



Week 4: December 16-22 (FINAL GUIDE BEFORE HOLIDAY SEASON STARTS)

Introduce Guests/Share Life: *How has this week been going? Good? Bad? Ugly? Things to celebrate?*

Open in Prayer: *Include any prayer needs that came up while you were sharing life together.*

Recall the Guidelines: *Ask: "What is the purpose of the guidelines?" Answer: To be relational!*

Share the Vision: *The church is God's family. Small group is like our immediate family. In group, we find a practical way to live out God's commands for His Church in real life relationships with one another.*

Hook Question: What are your plans over Christmas?

(Look for people who are alone and need their group. Discuss plans for your group over Christmas. Be sure to meet at least two times between December 23 and January 5. You will not have curriculum for these meetings, so choose your own stories or plan to do something different. We will resume January 6.)

Ask someone to retell last week's story (Matthew 1:18-25).

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

Throughout this series we have focused on desiring God. Because of what God had done, Mary and Joseph both desired God. In today's story, God reveals Himself to some lowly shepherds. You need to know that shepherds were considered as part of the outcasts in Roman society. They were the lowest, the weak, and experienced regular discrimination. Yet in today's story the shepherds are highly honored by God. God is no respecter of persons. This is part of what makes Him so desirable.

The story of Jesus's birth takes place in Israel about 2000 years ago. Israel was under the control of the Roman government. Caesar Augustus was the ruler of that government. Few things mattered more to Rome than collecting taxes from the regions they had conquered. The taxation in this story was especially burdensome because it required people to travel back to their hometown to register. This would have been terribly difficult for the elderly, the weak, and those carrying a child. Enter Mary and Joseph. Yet through this suffering, God fulfilled the prophecy in His Word that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. God is always working in our weaknesses and our sufferings. With this in mind, this is where our story begins...

Tell the story from Luke 2:1-20: *Use different storytellers. Teach people to share God's Word!*

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

Read the story from Luke 2:1-20: *Ask the group to read these verses.*

Discussion Questions: learn to talk about God's Word with others...

Head
Questions:
Quicker
tempo.

- What do you like or dislike about this story?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God?

Heart & Hand
Questions:
Slow down &
wait!

- What do you think God is trying to show you right now? How do you need to change?
- Who could retell the story for us right here one last time?

Christmas Plans: *Restate your plans for the next two weeks. Encourage them to stay connected and to look for opportunities to connect others to group over Christmas.*

Thank your storyteller for sharing the Word. Ask for a volunteer storyteller for next week. Close in prayer.



Week 4: Desiring God

Quadrant Three: Minister

In recent reflection with Pastor Jerry and some of our coaches, I believe God is revealing to us that today's phase of spiritual growth might be the most neglected at the moment in our church. We are praying God would help us with the culture in this area. The third quadrant of the wheel (bottom-left) reveals our third phase of spiritual growth: spiritual young adult.

Spiritual Young Adult:

Knowledgeable of God's Word. Eager to serve. God and others-centered. Inexperienced. Fast changes from over-confident to under-confident in ministry. Hungry for opportunities and training. Still need help on learning to work under authority and inside jurisdiction. Need to develop patience.

What do young adults need? Young adults need someone to help equip them for ministry, to give them a safe place to practice ministry, and to lead them to a place where they can minister as part of a team, but without the need for direct supervision.

In the SCMD process, "M" stands for "Minister." How can you help spiritual children connect?

