

discipleship essentials

**Guide to Using
Discipleship Essentials**

Purpose and Content Outline

What is Discipleship Essentials?

Discipleship Essentials is a media-assisted, multi-lingual discipleship training tool developed in partnership with organizations from around the world. It is accessible through multi-media platforms with portions based on a curriculum developed by Campus Crusade for Christ. It is intended for open use by organizations, churches, pastors, lay leaders and individuals.

In many nations where the Gospel has been proclaimed and received, there is a troubling gap between growth in the number of believers and the impact the Church is having on these nations... there is an urgent need for mature, trained disciples!

The vision of *Discipleship Essentials* is the development of a trained, mature base of Christ-followers as a means to evangelize and disciple the next generation of Christian leaders.

What do we mean by Discipleship?

Discipleship is the process by which a Christian is equipped with the knowledge and experiences necessary to fulfill God's call on their life. This equipping is accomplished by the Holy Spirit and through the Church.

God's Call on every person's life is:

1. To submit to the authority of Jesus Christ in all things (Mark 8:34-38, Matt. 6:33)
2. To grow in Christ likeness and obedience (1 John 5:3, Eph. 4:15)
3. To increase in their knowledge of God and His Word (2 Peter 3:18, 2 Timothy 2:15)
4. To serve others in love (1 Peter 4:10, John 13: 34-35)
5. To multiply the Church through evangelism and discipleship (Matt. 28:18-20, 2 Tim. 2:2)

Introduction to the Materials

There is a great need in our world not only to preach the Gospel to non-Christians, but to disciple believers in their faith and give them a firm foundation in the doctrine, practice, and life of a follower of Jesus Christ. In addition, emerging leaders and pastors worldwide have a dire need for resources and teaching they can pass on to others. Discipleship Essentials has been developed with the goal of instructing as many Christians as possible in the basics of Christian Discipleship. For that reason, all lessons are available in several different formats for flexibility in delivery.

1. Audio and Video: These feature the Discipleship Essentials content presented in dialogue format between two parties. They are conversational yet instructional. They may be used by an individual online, heard through radio or via a media player, or used as an introduction video for use by a church or discipleship group.
2. Lesson Essentials: This is a print media version of the Discipleship Essentials content, intended to be read by an individual. It is written in a friendly article format summarizing Scripture passages and key ideas with stories and making application of the truths. They are accompanied by questions and key points and may be used by individuals for instructional or devotional purposes, or as content to be read by a Discipleship Group in advance of a teaching time. It may be useful material for one-on-one discipleship as well.
3. Leader's Guide: This guide presents the Discipleship Essentials material in a lesson-outline format. It is intended to be used by instructors in a classroom, in a church group, in preparation for a sermon or in a one-on-one setting. This guide includes introduction and discussion questions for interacting with participants as well as an outline for instruction of the content. It can be used in conjunction with any or all of the other materials.
4. Study Guide: This guide presents the Discipleship Essentials material in a self-led lesson format. It may be used by individuals in discipleship classes, or independently through the Discipleship Essentials online learning platform (to be released in 2015). This guide takes participants through the Word of God to find discipleship truths for themselves. It may be used alone or in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials.

Intended Audience of Discipleship Essentials

Discipleship Essentials is a multiple format training tool intended for Christians who wish to learn more and grow deeper in their faith. It is assumed that participants have a basic understanding of the Gospel and are now ready to learn more and prepare for evangelism and discipleship of others. (Throughout Discipleship Essentials, the term *participant* is used to refer to students, learners, or anyone being disciplined.)

Some modules are specifically designed for emerging leaders or those in a pastoral role who desire training of specific interest to church leaders.

Each module introduction highlights the intended audience for that module. As a leader you may choose the modules that are most relevant to your needs.

How do the Components of Discipleship Essentials Work Together?

Discipleship Essentials is designed to be a flexible multi-media platform. Use of the different components will be determined by the user and their need. Some examples of how these components work together include:

- ❖ **Church Use:** Pastors and Ministry leaders may benefit from using this content as sermon source material, to offer church classes on discipleship, leadership development and training for ministry or for their ministry staff and teams to use for their own instruction.
- ❖ **Small Group Use:** A small group may have members go through the Study Guide, and meet together where the Leader's Guide will help inform their time together. They may also benefit from starting their meeting time with the corresponding video or audio presentation. Small groups could also simply meet together while a teacher uses the Leader's Guide content as a basis for their time together and be given the Lesson Essentials as material to take home and share with others.
- ❖ **Individual Use:** While discipleship ideally happens in the context of a local church, there are times when an individual may pursue knowledge independently or be unable to meet with other believers. Individuals may watch the videos or stream audio, read the lesson essentials for a summary, or for more in-depth study complete the Study Guides with our online learning interface. Individuals may also use this material in their one-on-one discipleship of another individual.

