a praxis, which I believe describes each principle Jesus was trying to convey. Through each word we give students a tangible, upfront expectation of what will be expected of them if they choose to follow Christ.

If we are to see disciples made I believe we have to stop the bleeding at the altar. I have prayed with hundreds of students to receive Christ. I don't believe students fully grasped the complete concept. I don't know if I do, but remember it's all about seeking, a continuous desire to understanding our faith.

Why do many students fall away? The parable of the seed we discussed earlier and the different types of soil (Matthew 13:1-23) explains a lot but I believe there is more to it.

I believe many students who answer the call to receive Christ do not know what they are signing up for.

When was the last time you read the contract for your mortgage? How about the contract for your cell phone plan? Not recently? Neither have I, but our strong need for shelter and cell phones compel us to sign and initial everywhere we see the x.

Too often we treat the gospel with all the care of a used car salesman trying to make quota. We tell students to sign here and initial here and boom you're a disciple. Back to the car analogy, before buying a car we ask key questions like:

- What kind of mileage does it get?
- Does it come with a warranty?
- What is the interest rate?

These are important questions you need to ask if you don't want to get ripped off. When you sign the contract you expect certain things. Too often we are shocked and amazed when a student who has just spent 20 minutes boo hooing at the altar gets up, leaves our service and never enters our doors again. Why are we amazed? We made it easy for them. We sold them emotionalism and a quick fix. They may have sincerely accepted Christ as Savior but have no clue that making Jesus your Lord was part of what was being asked of them. We get what we preach. If you preach salvation then God will save them. If you preach discipleship God will call disciples.

Salvation is a free gift to all, but discipleship cost everything. I never question a students' salvation experience but their followership is fair game. It's part of explaining the "contract" to them. Jesus told some who desired to be His disciples that foxes had holes and birds had nests but the Son of man has no place to lay his head. He let them know up front that following requires something more than a sinners prayer. Jesus turned fine print into bold print. He did not want any to miss what we they were signing up for. Jesus did the uncommon.

Traditionally we tell students what to believe. Jesus told his would be disciples what was expected. Can we do any less for those who have been stranded at the bus stop of salvation wondering, "Is that all?" **Let's give our students a lift to the next level through uncommon actions, uncommon opportunities, and uncommon expectations.**

Another piece of the youth ministry puzzle that gets lost under the bed is the piece called follow up. I had the tendency to want to teach students doctrine and spiritual disciplines first. Not that these are not important, but I may have unintentionally set our students up for failure. I am afraid I missed a step. I would tell kids to pray and read your Bibles, Both are good and appropriate steps for teens to take. Before we rush a student into what to believe, let's show them what is required, Jesus did. Imagine a new altar card that looked like this:

You've come today with a heavy heart. Jesus invites you to forgiveness, wholeness, peace, life and an eternity with Him. By faith you can receive these things. The challenge before you today is not if you believe in God, it is how will I follow this God I believe in. Jesus not only invites you to know Him but to follow him. Your commitment today requires a change of lifestyle. Jesus invites us to understand and live out, through the power of the Holy Spirit and your obedience, these five words: sacrifice, surrender, separation, study, and Spirit.

**Knowing this I, _____
by faith, want to experience Christ's forgiveness and desire to follow His call.**

I will take home, read, and pray for understanding the pamphlet I have been given about what I have committed to. If I have understood my commitment and by faith desire to pursue the Christian life I will return next week or to my church/youth group I attend and voice publicly my commitment to follow Jesus Christ.

This is scary stuff, because on the surface it looks like we're letting the fish off the hook. Go home and think about it? On the contrary, I am allowing a student the right to make an educated decision about what it means to be a follower of Christ. I would never let an opportunity slip away for someone to connect with our Savior. at the altar.

One final word, before we begin. I am not at all expecting teenagers to make any more of a decision than an adult would make. Students receive Christ at their level and follow Christ at their level. All I am asking is that we all do a better job of explaining on either level, what is required to be followers of Jesus. We cannot put burdens on students who accept Christ that Christ himself did not ask them to carry. In fact we are told in Scripture:

"For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn't first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, after he has laid the foundation and cannot finish it, all the onlookers will begin to make fun of him, 30 saying, 'This man started to build and wasn't able to finish.'" Luke 14:28-30 HCS

Each student, just like us, will be required to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Each one of us had to count, and must continue, to count the cost. We have to work out what it means to follow Christ. Teens should not have to work it out alone. Let's look at five

words I wanted all of our students to at least know (not completely understand) before we started the Disciple Project..

Five Biblical Characteristics of a Disciple

Core Value #1: Love

Key Verse: *“I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”(John 13:34-35) HCS*

Praxis: Measured Through Sacrifice

The word love is suffers from subjective slant but Jesus makes it plain: A lot is riding on this love thing. There were a lot of disciples running around with a lot of rabbis and teachers at the time of Christ. Jesus wanted there to be a difference in His disciples. He did not want His disciples to become law quoting, man followers. He wanted them to stand out and be set apart.

How about your students? Does love for each other best describe your students? Don't worry, you can't make them love each other but you can create the environment for them to live sacrificially for each other. This is agape love, brotherly affection.

How do your students feel towards each other? Before they can reach the world they have to reach each other. Before embarking on The D-Project I spent a month not just teaching on love but giving my students an opportunity to love each other, to give to each other and to serve each other.

We had communion a few weeks in a row and included a foot washing service for my youth staff. We had longer times of prayer where they prayed for each other in pairs or in small groups. We tried to lead the way in loving them sacrificially.

We cannot manipulate students to love each other. Peter admonishes his listeners in I Peter 1:22 to love each other with sincere heart.

“By obedience to the truth,^[26] having purified yourselves for sincere love of the brothers, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,”

The first part of the verse explains why they are able to love each other with a sincere heart, they “purified themselves by obeying the truth.” Obedience is the trigger. When pulled, the God of all creation comes alive in us. When students are busy obeying God they find their heart growing much like the Dr. Suess's Grinch. When the Grinch began to do good deeds he could not contain the good will and love his heart experienced. He felt compelled to share it.

The apostle Paul was certainly brimming with joy, love and passion when he declared to the Corinthians,

“For Christ’s love compels^[5] us, since we have reached this conclusion: if One died for all, then all died. 15 And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.” 2 Corinthians 5:14,15 HCS

I believe this same love, once experienced from God and each other, will compel our students to love the unlovely, welcome the struggling, help the hurting, and boldly walk in the foot-step of Christ. Students who are obeying the gospel, cannot help but to grow big hearted for God and for each other.

Soldiers have a saying about sharing tours of duty. When they talk about a tour of duty, they say of their relationship, “Same mud, same blood.”. They knew they had gone through something together that made them stronger and bonded them together for ever.

A few of our outreaches had a military operation slant to it like Operation Sing For Your Supper. We set up karaoke in a parking lot and challenged students to sing for a slice of pizza. This did not work as well as we wanted to but it was still “same mud, same blood”. We had Operation Hope Dogs, where we handed out free hot dogs. Events like these, regardless of success or failure, put students “out there” and it bonded our group together.

You may say “If we tell a student that following Jesus involves sacrifice we may lose them.” I say, if we do not risk losing them, by lovingly telling them the truth; they will be lost anyway. If we’re not ready to lose a few students for the gospel we are not ready to gain students with the same gospel.

Jesus explained that sacrifice was a part of the plan. It’s no surprise that Peter came to Jesus and pled his case in Matthew 19:27-29. Peter claimed he and the other disciples gave their all. Whether he was bragging or complaining Peter wanted Jesus to know about their sacrifice.

Jesus is not a cruel taskmaster. Jesus does not ask for full devotion with out sharing the blessing of obedience with Peter. Jesus said the disciples would receive 100 times what they have given up and eternal life as well. We do have to remind our student disciples, the way Jesus did, that this is a temporal life. The greater reward is on the other side, but serving God here and now is not without blessing.

If we do not include sacrifice as part of the journey we encourage a soft commitment. A soft commitment will only set our kids up for disillusionment later in life. It is a lesson students can learn now and save themselves some heartache later; not to mention that we are creating the next church board, children’s and youth workers for God’s church. Do you want them to be sacrificial Christians? Then take action now.

Core Value #2: Humility

Key Verse: *“In the same way, therefore, every one of you who does not say good-bye to all his possessions cannot be My disciple.”* Luke 14:33 HCS

Praxis: Measured Through Surrender.

In my opinion, sacrifice and surrender are similar but not the same. Sacrifice lends itself to dealing with the outer part of our lives where surrender I believe deals with the inner part of our lives. An outward sacrifice does not mean an inner surrender. Students walk to an altar for all types of reasons:

- Because of their friends
- They are stressed out and need relief
- They are struggling but can't find resolve.
- Susie broke up with Steve and needs a good cry.

A step to the altar, a raised hand, and a signed card are all steps to surrender. For me, it's not how they kneel, it's how they get up. It's about resolve. It's like the movie *What About Bob*, it's about baby steps. Each time they raise that hand, come to the altar or sign that covenant, they are closer to a lifestyle of surrender. Surrender is the sum of everyday decisions that put God first and us in the background.

Let me give you an example of surrender and sacrifice. I grew up in an era when burning your secular records and tapes were a sign of holiness and commitment. I participated in this ritual at a camp one time. I had burned, of all things, that pagan Bruce Springsteens' *Born In The USA* tape (said with tongue firmly in cheek). Now, at the moment, I thought this was a good idea and I outwardly sacrificed my music. Although the music had burned in the fire, it was not burned out of my heart. Within in a week I had bought all the tapes that I had burned before you could sing the first line of *Dancing In The Dark*. I had sacrificed the stuff, but had not surrendered to the lifestyle.

