

Better Together:

A biblical foundation and focused strategy for discipling



SEVERNA PARK BAPTIST CHURCH
GROWING GODLY GENERATIONS

www.spbcmd.com

OUR FOUNDATION

Genesis 2:18 “it is _____ to be alone.”

Ephesians 2:16-22 “[the gospel] reconciles us both to God in one body through the cross... no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and _____ of the _____ of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.”

Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-26

- Biblical community is not discovered but developed.
- The early church was committed to a spiritual rhythm of _____ in worship, _____ in the word, and _____ out in witness.
- Jesus, the disciples, and the early church ministered house to house (Mt 10:11-14; Lk 9:1-6). The Gospels and Acts reference “upper rooms” (cf. Mk 14:13-15; Acts 1:12-14; 9:39-40) and homes where gospel ministry and church gatherings took place (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12; 16:15, 40; 18:7-8; 20:8, 20; Rom 16:14-15, 23; Col 4:16).
 - o Homes are where the family practices faith, hope, and love in profound and practical ways. They are established infrastructure, along with “third places” like coffee shops, restaurants, and other social venues.
 - o Church buildings can and should be utilized for spiritual growth gatherings. Yet, consider how an unbeliever might view a church building versus another location.

OUR FOCUS

Matthew 4:19; 9:9 “Jesus said, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of [people].’”

Matthew 28:18-20 “Jesus said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

- Disciplemaking requires a relational investment with God and with others. Therefore, effective disciplemaking will require fewer individuals for intentionality of purpose. Like Jesus, we must aim big by starting small and flip the paradigm strategy to have a disciplemaking impact.



- Disciplemaking is about intention not addition. It's not a program or event on your calendar but authentic relationships with a faith-centered purpose.

OUR STRATEGY: START – SEE – SELECT – SHAPE – SEND

Start as a disciple.

- Are you following Jesus Christ as Savior from your sin and Lord of your life? (Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10)
- Have you followed Jesus in baptism and meaningful connection with God's people in a local church? (Acts 2:37-47)

Take action:

- 1) Become a Christian and connect as a church member.
- 2) S.O.A.P.S. or 5 Arrows

S.O.A.P.S. BIBLE STUDY METHOD

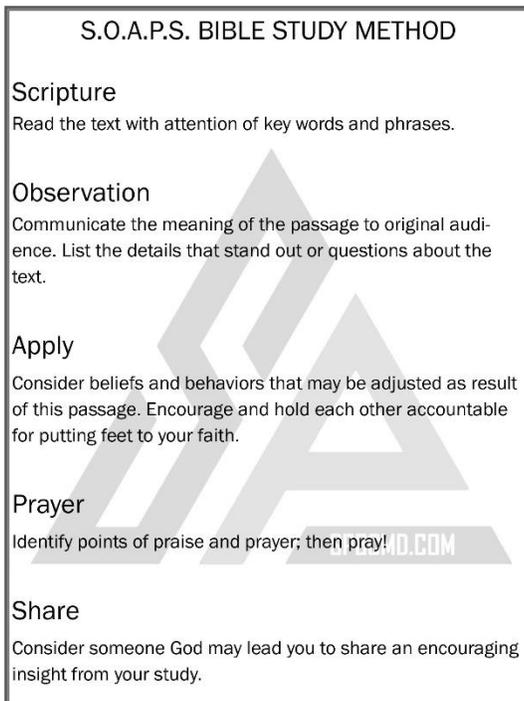
Scripture
Read the text with attention of key words and phrases.

Observation
Communicate the meaning of the passage to original audience. List the details that stand out or questions about the text.

Apply
Consider beliefs and behaviors that may be adjusted as result of this passage. Encourage and hold each other accountable for putting feet to your faith.

Prayer
Identify points of praise and prayer; then pray!

Share
Consider someone God may lead you to share an encouraging insight from your study.



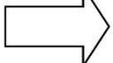
5 ARROWS OF BIBLE STUDY

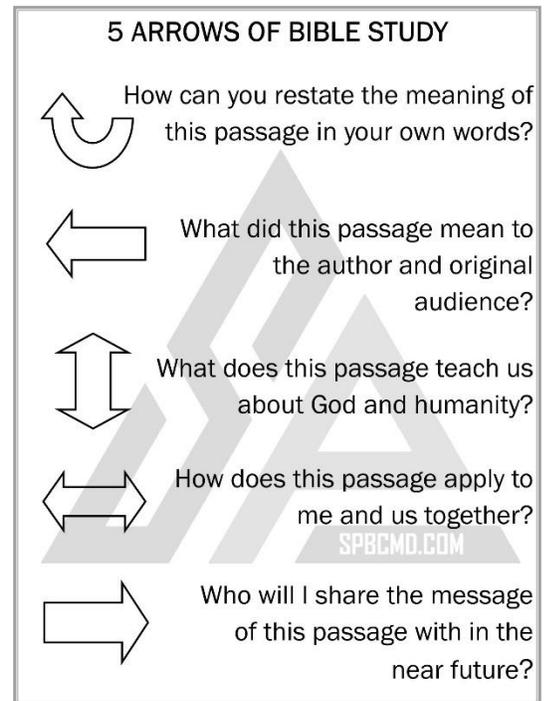
 How can you restate the meaning of this passage in your own words?