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul said,

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

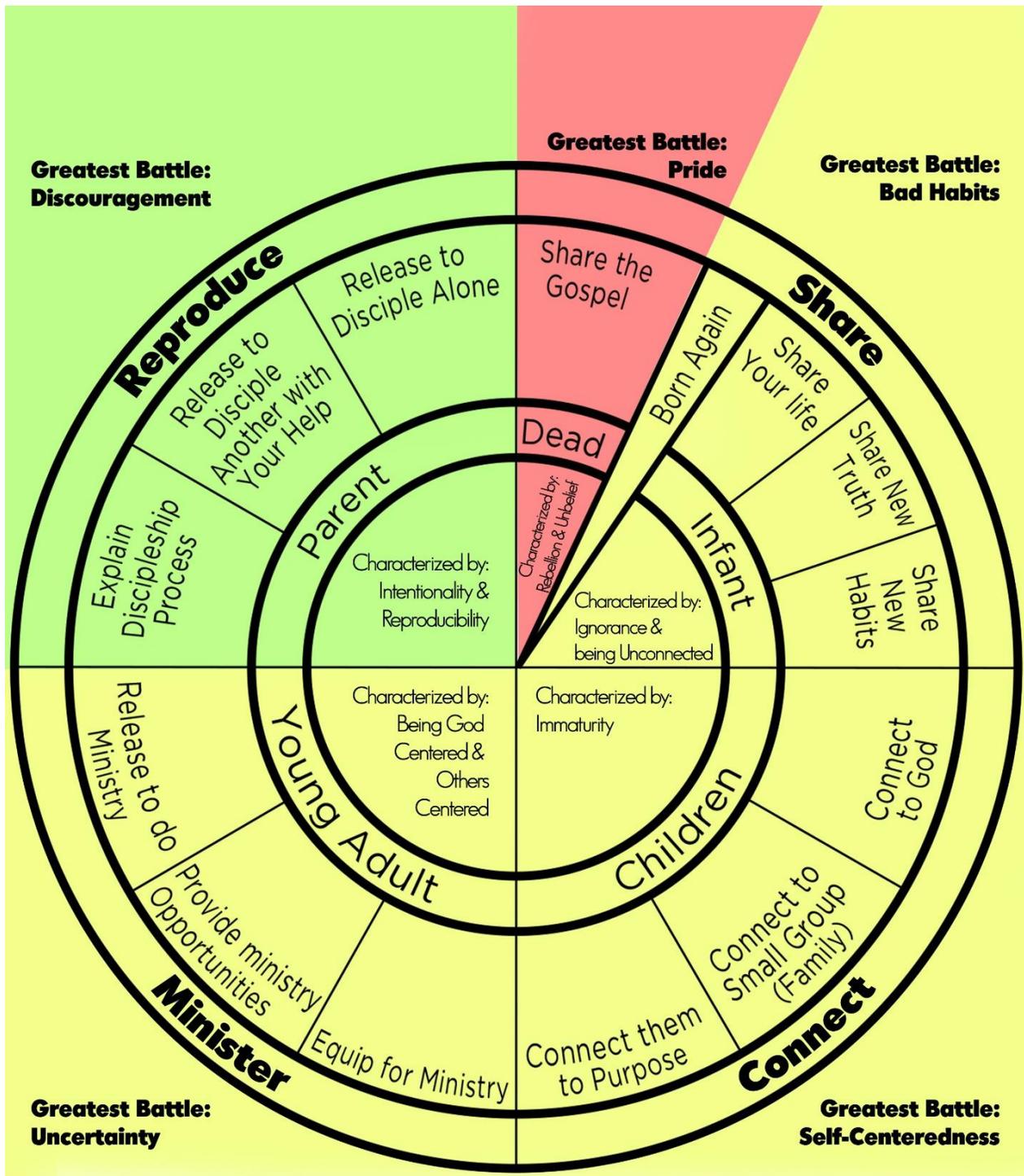
Young adults need a place to minister. They are hungry for it. When you think about ministry, don't just think about serving in the nursery or helping at a work project. Yes, corporate ministry can add a lot of value to the spiritual growth of a young adult; but that isn't where it should start. A heart to minister is born out of compassion for others. It starts with an individual recognizing they are God's ministers. It grows as that individual constantly lives their life with an attitude of giving rather than receiving.

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So, when you disciple your group, engage those who are growing spiritually in ministry. Ask them to go to the hospital with you. Encourage them to cook a meal for someone in need. Show them how to use their weekend to help someone else instead of just serving themselves. Lead them to give up what they want for the sake of others. In this, they will begin to see what real ministry looks like and they will start to grow up spiritually.

This phase of ministry prepares them by equipping them for long-term relational discipleship. They will learn how to make and keep commitments. They will learn to be there for people in their hardest times. They will learn to give up their time for the sake of others. They will find ways to use what God has given them to lead others into action. They will develop self-confidence and they will learn to depend on God for their inadequacies. They will learn patience when circumstances get hard and how to stay in the grind without giving up. Young adults need to minister. It is part of who they are. God has designed them this way so that they will become equipped to maintain a lifestyle of disciple-making until they die and go to be with Jesus.

(Discipleship wheel on the next page...)



Able to reproduce Discipleship Leaders

Equipped by the Spirit to engage others in the Discipleship Process

Able to use influence to impact others.