

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHECKOUT

Purpose Statement: To communicate to mentors the purpose, methods and principles of checkout.

Learning Objectives: This session is designed to help you:

1. Define what checkout means.
2. State the purpose of checkout.
3. Explain the mentor's responsibility in checkout.
4. List the essential methods and principles of checkout.
5. Identify common problems in the checkout of others.

Key Verses: Acts 18:24-28

I. Introduction

Instructor – please note that Appendix 3 is not in the Student Notes. Make enough copies of this for every student to have one for class. Also, each student will need a copy of the Check-out guide for one of the skills in Appendix 2 (suggestion: “Closing the Four Spiritual Laws”). After discussing the class notes, you will demonstrate how to conduct a simulated check-out in the ministry skill selected (you may want to consider doing this in a separate session – call it a “Check-out Workshop”). Call for a volunteer to be your disciple. Let him/her look over the Check-out guide (which should already be familiar to them), and then you conduct the simulated check-out on the ministry skill. After conducting the demonstration, ask the class to evaluate how you did according to what was taught. If there is enough time after the evaluation, ask for a volunteer to be a mentor, and another to volunteer as a disciple, and let the volunteer mentor demonstrate how to conduct the simulated check-out session. Let the class evaluate how the volunteer mentor did according to Appendix 3.

This talk could be introduced with the following exercise. Ask for volunteer(s) and give them a blank piece of paper and crayons or markers. They can not work together on this, and the instructor can not look at the volunteer(s) papers to correct miscommunications. What the instructor will do is describe a picture to be drawn. For example, for a smiley face, the instructor could say, “Draw a circle with a diameter of 5 inches. In the middle of this circle, draw another circle with a diameter of 1 inch. Go one inch above the one inch circle, then one inch to the left and start a half inch horizontal line from right to left. Now again go one inch above the one inch circle, then one inch to the right and start a half inch horizontal line from left to right. Now go one inch below the bottom edge of the one inch circle and draw a 2 inch horizontal line centered below the 1 inch circle. On the right side of this 2 inch horizontal line, draw a half inch line going 45 degrees up from left to right. On the left side of the 2 inch horizontal line, draw a half inch line going 45 degrees up from right to left.”

Volunteers may ask questions for clarification, but they cannot show their picture to the instructor to see if they are doing it right. The instructor may not say something like, “We’re going to draw a smiley face, and I’ll tell you how.”

This should result in a smiley face of sorts. If it doesn’t, it could mean that the volunteers were not listening well, or are not geometrically gifted, or there could have been a problem with the instructor

and his communication.

In checkout, it is similar in that ministry skills may not be done well in simulated or real situations because the disciple needs to practice more, listen more, or the mentor may need to communicate better. It's a challenge to pass on what has been entrusted to you.

Have you ever played the game where there is a circle of people, and one whispers a message into the ear of the person next to him? That person then whispers to the next, and so on until the message finally gets whispered into the ear of the one who began the whole process. This person is usually surprised to hear how much his message was altered in the process.

This can also happen in the transfer of ministry skills. Flexibility is OK in sharing the gospel, doing follow-up, sharing testimonies, and discipleship. And yet there are some important basic elements in each that need to be passed on.

Our objective in training is that the disciple “master” certain skills and a particular block of knowledge, and embrace certain values.

Since a commitment to excellence involves constant improvement, we must be committed to the process of evaluation and refinement of our ministry skills. Excellence demands nothing less.

Flexibility, creativity and personal preference are privileges reserved for those who demonstrate commitment to and excellence in the basics.

Checkout is not only designed to measure understanding and ability related to skills, but also the disciple's biblical knowledge and attitudes. For instance, we will evaluate the disciple's ability to use the Four Spiritual Laws and the Holy Spirit Booklet, lead a Small Group, apply biblical information to their lives and grow in their understanding of the Spirit-filled life.

II. The Definition of Checkout.

Check-out is a training method which:

- A. Allows the mentor to know specifically what “Mastery” is equal to.
- B. Gives the disciple a clear idea of the level of competency (L.O.C.) necessary for the designated skill, information and/or attitude. The LOC is explained in the Check-Out guides. This answers the disciple's question, “What's required of me in this skill?”
- C. Gives the disciple immediate feedback from a mentor, focused on practical ways to improve.
- D. Gives the disciple opportunities to practice skills in both simulated (theoretical) and real (practical) ministry situations.