Adapting Content

Some lessons contained within the Discipleship Essentials curriculum may express ideas or take positions that are contrary to those held by your denomination or group of believers. For instance, a range of practices regarding baptism is mentioned. The leader should feel free to adapt the content to reflect the denominational distinctives of their church or to the cultural needs of their participants to the extent that the teaching remains supported by Scripture. The leader is encouraged to include relevant examples, stories and case studies suited to the culture and worldview of the participants.

Features of the Leader's Guide

- **Purpose:** Each lesson provides a purpose statement so you can be sure you are keeping your content on track. It may help you decide which lessons to include if you are selecting only some based on the needs of your participants.
- **Leaders Note:** This is a helpful message to you, the leader of the study. It gives you background into the content, a reminder of the focus, or alert you to any possible problems participants may encounter with the content. It is provided for your benefit.
- **Introduction:** This is a set of questions or short discussion topics that you may choose to use to help participants begin thinking about the topic. It is important for adult learners to connect new knowledge with what they already know and feel. This is why the introduction is important. It may also help you as a leader to ascertain your participants' knowledge or understanding on a subject, allowing you to adjust your focus.
- **Study:** This is the centre of each lesson and lists a number of important points for you to cover. It is up to you how these are presented. You may deliver them lecture style, or incorporate them into a story, or if technology allows, a visual presentation. This study portion will look at many verses from the Bible in each lesson. You may choose to have participants look these up and read them, or you (the leader) may choose to read them to your group depending on size. For this reason you may wish to ask participants to bring a Bible to the group meeting if possible.
- **Tasks:** Occasionally within the study portion of the lesson there is a task for the leader to give the group. It may involve looking up a passage and creating a list of what you learn, or filling out a chart of information. It may not be suitable for every group, but is included if you want to use it.
- **Discussion Questions:** This section allows you to evaluate what has been learned from the lesson and allows participants to make immediate application of the material to their everyday lives. You may choose to ask all the discussion questions, or choose just one or two.
- **Prayer:** When meeting as a small group you may choose to pray as a group. Whether you are teaching in a large setting or small, it is advised that you close the session in prayer. Suggestions have been provided for you. During lessons on prayer, activities to help instruct prayer through practice have been provided for small groups to use.
- **Homework:** Occasionally supplementary activities that could take place after class time are included. If meeting regularly with a group or one-on-one, homework assignments provide an extension of learning and an opportunity to practice what has been taught. In large group or church settings these may be suggested to the group as something to do during the week. This resource will not be suitable for every group, but is provided for you if you want to use it.

Instructing Adult Learners

Your participants in Discipleship Essentials will be adults or young adults. While children are eager to accept new information, instructing older people has unique challenges and opportunities. Adult learning is about ownership of the learning. It is outcome-based learning. It is an intensely personal activity and every activity must contribute positively to the learning process. Education is most successful when the learners are participants, not merely recipients. Carefully prepare lessons with the following points in mind.

- 1. Adults are people with years of experience and a wealth of information.** Focus on the strengths participants bring to the classroom, not just gaps in their knowledge. Use experiences of your participants whenever possible to have them teach one another.
- 2. Adults have established values, beliefs, and opinions.** Demonstrate respect for differing beliefs, value systems and lifestyles while sharing truths of the Bible. Adults will change their beliefs and habits at their own time.
- 3. Adults are people whose style and pace of learning has probably changed.** Reaction time and speed of learning may be slower, but the ability to learn does not cease with age. Information may need to be repeated or presented in a new format.
- 4. Adults relate new knowledge and information to previously learned information and experiences.** New knowledge and information will always be compared with an old experience. Old experiences never quite die. This is where reflection and connection questions are vital to instruction. We must show adults how new knowledge connects to what they know.
- 5. Adults have varying attention spans.** Plan frequent breaks, even if they are 2-minute “stretch” breaks. Changing the teaching method within a lesson can help—for instance, times of discussion, sharing, watching a video clip or breaking into smaller groups to look up verses.
- 6. Adults require respect.** Self-esteem is at risk in a classroom environment that is not perceived as safe or supportive. Participants must feel free to share their opinion and experiences free of ridicule. Each individual must be treated with respect.
- 7. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing.** Engage the students in a process of mutual inquiry. Have them discover the answers in the Bible themselves, or in small groups.
- 8. Individual differences among people increase with age.** Take into account differences in style, time, types and pace of learning within your group. Be patient, demonstrate love.
- 9. Adults tend to have a problem-centred orientation to learning.** Adults generally want to immediately apply new information or skills to current problems or situations. Discussion questions after each lesson allow them to see how this lesson can change their life today.
- 10. Adults prefer non-formal learning environments.** Non-formal education is more responsive to the needs and the contributions of adult learners. This may take the form of small group discussions meeting in an informal location such as a café or home.

Most importantly: Prayerfully prepare each lesson with your participants’ needs in mind. Take the time to build relationships with each person if possible so you can instruct them better. Finally, give them opportunities to put into practice what they learn so that they can share it with others and become fruitful disciples and disciplers.