This encounter reminds me of the story of the teacher who told a disruptive student to sit down repeatedly. After a few warnings, the teacher sternly looked with impending doom at the student and commanded, “Sit down!”. The student, with equal fire in his eyes said, “I'll sit down, but on the inside I'll be standing up.”

You may get an audience of teens to do whatever you say on the outside but many of them will be standing up on the inside. Consider the altar, the cards, and the raised hands as part of the journey and not the destination. Hanging your hopes of discipleship on the emotions of teenagers is a like trying to jump aboard a speeding train. Keep the journey in mind.

Core Value #3: Holiness

Key Verse: *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.” Matthew 16:24 HCS*

Praxis: Measured Through Separation

“If any man will come. after me.”. Say it slowly. Jesus begins with the word “if”. Jesus knew not all would follow Him. He made it conditional. Our hearts break when students turn away. We become upset when our guests do not become members. We bang our heads against the wall when even our “leaders” won’t push past their convenience level and lead with unselfish motives. Jesus can become a compartment of life instead of life itself.

Students, and people in general, want everything and Jesus too. Jesus made it plain. It costs you nothing (physically) to believe in me. It cost you everything to follow me. It broke Jesus’ heart when the rich young ruler walked away (Mark 10:17-31)

It’s o.k. to be heartbroken when your students don’t follow through. Keep on loving them. Whatever you do, don’t share a soft gospel. The hardship for disciplers begin when they get a “disciple” that has no idea what it costs to follow Jesus. There are youth pastors who want students to “like” their Jesus like they like their friends. Listen, Jesus is a big boy and can handle himself. On the new U2 album, No Line On The Horizen, Bono punches this idea home,

“Quit helping God across the street like a little old lady.”

We do students no favor to lower the bar of the gospel. If we lower the bar just to get a altar response, God will only raise it later.

Jesus is a friend that sticks closer than a brother and will walk with students through their troubles and failures. Students must understand that this is a long-term relationship. This is a hard sell to students who go through boyfriends and girlfriends like a jr. high boy goes through burritos. Jesus made the call plain and so should we.

I think the principle of separation is best described as holiness. Holiness simply means “separated for the Lord’s purposes” or consecrated. The scripture says, “Without holiness, no one will see the Lord” Hebrews 12:14.

Our challenge to students is not to go home and burn everything in their room. Most students will not heed that call anyway. Neither is this act of sacrifice a clear sign of their love for God. The greater challenge is to ask students to examine every aspect of their lives and not just their culture. Living a submissive life to God and the authority of His Word is much harder than burning a few posters of Hannah Montana to prove our holiness.

I am tired of being the music and movie police, how about you? These are issues we will grapple with but it does not have to consume us. If we simply tell students not to do this or that we have not laid a good foundation for thinking critically and biblically about their choices and life in general. If we only challenge our studetns with our petty or legalistic version of the gospel we may make them our disciples but Jesus might have a hard time recognizing them.

I talked with a young man who used to be one of my campers. He has had a troubled life and was struggling over some issues. He recently confessed to me that he felt like a back-slider. I asked him why he felt that way. He explained that he had burned a lot of music online and he confessed that much of it was not good and did not inspire Him to pursue Christ. I could have quickly told him, “yes, get rid of all that music and you will desire more of Christ” or “Get rid of all your “secular” stuff and buy “Christian music” instead.

Unfortunately, neither of these choices would qualify him as a good disciple. I simply told him to pray about it. If that is what God is saying, then do it. He was very open to that and I believe he do what God puts on his heart

We have to get people to Jesus and not just buy in to our opinions and list of pet scriptures that support what we believe. Jesus has not called us to change a student’s music or their minds for that matter. God has called us to call our students to Himself.

Holiness is more than music, movies, and social tastes. It’s who we are on social networks, it’s the character of our heart and not just the outer facade. God does not only want us to separate ourselves from stuff but separate ourselves unto God for His purposes. One decision without the other creates a vacuum and could soon be filled with legalism and self righteousness rather than grace.

Consider how many doors are in your house or your church. Are there many easy access entries and exits? What if you had to climb a ladder every week to get into the church? What if you had to jump from a trampoline into the doorway? That sounds like fun but 80 year old Sister Jones would have a royal fit.

Preparing many doors into your youth ministry for new believers to receive Christ and be discipled will let students know that there are options into your program. Whether it’s an activity, a small group, Sunday School, or weekly youth meeting, providing ample access will keep those who want to follow Christ in range of a discipling relationship.

Core Value #4: Commitment to Learning

Key Verse: *“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples. ”* John 8:31 HCS

Praxis: Measured Through Study

From a recent study by University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and the National Study on Youth and Religion, this quote brings home the reality of students and spiritual disciplines :

“Furthermore, of all U.S. teenagers, only about one in four reads the sacred scripture of their religious tradition weekly or more often (26 percent). Large numbers of U.S. teenagers do claim religious affiliations and report attending religious services. But the findings here suggest that far fewer U.S. teens regularly engage in more personal religious practices of faith — like scripture reading — that many religious traditions, especially Protestantism, have long emphasized as crucial for spiritual growth.”

Now, we don't need statistics to tell us that our students are not reading the Bible like they should. We have to remember that the very book we are asking them to read is a cultural book. When we see Paul telling Timothy, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Both Paul and Timothy knew what that meant. The word study in this verse has nothing to do with academics; it means to work hard, to be persistent.

Students need to know that following God requires persistence. It requires know what is expected. We cannot just hand students a Bible after their saved and let them Harry Potter their way out of trouble by quoting a few scriptures. Students should be familiar with verses like:

- *"And let the peace of the Messiah, to which you were also called in one body, control your hearts. Be thankful. 16 Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God"* Colossians 3:15,16 HCS

Bible memorization is one way to study. It's not only about how much a student knows, it's how much a student understands and practices. One does not equal the other. Ask students to set aside time to think through a scripture and journal about its implications and not just it's applications. What if I obey this verse? Believe this verse? Live this passage?

Core Value #5: Living What We Believe

Key Verse: *"My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples."* John 15:8 HCS

Praxis: Measured Through Flesh and Spirit

These are still teenagers we're talking about, not adults. We can only imagine these students as full followers of Jesus Christ in light of their family, upbringing, education, and personality. Discipleship is not a cookie cutter endeavor. Jesus' own disciples were different from each other and Jesus interacted with each of them differently.

We cannot presume to know what kind of disciples our students will be when they are adults or by judging them by their attendance and participation in our youth program. I am pleasantly surprised by how some kids turned out who I thought never gave a rip and I've been broken hearted by those kids who were core kids but have left their faith behind. The final chapter has not been written for our students, or us for that matter, aren't you glad!?

It's become a spiritual faux pa if we are to mention another believer's fruit, or lack thereof, and is considered being judgmental. This is not the case. If we cannot see some outward manifestation of an inward life change then how are we to proceed in the discipleship process? Isn't baptism described as an outward proclamation of an inward change?

From the dramatic change of Paul on the Damascus road to the repentant Zachaeus who made full restitution to those he stole from, fruitfulness is a natural result of a changed heart. Consider these Scriptures on the willingness to cooperate with our beliefs:

- *Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance.” Matthew 3:8 “ HCS*
- *“Instead, I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.” Acts 26:20 HCS*
- *“For godly grief produces a repentance not to be regretted and leading to salvation, but worldly grief produces death. ” 2 Corinthians 7:10 HCS*

Scripture shows us that an encounter with the transforming power of God leads to both supernatural and natural changes in a believer's life. Not every encounter is dramatic and not every change is completely perceptible to the human eye.

We cannot force students to change, but we can open the door to the opportunity to change. The D-Project allows students to choose a field or area of discipline where they want to be fruitful. The D-Project helps students kick the tires on the ideas, concepts and spiritual truths we've presented and they have received.

In creating opportunities, we create a new norm for new believers. It's normal to serve. It's normal to live for Christ. It's normal to be baptized. It's normal to share your faith. We are creating the new norm. Serving is not something we announce, "If you have time this weekend we're going to visit the elderly." By having these opportunities as the main focus of your group vs something extra you do in your spare time, you send a strong message of what your group is all about. Now, will these students excel at every spiritual skill? No, but perfection is not the goal of these action groups, encountering and building a solid relationship with Jesus and others is.

Discipleship, like leadership, is by permission only. Students must have the will to follow and allow you to lead them, speak into their lives and correct them when necessary. If you want some new measuring sticks for your students' faith, check out the **How Should I Measure?** guides and the outline for teaching **The Five Core Disciplines For Disciples** in the resource section of this manual.

Prescription Plan

Chapter 4

Personal Exam

1. Which of these core values are you personally strongest in? Which core value(s) are you weakest in?
2. Take each of the core values and write yourself a prescription to grow in that area.

Group Exam

1. Which of the “common” traits described in this chapter does your group struggle with most?
2. Which of the “uncommon traits” does your group excel at?
3. Take index cards and write one student's name per card. Measure each student according to the core values. Use the **How Do You Measure** page in the resource section as you go. Write down the areas you have noticed where this student exhibits a core value. Remember to let grace reign and prayer prevail.
- 4 . It has been said you cannot lead a horse to water but you can put salt in it's oats. Begin to dream of ways you can salt the oats of your students and create a thirst to jump in the pools of opportunities you create.

Chapter 5

Preparing For An Uncommon Movement: Pastor, Parents, Youth Leaders and Students

Preparing Your Pastor

If you've ever been caught in rush hour you know it can be treacherous to change lanes. We get a road warrior mentality, me against them. This may work in traffic but it does not work when we are considering change in our youth ministry. When we attempt to maneuver between Pastors and parents with all the delicacy of a tank out of control we begin to make decisions that we think are in the best interest of our group with out any consultation. Scripture exhorts us to seek counsel,

- *“a wise man will listen and increase his learning,^[3] and a discerning man will obtain guidance”* Proverbs 1:5
- *“A fool’s way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is wise.”* Proverbs 12:15
- *“Without guidance, people fall, but with many counselors there is deliverance”* Proverbs 11:14
- *“Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”* Proverbs 15:22

Before you go to your pastor and ask him about changing the youth program, start out by saying that you've been in prayer (which we hope you are) and want present some new ideas. Share with him what is stirring inside you.