Checkout is done in both simulated (true to life but not real) situations and under the mentor's supervision in real ministry situations.

Checkout is a method of helping the disciple discipline themselves for the pursuit of excellence to the Glory of God. "...train yourself to be Godly" 1 Timothy 4:7b.

It takes a minimum of three weeks to establish a habit or break old habits. So, checkout is, without apology, an exercise in review and repetition of essential information, skills and attitudes. Some disciples may say, "I've already learned that, so do I need to be checked out in it?" The answer is "yes." If they are already doing that particular ministry skill, it should be easy to demonstrate it to their mentor. Repetition is good (Philippians 3:1). Read Appendix 1 on "Repetition, Review, and a Commitment to Excellence."

III. The Purpose of Checkout.

- A. To help the disciple strive for "mastery," in:
 - 1. Grounding in biblical information.
 - 2. Developing attitudes and convictions.
 - 3. Attaining ministry skills.

- B. To help the disciple reach the level of ability necessary to be considered "adequately trained." This is referred to as the level of competency (LOC).

This is based on:

- 1. The material presented in the classes.
 - 2. The specific requirements listed in the "Check-out Guides."
 - 3. The mentor's best judgment.
- C. To help prepare the disciple to be a mentor of others.
Checkout ensures that quality is maintained in the spiritual multiplication process (2 Timothy 2:2).

III. The Mentor's Responsibilities in Checkout.

- A. Clearly communicate assignments.
The students should receive a check-out guide for a particular ministry skill once it has been demonstrated in class. The mentor then needs to make sure that simulation assignments are clearly communicated in advance. This allows for satisfactory completion by the due date. For instance, tell the disciple, "Since you learned last week how to share the Four Spiritual Laws, this Thursday we will evaluate your ability to explain the circles in The Four Laws." Don't say something like, "Sometime this month we'll see how well you're doing in sharing The Four Laws."

- B. Help the disciples apply ministry skills in real life situations.
Make sure the disciple has ample opportunities for practical checkout under your direct supervision. This involves keeping track of their progress in order to plan ahead for your weekly one-on-one training time. You may want to use the mentor's tracking charts to assist you in this process (See Appendix 2).

- C. Maintain a proper attitude toward the training experience.
 - 1. You are adequate for the task in spite of any weaknesses. Our adequacy is in Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:5

2. Don't be threatened by the strengths of your disciple.
Your disciple may actually be better than you in some areas of skill or biblical knowledge. This is part of the diversity in the body of Christ. Allow them to minister to you in those areas. The disciple is not looking for you to be the expert in every area. They will probably find it refreshing and encouraging to be ahead of you in a few areas.
 3. Assume your disciple has a heart for God and teachable attitude unless there is a compelling reason to believe otherwise.
 4. Assume your disciple is qualified and can fulfill his/her responsibilities.
 5. Assume your disciple wants to grow in his/her ministry effectiveness and desires your input.
 6. Assume your disciple is a future multiplying disciple and mentor.
- D. Not all disciples are alike, adjust your training according to their bent

IV. The Methods of Checkout.

A. The simulation method.

1. Definition.

A simulation means acting as though the situation were real in order to evaluate the disciple's ability to perform the specific skills needed in that situation. This method is effective in determining student's ability in the ministry skills listed in the "Checkout Progress Chart" at the end of this session.

- a. What are some professions that use the simulation method of training?
(Instructor can allow students to share their answers to this question, and the following two questions. For this question, if not mentioned by the students, the instructor could say, "Aerospace, airlines, law enforcement, sports, etc.")
- b. Why do they use this method of training?
(If not mentioned by the students, the instructor could say something like, "Wherever there is a high skill required in a high risk situation, there you will find the simulation method of training.")
- c. Name at least one practical benefit of the simulation method?
(If not mentioned by the students, the instructor could say something like, "The student learns from mistakes in low-risk situations; It helps to build confidence in the student; It helps the student make less mistakes with real people.")

2. Key elements.

- a. The mentor must know how to correctly demonstrate the situation.