 What did this passage mean to the author and original audience?

 What does this passage teach us about God and humanity?

 How does this passage apply to me and us together?

 Who will I share the message of this passage with in the near future?



See disciples as Jesus did.

- See each person made in the image of God with an invitation to be loved in biblical community. (Matthew 9:35-38; Luke 10:25-37)
- See people in missional networks: family, vocation, geographic, relational, and commercial.
- Living as a generous blessing of God's kingdom with salt and light (Mt 5:13-16; 1 Cor 10:31; Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:23-24).

Take action:

- 1) Familiarize with the 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversation: Noticing, Praying, Listening, Asking Questions, Loving, Welcoming, Facilitating, Sharing.
- 2) Familiarize with B.L.E.S.S. strategy: Begin with prayer. Listen with care. Eat or Experience together. Serve with love. Share your story.
- 3) Identify #WhosYour1

Select and Shape disciples as Jesus did.

- Prayerfully consider who God has placed in your life to have an impact with faith, hope, and love. Remember, even Jesus, the greatest disciplemaker, limited His selection to twelve and one was a failure! Jesus invested more in the committed few than the curious many. (cf. Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16)
- Jesus's disciplmaking method equipped persons in key areas of convictions, character, and ministry capabilities. There was not a cookie cutter approach but customized interaction with individuals. Jesus's method included modeling ("I do, you watch"), instruction ("I do, you help"), coaching ("You do, I help") and delegating ("You do, I watch"). Overall, their life together was like branches connected to a vine, that sometimes requires pruning (cf. Jn 15:1-17).

Take action:

- 1) Connect with a "family group" of ~4-7 families for biblical community.
- 2) Each group fulfills three purposes of our church with some suggested roles...
 - a. Loving God
 - i. Teacher(s): Responsible to communicate with Pastors to affirm group curriculum, and to regularly teach biblical content. When teaching, think of the group beyond a classroom and more as a community and family to shepherd people in spiritual growth.
 - ii. Teaching apprentices: Responsible to learn and assist teachers. The developing aim is to multiply teaching opportunities and additional groups.
 - b. Living Jesus to others
 - i. Host: Responsible for group meeting environment. Think about seating, removing distractions, temperature, lighting, refreshments, etc.
 - ii. Prayer coordinators: Responsible to discern individual prayer needs and communicate with group and pastors to pray and minister.
 - iii. Care coordinators: Responsible to discern and implement tangible ministry to the needs of individuals.
 - c. Leading Generations
 - i. Missional coordinator: Responsible to mobilize individuals and group to use spiritual gifts of service inside the church and outward in the community.
 1. People
 2. Ministries
 3. Organizations
 - ii. Connector: Responsible to help group members know those outside your group, especially inside the church. Encourages group members to invite and connect "guests" to your group – with an eventual aim toward multiplication.
 - iii. Men/Women Coordinator: Each group should move toward including gender specific meetings; which we are calling "formation groups." The formation group can utilize the same curriculum the family groups study, but the purpose of deeper community, accountability, and aim for disciplmaking.

Group Life Aims

- ◇ Selections: The process of selecting individuals/members in each group should be somewhat organic. Pastors can assist and make recommendations to each group, or facilitate connections. Many groups will likely connect around similar life seasons. Admittedly, mixed generation relationships can take a bit more work, but there can be great blessing (and highly biblical value) that can come from intergenerational discipling.
- ◇ Childcare options: If your group has families with younger children, then you will need to consider how to involve or structure your group. Children might be able to be fully included or float between free play and minor oversight. Other times the group may isolate children in a separate room. Families might identify their own childcare, or even establish a volunteer rotation within their group or other groups.
- ◇ Location/Time: Each group must decide on their own the best day/time and place for their group meetings. If a group wants to meet on the church campus (outdoors/indoors) then they must schedule with church office.
- ◇ Frequency: Family Groups could meet every week or every other week. Additionally, formation groups could meet either once a month (rotate men and women on alternate weeks – perhaps for groups with childcare), or meeting on the alternate weeks from the family group. Ex: week 1 – family group, week 2 – men, week 3 – family group, week 4 – women.
- ◇ Curriculum: The primary study should utilize the Bible. Yet, groups may consider supplemental material and book studies. Groups may also consider thinking in trimesters with biblical study, book topic, and churchwide series. Sample suggestions
 - Select a book of the Bible and outline study timeline.
 - Essential 100 or Foundations 260 reading plans.
 - Navigators Life Change book studies
 - Gospel Foundations (one-year sequence) or Gospel Project (three-year sequence).
 - Books: Multiply (Francis Chan), The God Who Is There (D.A. Carson), Creed (Winfield Bevens), Growing In Christ (J.I. Packer), Experiencing God / Fresh Encounter (Blackaby); and a host of other spiritual growth and topical books.
- ◇ Grow in word, witness, and shared life.
 - Each group should be committed to studying the Bible. Spiritual growth occurs best when there is mixing theology and practice – faith and works.
 - Each group should constantly be on the lookout for ministry and missional opportunities, especially among unbelieving friends and neighbors.
 - Consider 2-4x a year group or multi-group service projects to serve others and advance the gospel of Jesus.
 - Don't forget to play together. Enjoy friendships and activities with life-on-life.