New ideas and change can make some pastors nervous. Convey your desire to work with the church in helping produce disciples. If your leadership is open to change let them know up front that with change there will be some challenges, but in the long run it will produce more Christ-like disciples who will reproduce themselves.

The goal of sharing your heart is to alleviate his or her fears that you're going to break something. I told my pastor that The D-Project was an experiment. It was not going ot last forever and I thought our group needed the change. I communicated how I would measure the success of the D-Project. The great thing about running the D-Project on your main youth night is I could always say I had 100% participation.

I update my pastor once a month or once a week with a report or an e- mail. I let the church know about the results of your outreaches and commitments to Christ. To increase the chances of repeating The D-Project for another term I made sure my pastor, board and parents had weekly or bi-weekly updates and the chance to convey their thoughts, concerns and encouragement with me. Information is power!

Lastly,I took lots of pictures and had our video team make an end of quarter video to show the church. I made sure to take note of souls won and testimonies of what God has

done in the lives of the students who participated. This showed my pastor the objectives we had set and it made him feel good about the decision to let us make a change.

Preparing Your Parents

Parents are the backbone of our youth ministries. We serve, not only the student, but the whole family. Without parents there is no program. We must always remember our role. We, the youth ministry, are like the vitamin C of the family. We are the vitamin supplement to the family's already existing discipleship efforts at home.

At our regular parents meetings I began to share the ideas and principles of the D-Project. *Youth Specialties Youth Workers Guide to Parents Ministry* is filled with great ways to communicate with parents that will allow parents to give feedback to your ideas in non-threatening ways.

One meeting idea included asking the parents to sit in groups of 5-8. I handed out a poster board and a list of youth ministry programs to them. I asked parents to put in order, from most important to least important, the list of current youth programs. On my list I included: evangelism, discipleship, worship, activities, Sunday School, trips, camps, preaching, etc.

When my parents completed the assignment I picked up the poster boards and let someone tabulate the results and then I shared it with my parents. Our parents chose evangelism and discipleship as number one and two on the list as most important so pitching The Disciple Project idea to them now had a foundation.

Because of the results of our parents meeting, I secured data for the D-Project. The parents decided what was important and I had just the program to meet the needs. The key was setting the stage for change and showing that you are trying to accommodate what parents and the Lord sees as important. The real question to parents is, "what kind of Christians do you want your students to be in five years?"

I have provided **Discussion Sheets** in the back of this manual that will help you get a bead on what your parents, students and volunteer leaders think about discipleship. These discussion sheets will expose faulty notions or confirm scriptural beliefs of what it means to follow Christ.

Be sure to invite parents to join an action group and help launch The Disciple Project. Parents can fill many roles to make the project happen:

- Team Leaders (leading the teams you create)
- Outreach Coordinators
- Promotion Directors
- Follow Up Coordinators
- Drivers

Including parents is a no brainer. The more parents that are involved with the spiritual growth of their kids, the more they will find value in the youth program as a whole.

Preparing Your Youth Leaders

Without dedicated parents or youth workers the D-Project will not get off the ground. Their training and preparation is very important to the over all success of the project. If you do not already have standards in place for youth leaders to follow, now is a good time to create them.

In essence, each of these action group or D-Groups as we called them, is a small group. The leaders of these groups must understand that you are giving them inner circle access to students. They will grow close through ministering together. Each leader I chose was not perfect and not on my full time youth staff. It was a great time of recruitment and I exposed many new people in our church to the great kids in our program.

As part of explaining the D-Project at your next youth leader meeting why not plan a foot washing service to demonstrate your commitment to them and the kind of commitment you want them to have towards students. Whether it's visitation, nursing home visits, or media ministry, your leaders have got to be passionate about it and should have some skills in that area.

Drama team leaders should have some creativity and organizational skills. If they do media, then a knowledge of digital cameras, websites, and digital camcorders is a must. If they are leading the visitation group, people skills are a must. Your leadership choices will ensure the health of the action group while these leaders and student mix together in ministry.

In the end, our leaders felt like they were being used to their full potential. They had ownership of their teams and were responsibility and accountable for the kids in their group. Our leaders formed relationships with many kids they never really new before. Many of these leaders testified at the beginning of the next weeks meetings because they were excited about what God was doing through them.

Preparing Your Students

Whenever I have a new idea I want to try, I hang with students and start out with, "What if" and present the new idea in non-threatening ways. I'm trying to gauge the temperature for change in my group. The D-Project resonated with them. From there we opened it up to different circles of students. Some were not so hot for it and others were dying for change. You'll never get 100% agreement but you can find a consensus.

One of the main reasons for making a change is the schedule students' keep. I'm sure you've experienced the challenge of trying to get students out for another night. Students' schedules are insane and we have to work around them. Our main youth meetings are where many of our students show up. They don't have time for anything else. I wanted to maximize our students time while showing the un-involved kids in our group that their was more to Jesus than four worship songs and some old guy babbling for 30 minutes. The D-Project exposed our nominal kids to a whole new world of service.

You may want to consider having a trial D-Project weekend for your core kids. You could use the material in this book to create a retreat and get your team excited in advance.

Another key to launching The D-Project is making students a part of the solution. Ask students what kind of D-Project groups they would like to see such as a visitation team, evangel-

ism team, drama team, dance team or maybe they have other ideas. Have a brainstorming stage where no action group is off limits. You can pare down the list to what fits your group right now. Ideas that are left over could be used for another time.

I made our core students D Group-Leaders or Co-D- Leaders if they were old enough. I did my best to create as many opportunities as possible for kids to jump on board. Many of our kids were just waiting for a chance to lead. I saw kids who were spiritually anemic come to life and see their gifts for the glory of God. It was a great time of spiritual growth for all involved.

Before we assembled our action groups I preach a series of messages that laid the foundation and invited their hearts to get on board. I took the **Five Core Principles of Discipleship**: sacrifice, surrender, separation, study, and the Spirit and made that my series. For my final message I spoke on Living All In based on poker terminology. Each student was given a poker chip and invited at the end to live all in as a disciples of Jesus.

Whatever method or message you choose it is important to give students the biblical foundation for change and the opportunity to express what God is putting on their hearts. We may be the official leader but it is our students who will lead the way if we let them.

Prescription Plan

Chapter 5

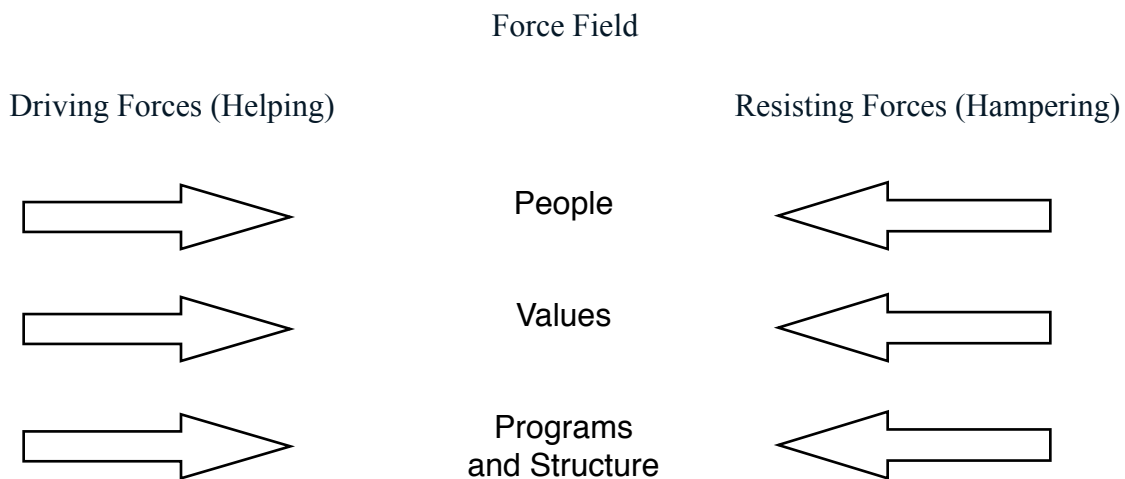
Personal Exam

1. Examine all your relationships. How are your relationship with your pastor? Your parents? Your adult leaders? Your core students? Before launching a discipleship program, lead the way by making your relationships right. Jesus said, “leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”. In making your relationships right you value people over ministry.

Group Exam

1. Chap Clark and Kara E. Powell offer this useful nugget and graph in their book, *Deep Ministry In A Shallow World* from author Kurt Lewin’s book *Field Theory in Social Science*.

Forces Involved In Launching Change



Use this simple diagram to see where you stand and how far you need to go before launching The D-Project. After accumulating the information chart a course to turn those things that would hamper into helpers.

Chapter 6 Anatomy of A Disciple Project

This section of your manual is filled with snapshots of all the various steps we took on our journey to a Disciple Project. Sit, have a cup of coffee with a notepad and pray as you go through the various steps. Pray that God will bring to mind people, needs and actions steps that apply to your group, church and city.

Begin with a vision for making disciples

To reach our ultimate goal we must begin with the end in mind. What kind of students do you want in four years? What kind of students do you want to release into your congregation and to your pastor? Jesus knew it was his time to leave and was confident that He had taught His disciples everything they would need to know in order to fulfill His vision for the world. We cannot afford to be short sighted and see our students only as they are. We must see them as God sees them; future prophets, pastors, evangelists, teachers and apostles.

I know I drove everyone crazy because they told me so. This is all I talked about, preached and breathed for months. I knew that if I was not passionate about it, no one else would have been either.

