HOW TO MAKE DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES

GOSPEL ADVANCING VALUE #4:

A DISCIPLE MULTIPLICATION
STRATEGY GUIDES IT



GOSPEL ADVANCING MINISTRY



Your youth group was made to advance the gospel and multiply disciples! A Gospel Advancing Ministry is one that's based on the seven time-tested, biblical values found throughout the book of Acts. These values help build a mindset—not just a method—of advancing the gospel through teenagers. Visit **gospeladvancing.org** for more information on how you can transform your youth group and reach the world for Christ, one teenager at a time.

DARE 2 SHARE MINISTRIES



Founded in 1991, Dare 2 Share's mission to "Energize the Church to Mobilize youth to Gospelize their world" has led them to train and provide resources to hundreds of thousands of students and youth leaders. The focus on relational evangelism training has made Dare2 Share the go-to teen evangelism training resource for youth leaders and churches globally who want a Gospel Advancing Ministry that accelerates the spiritual growth of their teens and impacts their communities with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Visit dare2share.org for more information.

GOSPEL ADVANCING MINISTRY

You pray. You plan. You use bad puns. And yet your youth ministry still isn't experiencing the spiritual and numeric growth you hoped for. Something's missing. But what?

A Gospel Advancing Mindset!

Gospel Advancing Ministry is not a method or a model. It's a mindset of ministry built on seven time-tested values that can be applied in any youth ministry context.

"Go and make disciples..." was the call Jesus gave His followers. And their faithful response to this call infused a passionate intentionality for gospel advancement into the very DNA of the early church.

A radical new paradigm that's 2,000 years old.

Whether you're just starting out in youth ministry or you're a ministry veteran, you have the potential to ignite that same God-given passion in your teens. They have a vital role to play in the rescue, reconciliation, and redemption of their friends.

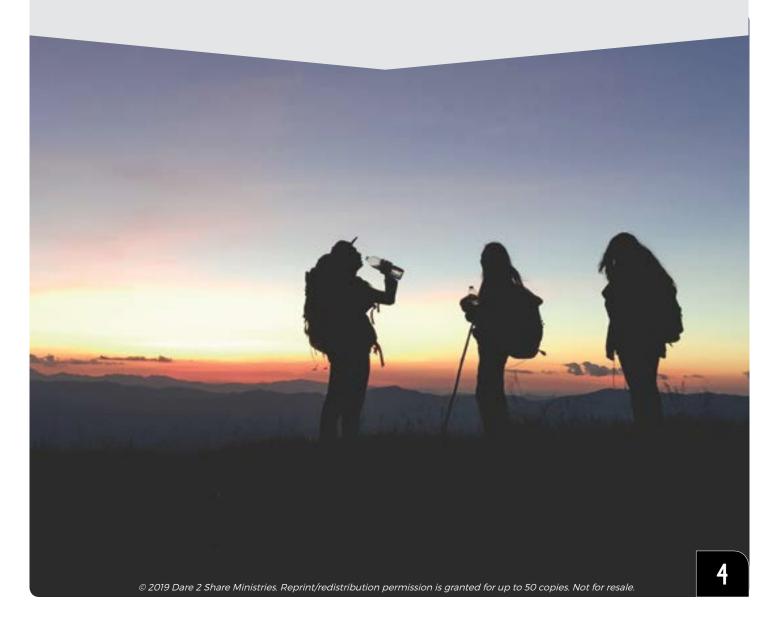
When your students begin reaching students with the gospel, the kingdom of God will grow with new believers, your teenagers will grow in their faith, and you will experience a renewed, refreshed passion for God and youth ministry!

This is exactly what Gospel Advancing Ministry is all about.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-21)

In these three powerful verses, Jesus lays out His plan for the spread of His message. He has charged His followers with making, maturing and multiplying disciples. This is Plan A. There is no Plan B for the advancement of the gospel.

As a <u>Gospel Advancing Ministry</u> leader, obedience to Jesus' call is a primary motivation for helping students become disciples who make disciples. But God, in His goodness, has provided several additional compelling reasons why an effective disciple multiplication strategy will dramatically amplify your ministry impact. Let's take a look at just five of the incredible benefits that come when you build Gospel Advancing Value #4, "A disciple multiplication strategy guides it," into your youth ministry.



