

MOTIVATING NEW BELIEVERS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to show you the importance of helping new believers grow and to equip you to motivate new believers for further involvement in the discipleship process.

Objectives: This session will help you to:

1. Understand and appreciate your role in a young Christian's life
2. Be familiar with specific "how-to's" of encouraging new believers to attend the first follow-up appointment.
3. Feel confident in motivating a new believer toward discipleship

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 2:8

I. Introduction.

Jesus talks about salvation in terms of a "new birth" (John 3). Newborns need certain kinds of things in the physical world, what are some of them? How do these relate to needs in the spiritual realm?

Note to instructor: Ask if the students came up with ideas on the "Spiritual Needs" blanks that were in their notes.

Natural Needs

1. Food
2. Nurture (care, love, etc.)
3. Communication
4. Training
5. Someone to clean up our messes

Spiritual Needs

The Word
Fellowship
Prayer
Discipleship
Grace

Our job is much greater than that of being a spiritual midwife, one who simply brings a new child into the kingdom. We also help the child, in part, grow to maturity. As we see people come to Christ, what can we do to help them grow spiritually?

II. Perspectives on Discipleship

A. Our Attitudes

1. Jesus shed His blood for this person.
2. He's part of me and I'm part of him, since we are both part of the body of Christ. My well-being is related to his well-being. My effectiveness is related to his effectiveness.
3. God causes the growth (see I Corinthians 3:6; Philippians 1:6; 2:13).
4. God uses me in other's growth.

B. Our Actions

Instructor may want to share one or two personal experiences related to this section.

1. Build relationships with the new believers.
2. Create an environment of: love, encouragement, friendship.
3. Be a friend. It is important to show those you follow-up that you care about them as people. One good way to do this is to be their friend.
 - a. Go see them.
 - b. Do fun things together.
 - c. Find out about them—family, interests, goals.
 - d. Share your life.
 - Be yourself.
 - Communicate how Christ relates to your life.
 - e. Learn to be a listener—concentrate on the individual.
4. Stimulate a desire within them to grow spiritually.
 - a. Make them aware of their needs.
 - b. Relate Christ to their needs.
5. Get them involved with other believers. It is important to introduce new believers to other Christians as soon as possible. This is an encouragement as they meet others who love God and are growing in their relationship with Him. It also rounds out their growth as they can draw upon others strengths, gifts and experience with God. Offer to take them to church, as well as other activities and meetings. Be a link between them and other Christians.
6. Pray for them regularly. Prayer is a crucial part of any person's spiritual growth. Not only will the new believers grow as you pray for them, but you will find your prayer life expanding.
7. Meet regularly in a discipleship context. Now let us look at some specific 'How-to's' of setting up the first appointment after someone receives Christ with you.

III. Encouraging new believers to come to the first follow-up appointment.

Read the following and be prepared to discuss answers to the questions that follow.

Jack received Christ with a man who was sitting next to him at lunch. The man had shared the Four Spiritual Laws booklet with him. After Jack had asked Christ into his life, he and the man rejoiced together, the man shared with him how great the Christian life is and told him about all the neat events going on. As the man left he said, “Hope to see you again.” Jack was excited, but as the day progressed questions came to his mind. What did I really do? Who really was this guy? What happens if I sin? Will God leave me? Does this mean I have to go to church three times a week? What happens now? Jack became acutely aware of his need for help in finding

answers.

If you were the person who led Jack to Christ, what would you have done differently? Write down some ideas **before** proceeding to the next page.

- A. Seek an appointment within 24-48 hours after someone receives Christ (see Mark 4:14,15).

It is important to meet with new Christians very soon after they receive Christ, because even before we lead a person to Christ, Satan is at work. Baby Christians are most vulnerable right after birth. Satan will try to bring doubt and confusion, so it is important to be with new believers in the early days of their Christian experience.

- B. Make them aware of their need to grow in their relationship with God.

Point out that being a Christian is having a relationship with God. As in any relationship, you have to spend time communicating to see the friendship grow. Then explain how you would like to meet to pass on some information designed to help people learn how to grow in their friendship with God.

- C. Arrange a specific time and place to meet.

- D. Ask individuals to review the Four Spiritual Laws before you meet again and to thank Christ once more for coming into their lives.

When new believers express thanks to the Lord, they demonstrate faith, which pleases God. You might give a copy of the Van Dusen letter (or the Transferable Concept, 'How to be Sure You Are a Christian') to read and say 'This material contains a clear explanation of the Four Spiritual Laws and helps people understand more about their new relationship with Christ.'

- E. Encourage them to read John 1-3 before the appointment.

- F. Invite them to join you in some fun activity.

If time permits, the instructor could demonstrate this to the class. The Appendix shows a sample dialogue. Be prepared to demonstrate this without having to read from the script. Have one of the students assist, but discuss this with him before class. After the demonstration, ask the class to discuss their observations. Students can practice this two-by-two if time permits. Take no more than 5 minutes each.

APPENDIX

Demonstration Dialogue: Setting up the First Follow-up Appointment

- You: (Partner's Name) When you prayed today and invited Christ into your life, you have now begun a personal relationship with Him. But this is really only the beginning. We have just met each other today. In this sense we have begun a friendship, but suppose that after today we never see or communicate with each other again. Will our friendship grow?
- Partner: No.
- You: Why not?
- Partner: Because a friendship depends on getting to know the other person and that takes communication.
- You: Right, it's the same way with Christ. Even though you began a relationship with Him today, if your friendship is going to grow, you need to learn how to know Him better. The better we know God, the more we will be able to trust Him. How do you think a friendship grows, (partner's name)?
- Partner: It grows by spending time together, talking with one another and doing things together.
- You: That's right. In other words we need to learn how to communicate with Christ and allow Him to communicate with us. We need to learn how to spend time with Him so our friendship will grow. (Partner's name), I would like to get together with you and share how you can build your friendship with Christ. Would you be interested?
- Partner: Yes.
- You: Are you free tomorrow at this time?
- Partner: Yes.
- You: That's great! Let's meet right here at 2 o'clock. Why don't you write that on the back page of your "Four Spiritual Laws." I'll see you then!
- Partner: OK.
- You: (Partner's Name), I encourage you to read through the Four Spiritual Laws before you go to bed tonight and thank Christ that He is in your life. By thanking God you demonstrate faith, and that pleases Him. You may also want to begin reading the Gospel of John – perhaps the first three chapters before we meet again. I really enjoyed talking to you today and I look forward to seeing you tomorrow at 2:00 o'clock.

Discussion Questions:

1. How has this lesson helped you understand and appreciate your role in a young Christian's life?
2. What are some "how-to's" of encouraging new believers to attend the first follow-up appointment?
3. How has this lesson helped you feel confident in motivating a new believer toward discipleship?