Preparation not Frustration

In our effort to have students experience God I had to let go and let die of some current programs and meetings that already existed. There were times I wanted to have a cool game or special night but I let it go. Focusing time, talent and resources will reap a greater reward than if treated as just another program.

Jesus challenged us to count the cost before beginning our journey. If we want to avoid some of the frustration of ministry, then we have to build in the preparation for ministry.

We took our youth group on a missions trip to Mexico one year. We had prepared as much as we could. When it came to do our first service we found the radio was not loud enough for our drama music. It may seem like a small thing, but it became a big deal. Not having the radio loud enough through the drama teams timing off.

The drama's weren't right, the balloon making came up lame, the kids and adults looked confused and so did our audience. God taught us that day to fully rely on Him in every circumstance and not the program. God has plans in spite of our plans. In the midst of our D-Project there were unexpected challenges that caused us to grow deeper. You may experience some of that but don't despair. God's got a plan.

Make sure you have worked through all the steps for preparation concerning the various groups: Pastor, parents, leaders and students. This will save you major headaches and your plans will run smoother if everyone is informed and on board.

What Kind of Project Will You Run? A Retreat, An Experiment or The Shift

There are many ways to implement the Disciple Project. I will be sharing three of them which can act as building blocks to your program. Each can stand alone or be combined to create a year long strategy or to make a full blown programming shift in your youth ministry. The best thing about The Disciple Project is that it does not hinge on having a certain number of kids in your group

The *first option* for implementation is to have a **Retreat**. A retreat gives you the time and the room to talk through the principles of this book and help everyone understand in small doses. We've included all the discussion sheets and a sample weekend formats for your convenience in the resource section. The weekend includes teaching, serving and worship opportunities. This will help you get a feel from leaders and students if you can move on to the next step.

The *second option* for implementing the Disciple Project is to try **A Month Long Experiment**. We call it an experiment because we know one size does not fit all and this gives you a way out of it if it does not fit your group.

Beginning with a launch service (like the **All In** message I mentioned earlier), you would prepare students for the next three weeks for service opportunities. The end of the month is your outreach event and all service and skill groups work towards that end.

A quick word about skill groups. Like me, you will have students who are just not ready to go out for action groups. We created skill groups for kids who needed help with the mechanics of faith and for kids who were wore out from action groups. We had a skill group who worked on sharing their testimony and why that is important to a believer. We also had a prayer group who learned why prayer was important then they spent time praying for our action groups who were out in the field.

The action groups are exciting and will offer incentive to those kids to keep coming until they have completed their skill groups or membership class for three weeks.

The *third option* is called **The Shift**. It is a change in methodology of how you reach, keep and disciple teenagers. Shifting includes having one or more three month sessions of The D-Project in a year.

The reason for having three consecutive months (or experiments) of The D-Project is two fold. The first purpose is to build momentum. Each month is a building block to the next. Students and leaders will build a rhythm and eventually this becomes the "uncommon way" of doing things. The uncommon builds excitement and momentum into the next month.

The second purpose, is to give students a chance to serve in different skill or action groups. Over three months, each student will have experimented with an area that may lead them to finding or honing their gifts and callings. In addition, you will be adding new members and they will get to participate in a group after they have finished the membership sessions.

Calendar Development (samples)

I have included some sample calendars in the resource section of the book that will help you through the process from inception to closing. Remember to check the church calendar and the school calendar for not only conflict but opportunities to reach out.

Set A Date For Launch

Once you have prepared, planned and prayed, set a date. If you do not set a date to begin, the process is most likely not to happen. Putting the date in the public eye (church bulletin, etc.), announcing it's coming will build excitement and keep it front of everyone.

I have included a **How To Get The Word Out** marketing sheet to give you some ideas to promote The D-Project and your end of the month outreach which we called Impact 100..

Scrub the mission if...

- Your pastor is not behind you or it does not coincide with the overall vision of the church.
- Your core students are not passionate about it. (you can't work around them)
- You feel a check in your spirit during prayer. Work it out and then proceed.

Do not scrub the mission if...

- If you have a few difficult parents. Your committed parents and church members will take up the slack.
- A few of your nominal kids do not want to participate. Love them. Be patient. They'll be back.
- You have few set backs. It's part of growth.

The Meeting

I have used the midweek meeting as the center point but you can use any night of the week or Sunday's. Most youth meetings are roughly 90 minutes long and end when the adult service ends. This may prove to be challenging but not impossible. Following our launch service we maximized our time so we could get the most done in the shortest amount of time. We met on a traditional Wednesday night at 7 p.m. Here is a brief order of service for the first night:

7 p.m Gather

7:05 Sing two songs

7:10 Student shares a brief devotion or testimony from the week before.

7;15 Prayer

7;20 All Action Teams leave for assignments and all Skill Groups go to there rooms.

8:20 Teams return.

8:20 Prayer/Fellowship/One or two testimonies

8:35 Dismiss

You may not think 1 hour and 15 minutes is very long but it keeps students on task. Students know they don't have a lot time and will work with a sense of urgency. The following week we'd find great stories from the leaders of the groups and have students share their stories.

We kept visitation down to 2-3 homes a week and evangelism opportunities were kept nearby such as our nearest Winn Dixie parking lot where many students hung out. If weather was bad we kept our E-Team (evangelism) in and used it as prayer time for the outreach.

A word about seasons. We did our D-Project in the Spring and the Fall. In the fall it would get dark and colder sooner so this effected some of our ideas but we were able to get creative like handing our pop corn and hot chocolate at outreach locations.

During the holiday season we partnered with the Angel Tree program and delivered groceries and presents to families who had a loved one (usually a mom or dad) who was in prison.

Keeping it on your main youth night shows that ministry is for everyone and not for an elite few. Billy Graham was fond of saying, "I have come to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." This was one of our goals.

The Outreach: Impact 100

We called our outreach night Impact 100. The reason is, we wanted to see at least 100 students at each of our three outreaches. Some weeks we hit our goal and others we did not. We saw an excitement building in our students to reach this number. Our numbers did climb and this gave students even more incentive to invite friends.

The number 100 is just a number. For your group it could be Impact 50 or Impact 250. Either way, using a number oriented goal gave our kids something to shoot for. We always had new kids at our outreaches even if we did not hit our number, but that was our real goal. When we did hit our number we made sure we gave God all the glory.

The outreach is where you see all your hard work come together. Check the **Resource Section** for great outreach ideas and let your students own this night. Impact 100 is as much about celebration as it is invitation. Be sure to thank all your students and leaders for their hard work. Share with all your guests what has been going on for the past few weeks so they can see your youth ministry hard at work. Let a few students and leaders share what it has meant to them and maybe something funny that happened along the way. If you are doing The Shift plan don't forget to invite all your guests back for the membership classes next month.

If you had a video team or picture team during this time it would be a great opportunity to show this to the whole group. Leading in with a video or power point with music introduces new students to what you have been up to the past three months and reminds your current kids how much fun they had and the memories they created.

Start A Whisper Campaign

Our whisper campaign was called "what if". We went to leaders, core students, fringe kids, everyone. Through casual conversation we would ask "What if" questions. We would ask questions like:

- What if our group did something we have never done before? What would it be?
- What if we did not spend so much time in our meeting room? What would we be doing?
- What if we used our time on _____ night to serve people? Who would we serve?
- What would our groups look like if we doubled? What would we do?

Our goal was to start expanding everyone's thinking slowly. As time got closer to the The Disciple Project we began to let the students know that change was coming. By this time all the core students leaders, youth leaders, pastors, everyone is on board.

The month leading up to the campaign, you could do a reveal each week of a logo you created for The Disciple Project or something you can show piece by piece to build excitement.

Sign Up

During the month you are preaching the messages on discipleship you should all ready have your skill group and action groups set. You will want to have sign up sheet for each group. At the end of every meeting, give the students a chance to sign up for which group they would like.

If you see any names you don't think will be a match for that group, now is when you want to talk to that student. For other impact service ideas try **Vision Moments: Creating Lasting Truths in the Lives of Your Students** by Bo Boshers

Launch Night

Launch night is your final message in your series. This night is huge. You will want to be pumping this night all month and get as many students there as possible. This would a good night to include communion and a way for students to show their commitment to the new direction the group is taking. I have include my notes and my outline from my message called **Living All In**.

At the end of the evening, after students have responded to your call to commitment, ask all the students to join you at the altar for prayer. Close the evening on a positive note and be sure to follow up the next week with a mail out and phone calls to remind everyone of the group they signed up for and you are excited that they will be a part.

Celebrate

Don't forget to celebrate all God is doing. This is where your media/pic group comes in. You will want to have a some media ready for the outreach night so your guests can see what you've been up to as well as showing it to your Sunday morning service.

If your Pastor will let you, have a student from various groups share on Sunday morning. This way the rest of the church body can rejoice with you and know how to pray for you and your students.

Don't Forget the Fun Factor

Discipleship is fun. Say it with me, "Discipleship is fun!" You will be launching small actions groups with loving leaders and creating stories in your city! That's fun! You are giving your students something to talk about every week! That's fun! You are creating memories! That's fun. You are spreading the gospel and winning others to Christ! That's fun. You are giving your students something besides meetings to get excited about! That's fun! You are giving your students God-encounters worth sharing the next time someone ask them, "What did you do in youth last night." That's fun!

Chapter 7 Impact 100: Uncommon Outreach

We called our outreach Impact 100 because it was how many of their friends we wanted to impact for Christ. If you have a youth group of 100 already then you could call it Impact 200 or 1000. We did our Impact 100 on Wednesday nights, our main meeting Night. We used outreaches such as Battle of The Bands, Battle of The Sexes, Guest Speakers, and Dodge Ball Tournaments. These are great outreaches for any size youth ministry.