- ◇ Hybrid: Discipleship and discipling can reflect multiple shapes and sizes in biblical community. Some persons may only participate in a family group. Others might only participate in a formation group. The aim is spiritual growth in biblical community. We want to be firm in stating our goal for every member to participate in a group. Yet, we want to be flexible and understand people are at different stages and seasons of their spiritual journey.

Send disciples as Jesus did.

- Each group is like a family that is learning, maturing, and becoming ready to independently depend upon Jesus. As a child becomes ready to leave the home, so a disciple will display readiness for starting his/her own discipling group. This should not be forced, but neither should it be fumbled.
- Generally speaking, groups should have an aim to send and commission individuals every 2-4 years. Some groups may be ready sooner, and others may take longer depending on the spiritual health of the group.
- Common hindrances to sending people is the emphasis of ongoing relationships. Why do we need to multiply (leave) a group if we're enjoying and growing as our own group? In this case, we need to remember two perspectives: first, the fact that a person(s) may not be physically in one group should not equate to isolation from other groups. Groups can stay in fellowship and service with one another. Secondly, following Jesus means making and multiplying disciples is not an option. We must not allow the Great Commission to become the great omission.

Take action:

- 1) Start with the end in mind. As we begin (again) developing our small group ministry, let us recommit to the Lord and our church family to growing godly generations in and through spbc. Pray so!

GROUP LEADERS

Thank you for your interest in facilitating spiritual growth in our church. Some helpful guidelines will help you get started and us stay united in approach for small groups and discipling.

◇ Depend on God.

- Pray and stay connected to Jesus. (John 15:5)
- Prepare and don't wing it. Teaching is a stewardship (James 3:1).

◇ Partnership.

- Our church members and ministries are not competing against one another. Our attitude and actions must reflect humility, patience, and service to one another.
- You are not alone, whether a group leader or church member, we can work together.

◇ Promote the mission.

- A great commitment to the great commandment and the great commission makes a godly Christian and a great church.

◇ Teach the Bible.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the child of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
- 2 Peter 1:3 "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises"

◇ Teach to people.

- Just as we know the church is not made of bricks, sticks, and drywall but of flesh and blood – such is true of small groups.
- All of us need shepherding and spiritual growth. As a teacher/leader, make sure you are spiritually feeding and have someone pastoring you.
- Care for the condition of your group (Ps 78:72; Prov 27:23). Each person/family has various idiosyncrasies and challenges. Teachers have a responsibility, along with others and spiritual leaders, to help the members in the group know and be known. Work hard at cultivating biblical community among your group. Discipling often best happens beyond the teaching moments or classroom.
- Avoid lectureland and opinionville. Find the balance of teaching God's word to transform and enhance a living faith.
- Grow to understand learning styles and personality types.
 - Learning styles:
 - Visual learn through seeing pictures, handouts, video, etc.
 - Auditory learn through hearing with question & answer, stories, case studies, music.
 - Kinesthetic learn through touching objects, drawing, sculpting, activities.

- Personality types
 - Drama Dave: avoid the minor and confront the major; involve with tasks.
 - Talky Tara: encourage hand raising, calling names to speak; confront with sensitivity.
 - Churched Charlie: encourage to find different perspectives; ask “where” in Scripture is their view; ask what others think.
 - Pensive Paul: be patient and unafraid of silence; ask open ended questions, build relationships.
 - Sponge Sarah: provide opportunities to lead and apprentice for multiplying.

◇ Let's get started.

- Do you have or need group members?
- What will be your starting study/curriculum?
- When and where will you meet, and with what frequency?
- What resources do you need or questions do you have?



GATHERING to worship
Sunday 10:45am

GROWING in the word
Family Groups & Formation Groups
Sunday 9:30am studies/seminars

GOING in witness
Generous with time, talent, treasure
Living sent... seeing people