- b. The mentor gives the specific situation to be role-played. The mentor will “set the stage” and make sure all participants know their roles.
- b. The mentor carefully evaluates the simulation and (if possible) takes notes.
- c. The disciple performs the skill to be evaluated.
- d. The mentor provides feedback on the disciple's performance.

B. Practical field experience.

1. Definition.

Mentors observe and evaluate disciples in real life situations during their field ministry. This should take place as soon as possible after the teaching of the skill.

2. Key elements.

- a. The disciple should observe the mentor in an actual ministry situation before being evaluated in that ministry skill. It's what Jesus and Paul did.
- b. The LOC for each skill should be clearly understood by both mentor and disciple. This should be communicated before the checkout time.
- c. **The mentor should observe the disciple in enough actual ministry situations to properly evaluate their skill level.**

Doing a skill well only once does not mean a habit has been established. Nor does it mean the level of competency has been reached. We are looking to instill habits, or patterns of excellence and this will take **time** and **practice**. Don't settle for an average job. They may pass a skill today, but then revert back to old habits tomorrow.

- d. The mentor and disciple should meet for a time of evaluation after the field experience, carefully going over the areas done well and those needing improvement.

A good transition is for the mentor to ask, “How do you think it went?”

- e. If the disciple's ability/performance does not meet the required level, specific input on how the disciple might improve is given and another time is set to evaluate the skill in question. The mentor should express confidence in the disciple.

The mentor may need to demonstrate the skill again - people remember more of what is seen than what is heard.

V. Principles of Checkout.

- A. Communicate your expectations **clearly** and **specifically**. The student should have already seen the ministry skill demonstrated in class and they should also know what's expected of them according to the check-out guides.

- B. Give specific, positive reinforcement **immediately** after the simulated situation or field experience.
- C. Be sensitive as to **when** you evaluate and correct a **field** experience. It would not be good to evaluate and correct them in the middle of presenting the gospel to someone. If in a **simulated** check-out the disciple is making a major mistake or a repeated mistake, then the mentor needs to stop the demonstration and make corrections. When evaluating, start with positive comments on what they did well. Then you could transition to what needs to be corrected by saying something like, "Do you remember how we demonstrated this ministry skill in class?"
- D. It is important to keep a **written record** of your disciple's progress. See "Check-out Progress Chart" in Appendix 2.
- E. Allow the disciple to give self-evaluation when correction is necessary. They often know what they did wrong.
- F. DON'T CORRECT EVERY MINOR POINT.
- G. Refer to the lesson and the Check-out guide when making corrections.
- H. Have the student repeat only the portion of the check-out which was done incorrectly rather than the whole check-out.
- I. Follow the principle of clear communication throughout the training process, especially when you are demonstrating ministry skills.
 - 1. Tell them what you are going to do and why.
 - 2. Do it.
 - 3. Tell the disciple what you did.
 - 4. Have the disciple do it.
 - 5. Evaluate the disciple according to the standards listed in the Check-out Guide.

VI. Common Problems in Check-out.

- A. A tendency toward legalism and perfectionism, being too hard on them.
- B. A willingness to settle for less than excellence.
- C. A loss of perspective on the **purpose** of checkout:
 - ▶ Preparation of disciples for fruitful ministry and future leadership.
- D. An unwillingness to confront. This is usually due to:
 - ▶ Fear of loss of friendship
 - ▶ Fear he lacks authority
 - ▶ Don't know how to do it

VII. Summary and Application.

- A. Check-out reflects our commitment to excellence.
- B. Check-out is comprised of **simulated situations** and **real life ministry** experiences.
- C. Review the "Check-out Progress Chart." This is designed to help you:
 - 1. keep track of your disciple(s) progress in completing simulated and field training, and
 - 2. determine the "next step" in training as you prepare for your training time each week.

APPENDIX 1

REPETITION, REVIEW AND A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The ancient Greeks said that repetition is the mother of learning. The ancient Hebrews knew the value of being exposed daily to the same information if it was to take hold in the human heart. Moses writes:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord you God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:4-9

God is telling us through Moses that we need to hear something more than once in order to learn. Merely hearing is not the same as learning.

Educational experts confirm this. They maintain that most of us need to hear something 6-9 times before it makes the difficult twelve-inch journey from our head to our heart. This is the role of repetition and review. Most educational experts draw a distinction between these terms, though both play a crucial role in the learning process.