Part of our strategy was to emphasize the number 100. We used it through our giveaways such as giving away given away 100 cans of Mountain Dew and 100 Candy Bars as prizes. See the **Hot 100** list in the resource section for more ideas for giveaways and much more.

What makes the Impact 100 outreach successful is that all your Action or D-Groups are working towards making it happen. Your E-Team (evangelism team) is hitting the streets, handing our invitations, finding creative ways to invite people (all on your main youth meeting night), the visitation team is visiting people who have not been in a while and are inviting them, and your drama team is coming up with skits and dramas that will compliment your message on the outreach night.

Most of your teams will go out on your main youth night but there is wisdom in having some of your group join the E-Team for a Friday or Saturday before the outreach and hit the student hot spots in your town. Maybe your Media Team is making special videos, the website guys are putting up info and cool graphics and sending out e-mails. The options are endless and the payoff comes at the end of the month when they see their friends come to Christ at that outreach.

Creating Uncommon Members

Besides seeing students come to Christ our next greatest joy should be to see them “join” the church or commit themselves to a group of believers for worship, study, fellowship and accountability.

One of the most important classes I taught during the D- Project was a three week membership class. Since the cycles went month to month we did our membership in three weeks with a closing welcoming service at the Impact 100 outreach. The three weeks consisted of **Who Is Jesus, Who Are We and Why Should You Care**, and **What Is A Member?**

Who is this class for and why should you teach it? Both good questions. I used this class for two purposes. First, I used it to welcome new students who had no clue who we were and second, to get to know students who were occasional attendees or who just sat like lumps in the back. Students who do not want to participate in any of the other D-Teams should be in this class. You could even use these students to help with refreshments, taking role, etc..

If you have a large group, it's tough to get to know your students well if you only see them once a week. Even then, you only get a casual hello but nothing too deep. This is why it was important for me, the youth pastor, to teach this class or lead this team, who better to share the vision of what your youth ministry is all about than you.

I made sure I personally invited the fringe students because I wanted them to know I cared. I wanted to know them. I called them and I sent them letters inviting them. Not all of them came, but they knew I cared.

I don't know many students who will attend a 12 week membership class. Youth Ministry as a whole, does not package the reward of belonging well. Youth groups tend to come off like a cheesy bank who offers a free toaster if you open an account.

What are the rewards of joining your group? We understand the spiritual value of belonging but what are the physical rewards of belonging? In an article by Denise Winterman for BBC News Magazine she offers observations about British believers, She says,

“ It seems that while people find the church thing a little bit difficult, they are willing to recognize God. There's even a cute catch phrase for this absent majority - believing without belonging’

She could not have said it any better. American Christianity is equally liberal in its attitude towards God. Pick a news magazine; they have all reported at one time or another that 98% of people believe in God. This being true, why are our churches empty? Why do we have so many spiritual orphans without a home?

Dr. Elaine Storkey, a Christian Academic, broadcaster and President of Christian charity Tearfund, which commissioned the study comments in the same article,

“People are used to instant gratification, they are used to having what they want when they want and without putting too much effort. Some view religion the same way. Having a connection with Christianity is not a problem, it's when something is asked of them that they start to struggle,”

How about you ? Do you have a lot of believers but not many belongers? Do not give up hope that these believers will one day belong to a body that cares for them. That is why the goal of The Disciple Project is not crowds but disciples.

The success of any outreach is not how many believed, but how many eventually belong. Belonging should be special and not just a shake of the hand a toaster. Let's make belonging special again.

One way I made membership special was creating a personalized cd called, What is A Member. I gave it to each person that was in the class. I told them this was a personal gift from me. It was a 20-minute message I customized from Doug Fields C.L.A.S.S curriculum. You can find it and other cool products on simplyyouthministry.com.

The potential new members went home, listened to it and brought back the outline complete with the gaps filled in. Included in the pack was a list of standards we thought were important to our group and a covenant they could sign if they could agree to uphold them.

The standards were relational values that make groups tick like respect and honor and biblical “one anothers” from Scripture. If they returned the covenant by the Impact 100 outreach night we welcomed them in to our group. If they did not return it we thanked them for attending and inviting them back for one of our skills groups.

We felt that students who did not sign the covenant should not go and do outreach. It's hard to do outreach if you do not buy into the values you are outreaching for. Within our three month cycle we would release the graduating new members, if they signed the covenant, into one

of the ministry teams. The goal is that our new members would understand that believing, belonging, and serving was a seamless part of one's faith. It was expected for new members to serve.

Our Impact 100 night was geared towards sharing Christ but also welcoming our new members. We felt that the welcoming process sent a strong message to our guests that we think it's a big deal when someone wants to become a part of us.

We had certificates of membership ready as we called each person by name and had them stand on Welcome Mats. We had members from our youth group who would gather around them and we would have prayer for them and for us that each of us would love and care for one another. It was a powerful moment. We saw Scripture come to life when we saw our believers find a place to belong (Acts 2:41)

Conclusion

Don't be afraid to do some tweaking along the way. The program, the way I have described it, may not fit your schedule, denomination or church. Feel free to tinker with it. You may have to move students around if they are not fitting in with their teams. You may have to rotate leaders. You may have to change the night you meet for a month to a Friday or Saturday when there are more people to reach in your community.

At the end of each month, talk about the issues with leaders, students, and your Pastor. Get feed back, but stay on course. You'll be tempted to give up but don't. You're setting a new precedent of how ministry gets done and disciples are made.

Life is too short to be common. Our students deserve an uncommon model to follow. Jesus set the pace and our students, if given permission, will follow suit. Let's do our best to eliminate the word common from our vocabulary, but more importantly lets defy the expectations of a world who believes we should be common.

Uncommon to the Glory of God!

Paul Turner
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Uncommon Resources

Tools for the Journey

How Do I Measure Spiritual Growth?

How Do I Measure Sacrifice?

Sacrifice is about receiving love and giving out of that love. It's impossible to judge the heart but here are some actions to look for in your students. Sacrifice normally involves the big three: time, talent, and resources. For a teenager it also involves street credibility, popularity points and social currency. Teenagers risk more with sacrifice because it could effect the thing most important to them, their relationships.

Time

- When they give up basketball camp for youth camp.
- When they volunteer to help in children's church or VBS.
- When they give up their boy/girl time for Guys and Girls Bible Studies
- When they tutor or mentor in their free time.
- When they'll get up early to meet with their youth leader who just wants to talk with them about life.

Talent

- When they volunteer for small tasks as well as big ones.
- When they take a lesser role in a drama or play because that's where you need them.
- When they sing back up instead of lead.
- When they use their strong personality as a tool for leadership instead of just laughs.
- When their sports life becomes a platform for faith instead of an end in itself.

Resources

- When they give up their lunch money so someone else could eat.
- When they sit with the unpopular kid away from their friends.
- When they say hello to everyone and not just a few.
- When they give in the offering consistently.
- When they make a missions pledge and then works hard to meet it.

How Do I Measure Surrender?

Surrender can be hard to measure but not impossible. Surrender is about trading up not down. They understand the juxtaposition of faith, down is up, giving is receiving and so on. Jesus surrendered more than we can conceive. Philippians 2:5-11 is a Christ-like template of surrender than can be place over our students to see where they are hitting and missing.

Vs 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

- When they choose to be quiet rather than jump on the insult bandwagon.
- When they choose speak up for the injustice of another when others remain quiet.
- When they see everyone as equals.
- When they rejoice when others rejoice and mourn when others mourn.
- When they are quick to forgive and slow to judge.

Vs 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

- When they show up early set up and stay late to clean up
- When they sign up for church workday.
- When they are working behind the stage and not on it.
- When they understand that small assignments require big hearts.
- When “What can I do?” becomes more important than “Why do I have to do that?”

Vs 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

- When they worship with abandonment (kneeling, hands lifted, etc).
- When they are quick to share the glory and accept own their mistakes.
- When they can receive instruction from authority (especially from their parents)
- When they see themselves as vessels and conduits of God’s grace.
- When they understand that everything they have comes from and should be used for God’s glory.

Vs 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- When they’ll share with others the Good News they have received
- When they understand it’s not about them.
- When they seek God’s input about where they should go to college, who they should date/ marry and what their vocation in life should be.
- When they no longer need to see the nail scars in his hands to believe God is faithful.
- When they understand that Scripture is the Word of God, not a book of strong suggestions.

How Do I Measure Separation?

Separation comes in two parts. There is what we separate ourselves from and what we separate ourselves to. We must remember that many of the choices and actions in the area of holiness and consecration will remain unseen. Let's look at the culture of teens and rather than make a list of all the bad movies, bad music, and bad television shows they should not see or hear; let's see how students can live in the world but not be of it.

Movies, Music, Television and Culture

- When they will choose a PG movie over an R Rated Movie
- When they choose no movie over one that will offend.
- When they purchase music that glorifies God.
- When they change the station or the track because they feel uncomfortable listening to it knowing Jesus is present.
- When they'll call their parents rather go to a movie because the whole group wants to see it.
- When they change the channel.
- When they take their ear ring/nose ring out for camp.
- When they remove their hat when entering the church.

Friends and Other Relationships

- When they choose to fellowship with the strong and minister to the weak.
- When they choose to date only Christians.
- When they choose not to date at all.
- When they choose to listen to a parents' advice about a certain friend.
- When they choose not only friends but also accountability partners.
- When they choose honesty over image.
- When they choose to keep a promise, a secret or a commitment.
- When they choose to befriend the friendless.

Spiritual Disciplines

- Chooses silence over noise
- Chooses Bible Study over just Bible Reading
- Chooses to worship rather than be a spectator
- Chooses ownership and service over laziness and apathy.
- Chooses fasting over feasting.
- Chooses submission over superiority
- Chooses confession over secrecy.
- Chooses love over judgment and mercy over vengeance.

