

byDesign

Week 1 (April 29 - May 5): Lesson Guide

Introduce guests/share life.

Cast vision & open in prayer. Say, “We are just a group of broken people journeying with Jesus together.”

Recall the guidelines together.

Hook Question: What is causing you the greatest disappointment in life right now?

Ask someone from your team to tell or read the following background for the story:

No missionary has had a greater impact on the advancement of the gospel and the growth of the church than the Apostle Paul. Through great suffering and many disappointments, God used Paul to spark a fire that caused the church to spread rapidly throughout the world.

In today’s story, Paul and his team of missionaries had recently arrived in a city called Philippi. Upon arriving, then began to seek out the religious people of that city. They shared the gospel of Jesus with them, and a woman named Lydia and the members of her household were saved and baptized.

While Paul was ministering in this city, he was being harassed by a female slave who had a spirit in her that helped her predict the future. This spirit helped her make a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul around and shouted, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved!” She went on for days. Finally, Paul became annoyed and he turned to the slave girl and commanded the spirit to come out of her in Jesus’s name. At that moment, the spirit left.

When the owners of the slave girl saw that their opportunity to make money was gone, they drug Paul and Silas, one of the disciples on Paul’s team, to court. A mob joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and before long the legal authorities ordered that they be stripped and beaten with rods. They were severely flogged and thrown into prison. The jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. The jailer placed them in the inner cell and bound their hands and feet. The prisons in this day would have been absolutely miserable. In a short amount of time, Paul went from ministering to people in Philippi to being beaten and throw into prison. What a disappointment. This is where our story begins...

Tell the story from Acts 16:25-34: Change up the storyteller often!

Rebuild the story: Group members retell the story based on what they remember.

Read the story from Acts 16:25-34: Ask the group to read together.

Discuss these questions:

- How did God use Paul and Silas’s disappointment to guide their steps?
- What does this story teach us about God?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- How has God used a past disappointment in your life to bring you to where you are today?
- What disappointment are you currently facing that you need to trust God with right now?
- Ask someone to retell this week’s story one last time.

Head

Questions:
Quicker
tempo.

Heart Questions:
Slow down & wait!

Action

Close in prayer.

Recruit a storyteller for next week.

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Week 1: Coaching Guide

Growing as a Disciple-Maker

Recently, it has felt like God has been taking me through a second growth-spurt in discipleship. This growth spurt has very little to do with gaining knowledge. God has been reminding me that the primary mission of His Church is to make disciples. He has been showing me that I must be willing to do whatever it takes to join Him in that mission.

There are three things God has been working on in my heart. As you read what follows, I pray the Lord will challenge you personally as a disciple of Him...

1. **More than anything else, I must focus on my own spiritual vibrancy (my relationship with Jesus) and on sharing real, authentic relationships with others.** Making disciples is not first and foremost about the Sunday service or small group. It is about being intentional in my relationship with God and with people. It is about setting aside time to invest in my relationship with Jesus and with others. If I think I can condense the method of discipleship Jesus modeled into two weekly meetings, I am greatly mistaken. Discipleship is life-on-life, not meeting after meeting.
2. **I will find the most success in discipleship as I practice faithfulness in what God has already called me to do.** This is my reminder to not throw the baby out with the bathwater. I must remember that discipleship is far more than meeting on Sunday mornings and in small groups, but that discipleship also includes meeting on Sunday mornings and in small groups. There is great value in worshiping together, praying together, studying the Word together, and learning in formal settings together. This isn't all there is to discipleship, but this is an important part of my own spiritual vibrancy and in the community and relationships I share with others.
3. **The culture in my home is vitally important.** If discipleship is more about sharing life and relationships with others, than it is connected to my time, my family, and my home in vital ways. Discipleship Jesus's way means doing life together. It means inviting others to join me in what I am already doing. It means letting them see what my family life looks like. It means giving them a front row seat to the way I relate to my wife, the way I parent my children, and the way I lead my family spiritually. Whoa. That just got real. If the culture of my home isn't right, my discipleship efforts will suffer.

How's your own spiritual vibrancy right now? How are your relationships with those you are seeking to disciple? Do they know you are discipling them? Would they say that your discipleship is limited to a couple formal meetings a week, or does it include sharing life-on-life? Can those you are discipling see your faithfulness to worship God and gather in community with other believers? How's the culture of your home?

As you answer these questions, what do you need to do to take your next steps in growing as a disciple-maker? Share your thoughts with your spouse, your coach, and your group.