REPETITION

Repetition is simply doing or saying things over and over again until a fact is confirmed in the heart and mind, an attitude is formed, a habit is developed or a skill attained.

Repetition is a practical necessity in the attainment of any skill. Think for a moment about sports like tennis, soccer, or basketball. All require repetition of both basic and complex motor skills. Repetition is the key to skill attainment. But even more important to our discussion, **SKILL ATTAINMENT IS THE KEY TO ENJOYMENT OF A PARTICULAR ACTIVITY.**

We want our disciples/students to enjoy evangelism and discipleship, but their enjoyment is directly related to their skill level, and their skill level is directly related to habit patterns developed through repetition.

REVIEW

Review, though distinguished from repetition, is its cousin. While repetition brings the same information in the same manner over and over, review involves a fresh look at the same material or skill.

Review can include looking at the same information from a different angle, or in the context of new information, looking at a different emphasis or a new application. It could be the practice of the same skill in a variety of situations.

The goal of review is a more clear, fresh, broadened and deepened vision and application of the information or skill being taught.

SUMMARY

It has been said that you need a firm grip to achieve flexible handling of a tool. Gaining a firm grip is the work of repetition and review. Flexibility and creativity in the ministry are the fruit of repetition and review.

Repetition and review deliver the power of life changing application. They are the key to a mastery of the basics. We desire nothing less for our disciple(s). . . a firm grip on the ministry and a life changing experience with Jesus Christ.

Toward this end, we offer, without apology, the opportunity to repeat and review the foundational truths and essential skills that contribute to our walk with God and an effective ministry.

APPENDIX 2 CHECK-OUT PROGRESS CHART

(Fill in the date when each box is accomplished)

Skill or Discipline	Observe a Simulation	Theoretical Check-Out	Observed Mentor in Field	Practical Check-Out	LOC Attained
BASIC LEVEL					
Introducing the Four Spiritual Laws					
Handling Different Responses					
Memorization of the Four Spiritual Laws					
The Spirit-Filled Life Presentation					
INTERMEDIATE					
Closing the Presentation of the Four Spiritual Laws					
Motivating New Believers					
Follow-Up #1: Beginning Your New Life in Christ					
ADVANCED					
Presenting a Personal Testimony					
Motivating People to Discipleship Group					
LEADERSHIP					
Leading a Group Discussion					
Leading a Discipleship Training Group					
Making the Issue Clear					

APPENDIX 3 - EVALUATION OF MENTOR FORM

LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY	EVALUATION	
	Completed LOC	Comments
<p>A. The mentor set the atmosphere of the session.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expressed confidence in the disciple. 2. Was enthusiastic and personable. 3. Created an atmosphere of learning. 4. Obvious attitude of love and acceptance. 5. Was encouraging during Check-out. 6. Conveyed the attitude of helping the disciple. 7. Was patient. 8. Was sensitive toward the disciple. 		
<p>B. During the Check-out session, the mentor followed these guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The mentor knew what was to be checked out and how to Check-out. 2. The mentor had a clear picture of the Level of Competency. 3. The mentor told the disciple exactly what was expected based on the standards of performance. 4. The mentor set the stage. 5. The mentor made notes of the disciple's performance on the Level of Competency sheet. If a mistake was made, the exact words the trainee used were written. 6. When correcting the disciple the mentor: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allowed the disciple to evaluate him/herself. b. Began with the positive. Told the disciple what was done right and then explained what needed correction. c. Referred to the class notes and the Standards of Performance sheet when correcting the disciple. d. Avoided reading lists of the disciple's mistakes. e. Had the disciple repeat the section that was done incorrectly, rather than the whole lesson/check-out. f. Didn't embarrass the disciple. g. Was not too particular. The corrected mistakes were important ones. 7. If a major mistake was made, the mentor: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Stopped the disciple immediately and made the corrections. b. Had the disciple repeat the section done incorrectly until it was correct. c. If necessary, demonstrated the section the disciple did incorrectly, then had the disciple demonstrate the section again. 8. Reinforced good behavior. Was specific and realistic in praising the disciple. 9. Was excited and enthusiastic when the disciple did the presentation correctly. 		