How Do I Measure Study?

Study of the Bible is not only about memorization but comprehension and application as well. Rote memorization of the facts will not cut it. Our observation of students lives and their tenacity to challenge everything should spur us to have our A Game together.

For teenager, this may be the hardest value to adopt. Students spend 6 hours a day in required study called school. The word study itself has a negative connotation but we can compensate for that through innovation.

Use Technology

- Send them YouTube Links to watch and then discuss them.
- Text them Scriptures references through their cell phones.
- Use a MySpace or Facebook page as a check in and accountability page.
- Start a Bible Study Blog
- Loan them Christian CD's (in line with their tastes) along with a customized bible study for each song.
- Twitter with them, (twitter.com)

Find Their Learning Style

Not all students learn the same way. Offering different styles to learn expands your ability reach a broad spectrum of students. Study.Wikipedia.com lists four styles of learning. Make a separate list and write the names of your students under each one you think they fit under. Afterwards, create biblical study strategies for those kinds of learners

Visual Learning (learn by seeing)

- Try using more object lessons in your preaching/teaching
- Use handouts for your message with blanks to fill in.
- Use as much multi-media as you can

Auditory Learning (learn by hearing)

- Record your messages and give them to students afterwards as a refresher.
- Use music centered Bible Studies like Interinc at www.interlinc-online.com
- Use stories and illustrations to jazz up your messages.
- Ask a student to do Christian Music or Moral/Secular Music reviews for your website.

Reading and Writing

- Start a one on one Bible Study working through a book together.
- Have a student keep a prayer/devotional journal
- Inductive Bible studies keep the student interested and actively marking through key words or phrases. Kay Arthur has great resources at <http://www.precept.org/>

Kinesthetic or Practical Learning (learn by doing)

- Take your students on learning excursions using locations as lessons.
- Use prayer walks or prayer stations
- Service projects and Missions Trips

One on One Accountability

My friend Timothy Eldred of Endeavor.com likes to say, “Discipleship is life on life”. He could not have been more right. Jesus did not use long distance learning or workbooks to instill the critical values his disciples would need for the long haul. Nothing can replace the life you live in front of your students. Students will learn from seeing mature believers live out their faith.

Put Them on a Customized Learning Track

If you are concerned that your students are doing nothing between Sunday and Wednesday try putting them on a personalized learning track. Maybe it’s working through the D-Plus Manual that our ministry offers, maybe it’s downloading series of songs or messages you’d like them to listen to or maybe it is a series of short-term classes for them to attend. At the completion of a track celebrate their achievement with an award or certificate or something nice like a restaurant gift certificate.

Above all, discipleship must be desired. A stubborn and unwilling heart is not ready for the adventure Jesus will lead them on. Dallas Willard, in his book *The Great Omission* says, “God is not opposed to effort He is opposed to earning.” Classes and methods are not ladder rungs to be climbed to gain God’s approval (or the churches for that matter); they are stepping stones our Master has laid out for our safety and progressive spiritual growth.

How Do I Measure Spirit?

These are deep waters for my shallow mind. The Holy Spirit's work is detailed, personal, and customized for every believer. We cannot judge the redemptive work of the Spirit but Jesus and the Apostle Paul expected to see a physical manifestation of righteous living through the believer. It is not too judgmental to see a student accept Christ to then challenge them to make this same Savior, Lord of their life..

Repentance

- Restoration of material goods (Zacchaeus)
- Restoration of relationships (Matthew 5:23)
- Confession (Acts 19:18)
- Forsaking Empty and/or Sinful Culture (The Magicians: Acts: 19:19)

Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5: 22, 23

- Attitude towards parents
- Attitude towards friends
- Attitude towards their enemies
- Attitude towards the lost
- Attitude towards other believers (the church)

Using their Gifts I Corinthians 4:12, I Peter 4:10

- Do you offer multiple opportunities for service and do they respond?
- Do they use their natural abilities (singing, helping, etc) for Kingdom work?
- Do they use spiritual gifts (leadership, encouraging, teaching) for Kingdom work?
- Do they use these gifts in school or the community (Boys and Girls Club etc)?

D-Project Discussion Questions

The purpose of this talk sheet is to “flesh out” the answers to hard questions by discussing it with your youth staff, your students and your senior pastor.

Session I Desperate For Discipleship

This session is about the hard questions we eventually have to ask ourselves if we are ever to move forward spiritually or in ministry.

Define A Disciple (The Person)

Define Discipleship (The Process)

What is the difference between being a Christian and being a disciple?

How close do the students in your group look like your definition?

List some students that are close to the description Jesus gives of being a disciple.

We cannot change the Biblical Definition(s) of a disciple but we can change the process of how they get there. What is your current process of discipleship? Is it working? Are students (at their level of understanding and capability) becoming disciples?

List some methods Jesus used to make disciples

How many of these are you using? In what form?

On a scale of 1-10 how important is preaching/speaking to your youth program?

What place or role does preaching have in your discipleship process?

How does preaching impact your walk with Christ? _____

Session II 5 Biblical Characteristics of a Disciple

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

This principle can be measured through sacrifice. Name some acts of sacrifice a student could make?

Students can offer sacrifices but it becomes powerful when motivated by love. Relate a story of how one of your peers has shown this kind of sacrificial love.

How can your youth ministry reward acts of service motivated by love?

What current youth ministry programs do you have that requires sacrifice?

2. *“If any man will come after me, and let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24)

This principle can be measured through separation. There can be no following without a denial. Students often want to squeeze Jesus into their already busy life and compartmentalize Him to Wednesdays and Sundays.

“If any man will come after me.”

Is accepting Christ as Savior is the same as discipleship? _____ Why or why not?

We often ask students if they want to accept Christ but do we follow that up with do you want to follow Jesus. How do you offer the commitment to follow Jesus in your program?

“and let him deny himself”

Name some things you as a believer should separate themselves from.

Name some things you should be separated to.

“take up his cross”

What would be considered a “student sized” cross to bear?

“and follow me”

How can your youth ministry provide follow through opportunities for old and new believers?

What can we change our program that get students to follow through with their spiritual commitments? _____

3. *In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*”
Luke 14:33 NIV

This principle can be measured through surrender. This is different from sacrifice because we can sacrifice everything but never surrender truly surrender

Name some “self stuff” we could begin working on surrendering.

Name some things Jesus surrendered to make the disciples He made.

What are some things you will have to surrender to make disciples?

Read vs 26. Jesus says to surrender family loyalties and even personal safety to be a disciple. Do you believe Jesus still asks this of those who wish to be disciples now? Why or why not?

Jesus says in vs 28 that becoming a disciple is like building a tower. Before making the commitment to “everything” a disciple should count the cost. When does the “everything” concept of surrender come up in your youth ministry?

- Point of conversion
- Next time a student comes to service
- When they join a small group
- Continuous
- Never

What are some barriers in our minds to the “everything” concept?

Read vs 31. Jesus then compares the call to follow him to a King in a war. Once again, He asks whether or not the potential disciple has the resources (inner discipline) and the wisdom to follow Christ. How can we communicate so our youth ministry will understand giving all “by faith”.

4. *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. (John 8:31)*

You can measure this principle through study. How important is Bible study to your youth ministry?

How is the Bible integrated into our youth ministry? (Check all that apply)

- We ask students to bring their Bible to youth
- We use power point/media shout verses
- We encourage scripture memory or Bible Quiz
- We have tools such as Bible studies and devotions I hand out.
- We just preach it.
- Other _____

What can you change to the program/teaching/ format to include more "study"

5. *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:8)*

This is measured through the flesh and Spirit. Discipleship involves intangibles such as love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. You can also measure practical things such as family, care for poor, sharing their faith etc.

What kind of fruit (evidence of a relationship with Christ) do we look for in disciple of Jesus?

How can we show grace to the new believer and during the slow times of spiritual growth in our youth ministry?

Define Repentance

What role does repentance play in the life of a believer?

What can you change to the program/teaching/ format to include more opportunities for students to be repentant?

Part III Preparing For Change: Pastor, Parents, Youth Leaders and Students

Preparing your Pastor for change

Describe your Pastors vision for your church.

What are your Pastors passions? (The lost, missions, etc.)

How can I set up the D-Program to fulfill my Pastors vision for this body of believers?

What resources will you need to fulfill the vision? Buildings, rooms, resources?

Write out your plan for the D-Project (what groups you might have, time schedule, who will be involved, etc.)

After you've worked through this give it to your Pastor for approval.

Preparing Parents for Change

If you do not have a quarterly or bi-yearly parents meeting now would be a good time to schedule one.

List some parents you can start to say "What if" with

Sample Parents Meeting

Have light snacks for lunch for your parents after church.

Opening Prayer: Your Pastor or a Parent

Review the last quarter's successes and near hits.

I recommend using Youth Specialties *Youth Workers Guide to Parents Ministry* by Dr. Marv Penner www.youthspecialties.com Ask the parents to sit on groups of 5-8 and let them put in order, from most important to least important, a list you provide such as evangelism, discipleship, worship, activities, Sunday School, trips, camps, preaching, etc. Afterwards, pick up the poster board or sheets of paper to see the results and program accordingly.

You may also want to have a sheet of paper that says, "Qualities I'd like to see in My Child in the Next 3 years." Have parent share some qualities such as: able to share their faith, able to memorize Scripture, hard working, etc. Parents do not have to put their name. Collect these and you will see your program begin to unfold.

Present the D-Project idea and possible changes. (You've already been what-iffing with some parents to gage the temperature for change).

Allow a Q and A time (be sure to have more A's than Q's)

If your Pastor is supportive have him share some words of encouragement.

Have sign up sheets for parents who want help get the project off the ground and lead teams or just help.

Close in Prayer.

Follow up with a letter thanking the parents for their input.

Preparing Your Leaders For Change

Without dedicated parents or youth workers the D-Project will not get off the ground. Their training and preparation is very important to the over all success of the project. If you do not already have standards in place for youth leaders to follow now is a good time to create them. In essence, each of these D-Groups is a small group and the leaders of these groups must understand that you are giving them inner circle access to them. They will grow close through ministering together.

- You want to make sure that each leader has character and integrity.
- You want to make sure they love students and they are a safe person to be around.
- You want them to be passionate about whatever ministry you give them.
- They have to have a servant's mindset.
- They also should have some skills and expertise in selected fields. (Drama, Media, etc.)

Plan a foot washing service to demonstrate your commitment to them and the kind of commitment you want them to have towards students. Here is my dream team list for leaders (dream big)

Preparing Your Students

Who are some students you could begin What-Iffing with?

Key Points For Change

Here are some reasons you can share for the change in your youth ministry.

1. Fulfill Scriptural mandate.
2. Ease pressure on busy schedules.
3. Maximize your time.
4. Everyone has gifts and talents to be used.

You may want to have some of your what iff'ers, who are for the changes, share these reason with the group. This way it looks like a united front for change and not just another crazy idea for the youth pastor.

On the following page is a survey for your students to better help you plan your D-Project. Take the information they give you and show it to your students and then choose from the ideas they have offered. You may also want to spend some extra time with those who may want to buck the system or sit out on the project. Take the time to make a phone call to the parents of those students as well and it will have shown due diligence on your part.

Sample Student Survey

What do you like best about our group?

What do you like least?

Describe a follower of Jesus Christ.

If I could focus on doing one thing in our group it would be:

I believe the neediest people in our community are:

I believe the neediest people in our church are:

My free night of the week is

Some D-Project Ideas I have for D-Groups

Youth Group or Youth Church?

Leader Guide

Characteristics of a Youth Group

- A Youth Group exists for itself.
- A Youth Group has only human standards of operation and no biblical mandate
- A Youth Group has random activities to keep students busy rather than productive
- A Youth Group is held together by common interests (who's friends with who, etc.)
- A Youth Group makes students in the image of themselves

Characteristics of a Youth Church

- A Youth Church exists to glorify God
- A Youth Church has the Bible as it's standard.
- A Youth Church has activities with a purpose
- A Youth Church is held together through common mission and shared values
- A Youth Church challenges students to become more like Christ.

Youth Group or Youth Church?

Student Guide

Characteristics of a Youth Group

A Youth Group _____ for itself.

A Youth Group has only _____ of operation and no _____.

A Youth Group has _____ to keep students busy rather than productive.

A Youth Group is held together by _____ (who's friends with who, etc.)

A Youth Group makes _____.

Characteristics of a Youth Church

A Youth Church _____

A Youth Church _____

A Youth Church has activities _____

A Youth Church is held together through _____ and _____

A Youth Church _____

Where is our Group? Youth Group or Youth Church

Exists For Itself

Us 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Exists to Glorify God

9 Totally Us

Human Standards

Us 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Biblical Mandate

9 Totally Us

Random Activities

Us 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Purposeful Activities

9 Totally Us

Be One Of Us

Us 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Be Like Christ

9 Totally Us

Session V Key Points

D-Project Tip Sheet

Prepare everyone for change

- Through prayer
- Through preaching messages
- Through meetings
- Personal conversation

Promote (use the How to Get The Word Out document)

- In youth meetings weekly (Don't forget sign up sheets for individual D-Groups)
- In the sanctuary (announcements, bulletin)
- Through e-mail, website, and other digital means

Produce

- Have a kick off service.
- Have 3 weeks of D-Groups.
- All groups have the same goal (the outreach)
- Conclude with an Impact 100 outreach

Post Project

- Tweak the program along the way (everything is flexible)
- Evaluate at the end of every month.
- Rejoice in the results
- Get feedback, but stay on course

D Project Weekend Sample

Here is a sample of what a D-Project weekend could look like.

Wednesday, Thursday or Friday Night

Special message in preparation for the weekend: Paul Turner

Friday Night (Sacrifice)

Dinner

Special off site meeting and devotion

Fun Night Out

Action(D) Groups are established and students are given the opportunity to sign up (for example: Media Team, Evangelism Team, etc).

Saturday Morning:

8am Breakfast

9:00 Teaching (**Surrender/**)

9:45 Surrender Stations

10:15 Break

11:00 Teaching (**Study**)

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Ministry Teams (possible promotion for Impact 100)

3:10 Back to the church for testimonies and debriefing

3:30 Teaching (**Separation** and prayer time)

4:30 Teaching (**Spirit**)

5:00 Prayer

5:30 Final Preparation if an Impact 100 is being conducted

6:00 Dinner or Impact 100 Begins (Closing teaching on the Spirit if there is no Impact 100)

If there is an Impact 100 Event everyone will be working to make it happen. If there is no Impact 100 event there would be a closing service at 7 p.m. and certificates would be handed out at the end.

This would be a great opportunity to have parents involved and participate in the D-Project on a smaller scale.. If there is an Impact 100 for that night the last service could be held Sunday morning and certificates could be handed out then.

I would be glad to speak at any of your outreaches, retreats or training.

For more information on booking a D-Project Weekend contact Paul Turner at 205-260-7229 or at thedproject@me.com

Weekly D-Project Worksheet

Name of D-Group (evangelism, visitation etc.) _____

D-Group Leader _____

D-Group Leader Contact Info: _____

How many in your D-Group this week _____

(Please use the D-Group Sign In page to sign in your group)

Describe any cool moments during your project?

Any Students who stepped up or stepped out in faith? Who?

Any students who step down or out and need more encouragement?

Other things I need to know?

Launch Service: Living All In

Opening: Hand out playing cards as students walk in. One card and one poker chip per person (this will come in later). At some point in your meeting you'll get your students talking by asking them to group up.

Get your kids mixing with fun game. Call out a type of poker hand such as a flush, straight, full house and let students group up to create that hand. When they group up have them answer questions such as:

1. Have you ever bet on anything before? What was it? Did you win or lose?
2. What is a gamble? Do you believe gambling is right or wrong?
3. Have you ever given anything your all? What was it? How did it turn out?

These questions can remain up on a video screen during the game or you can yell freeze and ask one of the questions.

All in is a poker term for betting all your chips. Usually when a player does that two things are going on: He's bluffing or he really has a good hand.

There is an analogy people used to use when someone would pass away- they'd say he "Cashed in his chips" For the Christian this saying should be meaningless. When we pass away we should be dead broke, no chips to cash in because we bet it all. We held nothing back.

5 Reasons For Living "All In"

1. You can trust the cards you've been dealt. John 7:14-17
2. Jesus raised the stakes Mathew 28:16-18 Acts 1:8,9
3. Your friends need you to live all in. Romans 10: 14,15
4. The Devil is bluffing. Col. 2:15, 1 John 3:8
5. The promise of winning it all. James 1:12

What is all? All means not leaving one chip to save for later. There is no plan B.

What kind of "All" is Jesus talking about?

All Our Heart- Emotions

All Our Minds- Thoughts

All Our Strength- Our Actions

All Our Soul- With all our will (determination), our essence

Altar Call: At the closing you'll ask student if they desire to Live All In. Their step to take, if they want to, would be to come to the front and tossing there chip into a basket. You can also invite them to spend some time at the altar giving God their all.

5 Reasons For Living “All In”

1. _____ John 7:14-17
2. _____ Mathew 28:16-18 Acts 1:8,9
3. _____ Romans 10: 14,15
4. _____ Col. 2:15, 1 John 3:8
5. _____ James 1:12

What is all? All means not leaving one chip to save for later.

What kind of “All” is Jesus talking about?

All Our _____ t- Emotions

All Our _____ - Thoughts

All Our _____ - Our Actions

All Our _____ l- With all our will (determination), our essence

**100 Uncommon Outreach
Ideas To Reach 100 Students
(or more)**

27 Uncommon Ways To Get the Word Out

Name of Event: _____ *Date of Event:* _____

Target Audience : Children _____ *Sr. High* _____ *Jr High* _____ *Adults* _____ *Other*
_____ *In-House (Church Only)* _____ *or Outreach* _____

Possible Promotions

- Word of Mouth (start early among leaders and students)
- Posters
- Postcards
- Church Sign
- From the pulpit (announcements, pastor, skit, video, etc.)
- Newspaper
- Radio (What market are you looking to reach?)
- Church Bulletin
- E-Mail
- Post bulletins on MySpace, FaceBook , etc.
- Website
- Phone Calls
- Unique hand out or physical reminder of the event
- PowerPoint Slides
- T-Shirts/Hats
- Bringvitations (something students can use to invite friends)
- Bulletin Board
- Sunday School
- Letters to other churches
- Pins
- Coupons
- Start a Twitter (Twitter.com)
- CD/DVD (to hand out)
- Special Outreach Street Teams
- Network with other events prior to your event
- Ticket Sales
- Create a You Tube Video and ask students to share it.
- Giveaways
- Stickers
- Other:

25 Uncommon Outreach Ideas To Draw A Crowd

1. Concerts (indoor or outdoor)

Have a local band, youth group/church band come and play. You could do a love offering or charge a buck or two at the door. You may also want to consider having the event off church grounds to allow for more skeptical students. All you need are some enthusiastic students who have heard or seen the band before and some cool flyers or invites.

2. Air Guitar Contest

Seriously, check out <http://usairguitar.com/> This site may spark 25 ideas alone to pull this event off. You will also have to decide whether you use Christian music only or not. You could just make it to where they pick up or download pre-selected pieces for that night.

3. Dodge Ball Tournament

4. Basketball Tournament (3 on 3 or 5 on 5)

5. YMCA/Church Lock In

You know the drill!

6. Volleyball Tournament

7. Rock Band or Guitar Hero Contest (Or whatever the latest game is)

8. Battle of the Bands

Why settle for one band when you can have 3 or 4. Have different bands of different styles come and play for glory and honor instead of money. Appoint students as the judges and the winner gets to come back for a paid gig later in the year.

9. Battle of the Sexes

10. Xtreme Sports Outreach

11. Xtreme Game Night

12. Outdoor Movie Night (works best in spring/summer)

13. 5th Quarters After football Games

14. World Record Nights (set a record for your city)

15. Largest Music Chairs Event

16. Largest Kickball Game

17. Largest Dodge Ball Game

18. Largest Water Balloon Fight (great for summer)
19. Largest Pie Fight (whip cream in tin pans would work)
20. Largest Pillow Fight

21. Charity Softball Game

Have your youth and or church members challenge your cities police, firemen, politicians or just hometown heroes for a 5-6 inning softball game. It will bring a lot of people out and you can donate the money to a local charity. You could also use the opportunity to promote your youth ministry or church.

22. Parking Lot Pizza Run

Grab a hand full of students a few pizzas and hit all the hot spot parking lots in your town where youth like to hang out. You can share the gospel while sharing a slice of pepperoni.

23. Partner with Other Churches

Don't do your event alone. If you want to impact students, join forces with other churches and share resources.

24. The Turkey Bowl

Choose a park or field and have a Thanksgiving morning or afternoon touch football game. Take about 3 months to prep your teams. You could have old guys vs young guys in your church play each other for 4 ten-minute quarters. Have a local radio station or DJ on hand to cover the mayhem or even call the play by play.

25. Camp Night

The Wednesday before you go to camp have a camp prep night. There will be many students who will not be able to take the week off to go with you. So, have a camp night and duplicate many of the things you already do at camp, games, songs, etc. This way everyone feels included and new people will see what your camp is all about.

Sample Planning Calendar Month One

Two months before you start sharing your Discipleship Messages

S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T Meet with Pastor/Board for vision casting	W Begin sharing "What if's"	T	F	S
S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T	W Continue sharing "What if's"	T	F	S
S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T Update Your Pastor	W Meet with Core Leaders Share Vision	T	F	S
S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T	W Seal commitments from leaders	T	F	S

Sample Planning Calendar

One month before you start sharing your Discipleship Messages

S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T Update your Pastor.	W Hint about changes coming	T Meet with all leaders and discuss action/skills groups	F	S
S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T	W Hint about changes coming	T	F	S
S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T Update Your Pastor	W Hint about changes coming	T Meet with all leaders and discuss action/skills groups	F	S
S Use discussion sheets in SS or small group	M	T	W hint about changes coming	T Confirm Groups	F	S

Sample D-Project Month

S	M	T Update your Pas- tor.	W D-Project Begins	T	F	S
S	M	T	W D-Project Cont.	T	F	S
S Get Feedback	M	T Update Your Pastor	W D-Project Cont.	T	F	S
S Get Feedback	M	T	W Impact 100 Welcome Members	T Follow Up	F Review Month	S Celebrate in the main church service.

If you are doing The Shift you will want to follow up with those who were guests at your outreach and especially those who responded to your invitation to Christ.

These are those you will want to invite to your membership class the next month.

25 Uncommon Giveaway Ideas

If you're going to use the Impact 100 Theme use these giveaway in hundreds or increments of hundreds. The purpose for you and your students is to get thinking about the number 100. If 100 students is your goal; build around it with these great giveaways.

1. Technology Prizes

2. 100 songs from itunes (about \$100)
3. 100 cell phone minutes
4. 100 blank cd's/DVD's
5. \$100 worth of gift certificates to Best Buy or Game Stop (or other video game outlets)
6. 100 minutes could include a dvd movie
7. Don't forget that you can give away 100 of anything to any one person but 100 is divisible. Don't get land locked on the number 100.
8. Give away four \$25 iTunes giftcards, etc.
9. The more winners you have the more buzz you get for your buck.

10. Food Prizes

11. \$100 Gift Certificate to a nice restaurant (good for family events)
12. (Or you could take a group of students out to a nice restaurant and spend time with them)
13. \$100 in Fast Food Refillable Credit Cards
14. 100 Little Debbie Cakes (about 12 boxes)
15. 100 cans of soda
16. 100candy bars (assorted, about \$50.00)
17. 100 Slices of Pizza (It's about 10-12 pies)

18. Really Cool Prizes

19. Things that are worth \$100
20. \$100 Movie prize back (tickets, popcorn, etc)
21. An iPod Nano or two iPod Shuffles
22. Tickets to a professional sporting event
23. Athletic apparel (jersey's, ball caps, etc.)
24. Pack of designer t-shirts
25. Gift certificate to designer stores

25 Uncommon Game Ideas To Get Students Involved

Eating Contests

Have students compete in up front individually or as a team to see how many items out of 100 can they eat in a certain time period. Be careful to monitor students and make safety a priority as with any activity. Some good food items:

- Grapes (no pits)
- Crackers
- Jello Squares
- Bananas
- Marshmallows
- Malted Milk Balls
- Cran-Raisens (cranberry)
- Jalapeño Cheese Cubes
- French Toast Sticks
- Cocktail Weenies
- Slice of Bread (with or without jelly, or better still Peanut Butter, even better still.....)
- Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches
- Hot Dogs (with or with out the bun)
- M & M's about 5 bags make 100 (plain not peanut)

Food Games

- Have a team see how many slices of bologna they can get to stick to the wall or better still how many slices can a partner catch with their face of head.
- How high can they stack certain foods (100 cucumber slices)

Counting Games

100-Yard Dash

Student will attempt to find the line of tape that has one hundred pieces in it. Create 5-10 dashed lines on a floor criss-crossing each other. Each line should have between 80-99 dashed pieces of tape with one having exactly 100. You should have a way of recognizing each line possibly through numbering them or using different colored tape. On your command students can rush to choose a line and start counting. Remember, you have potentially 100 students doing this all at once. When a student finds out which line has the 100 dashes they dash up to you to tell you. First one to come to you with the right line is the winner.

Clear Count

Have several see through container filled with varying amounts of anything. They could be a food like M&M or paper clips. Fill each of the containers with varying amounts but only one has 100. Winner could receive what's in side.

Quick Count

Who can count to 100 the fastest? Gather a group of contestants and ask them who can clearly and quickly count by ones or by integers like 5, 10, or 20's for a quicker round. Or have a team have to say an individual number in a random order.

Gather Up

Get two or three contestants to participate. The goal is to choose one by one (or gather a group in 10 seconds) students to get as close to:

- 100 pounds (or 1000 pounds)
- 100 inches (shoe sizes)
- 100 dollars (it's not possible don't laugh)
- 100 coins (this might be more reasonable)
- Other: _____

10 Uncommon Follow Up Ideas

- 1) If they gave their cell phone number on the welcome card, use it to text them (one time) and say, “Thanks for coming”.
- 2) Make a You Tube Video and post it where you can send guests to view it.
- 3) Create a team of students that will visit your guest the next evening with a goodie bag and maybe even a youth group t-shirt.
- 4) Hit them up with a message on their Myspace, Facebook or Xanga account
- 5) Set a night apart for just guests to have ice cream or a BBQ at someone’s house.
- 6) Rent a limo and pick up your guest for the following week.
- 7) Have a block party in their neighborhood and invite them and their friends.
- 8) Make a DVD to hand them of you and your students inviting them to upcoming events or just thanking them for coming.
- 9) Sponsor a hayride and pick up all the guests that month for a special night out.
- 10) Even in an all digital age they still like getting mail at home so send them letter or postcard thanking them for their time.

Your Ideas Here ↓↓

6 Uncommon Ways To Find a Name For Your Event or Outreach

1. Listen to your students. The first step to a lame event is a lame name. What are the new words out there in the youth culture? Not all are appropriate for church sponsored event so collect a few and pass them through some leaders and students before choosing.

2. Current or Summer Movies Spring is a great time to choose names because the summer blockbuster movies are being advertised heavily. Movies like Pirates and Transformers make for great theme nights.

3. Television Shows and Commercials It could be a popular show on t.v. but it could also be a commercial like the PC vs Mac series that may spark an idea for an event. Not many t.v. shows have spiritual depth or send the right message. In fact, if you choose an unpopular or dated show's name you may have an uphill climb trying to get your group to support it.

4. Advertisements Look around at clothing, billboards, listen to radio spots, glance at signs in stores or other branding and something may just hit you.

5. Trends A while back dodgeball became very popular after the movie *Dodgeball* came out. The movie brought attention to and spawned dodge ball leagues and tournaments. These are the kinds of trends you ride for a little while with outreaches. When you feel the enthusiasm wane, it's time to move on.

6. Name Mash Ups How about Pirate Dodge Ball? Ok, that may not work but you may be able to combine an activity and a theme to get students more intrigued in your event.

Other Resource From Disciple Project Ministries



Get ready... for the rush of energy. The buzz of obedience.

For that amped feeling that say's, "I am getting to know God today."

For the next 21 days
you're going to take a sip
from the promises of God's Word. Each sip will energize your faith and
challenge you to act on what you've read. Each gulp will refresh your soul
and charge your faith.

Knowing God is a Trip. Obeying God is a Rush.

Pop the top and let's get sipping.



Looking for a new way to bring Biblical truths to life? Take your kids to the scene of the crime. Each book is filled with creative ideas and CSI style lessons that will have your kids talking from the word go.

In Season One students will visit the crimes scenes of :

Adam and Eve

Gideon

Joseph

Sampson

Cost: \$7.00



Season Two of Crime Scenes keeps the drama and suspense coming with uncommon lessons on:

Cain and Abel

Daniel

Jezebel

Lucifer

Cost: \$7.00

For More Information on booking Paul for youth meetings, retreats, revivals, rallies or to pray with you, contact him at:

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