5 POWERFUL REASONS WHY DISCIPLESHIP MATTERS



Reason I:

DISCIPLESHIP IMPACTS A STUDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST FOR A LIFETIME

When you help students get an accurate, biblical view of who God is, who they are and what God wants from them, it impacts them for a lifetime. A biblical understanding of the foundational truths of the faith will drive students deeper in their walk with God and wider into the world with His message of hope. If students are encouraged to explore both the "what" and the "why" behind the core truths of Christianity, their faith will be far more likely to stay strong down the road when they encounter alternate worldviews that challenge the truth of Christianity. This brings honor and glory to God and advances His Kingdom. Will every one of the students discipled through your youth ministry become a fully devoted follower of Jesus? Perhaps not. But if you can change the trajectory of a student's walk with God by even a few degrees during their teen years, that slight shift can positively impact their path through life for decades to come. Even when you don't see the results you're hoping for, remember God's promise in Isaiah 55:11:

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (NKJ)

Reason 2: DISCIPLESHIP PROVIDES A SAFE PLACE FOR SPIRITUAL QUESTIONING

Awhile back, Dare 2 Share produced a reality series called <u>Gospel Journey Maui</u>. We took a Mormon, Muslim, Buddhist, Jew, Seventh Day Adventist, a girl who thought God was a black woman who baked cookies (she got her view from *The Matrix* movies) and a surfing evangelical named Zane Black to Maui for eight days of adventure and spiritual discussions.

One of the key things we discovered from this project is that teenagers are longing to have significant spiritual discussions that address deep theological questions. Effective discipleship relationships can become a centerpiece for these much-needed conversations. This type of authentic, more intimate, relationship-driven conversation opens the door for Christian teenagers to better understand what they believe and why they believe it based on the timeless truths of God's Word. You *want* your students to bring their questions about faith and life to you or other leaders in your group. If they don't find a safe space within their church relationships to raise their questions, they'll look for answers elsewhere.



Reason 3: STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP IS AN ADOPTION AGENCY

Sadly, there are many teenagers today who have strained—or in some cases, virtually no-relationship with one or both of their parents. They have no caring adult who will listen to them, discipline them, encourage them and believe in them.

But thank God that the church can provide a strong spiritual family for those teenagers who have a broken earthly family! The adoption language the New Testament uses makes it clear that we have been adopted into the family of God as a result of our faith in Jesus and His finished work on the cross (Galatians 4:4-8). As a result, we have a Heavenly Father who will never leave us or forsake us and spiritual brothers and sisters who can encourage us!

STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP PREPARES TEENS TO BECOME WORLD CHANGERS

Reason 4:

Teenagers are not just the church of tomorrow, they are the church of today! God can (and does) use them right now to impact entire schools and communities with the hope of Jesus Christ!

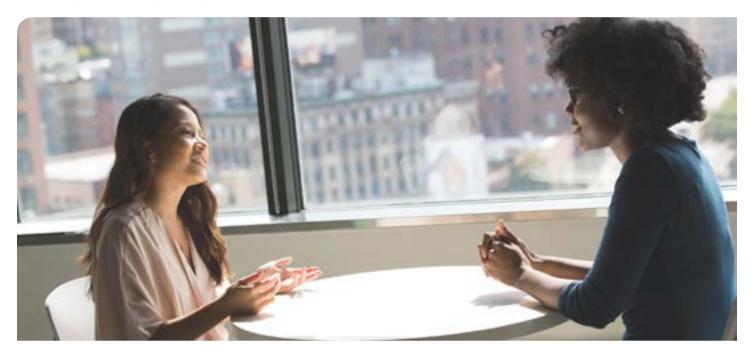
That's why the prophet wrote in **Jeremiah 1:6-8**,

"O Sovereign Lord," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!"

The Lord replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!" (NLT)

God loves to use the young to change the world! He did it with Jeremiah. He did it with Samuel. He did it with Esther. He did it with the disciples. He can do it with your teenagers. They don't have to wait until they grow up. Wouldn't it be just like God to use young people to set the pace for the entire church? Just like He used a teenaged David to defeat Goliath and turn the tide of a battle, He could use your teenagers to do the same for your entire church!

The average teenager has over 400 online and face-to-face friends, which makes them poised to make a huge impact for Jesus now! The driving mission Jesus has given all His followers—including your teenagers—is to take His message to others. If we fail to



communicate this mission to our young people, then we're robbing our students of the calling of Christ. They've been saved not just *from* something, but *to* something bigger than themselves—to play an active part in Jesus' redemptive plan for the world. If they are <u>trained to share the GOSPEL</u> and live their faith, they can be world changers now, not just after they graduate! A solid discipleship strategy lies at the core of motivating and mobilizing your students so that the message and mission of Jesus advances both *in* and *through* your teenagers.

Reason 5: STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP IS A FARM CLUB FOR FUTURE LEADERS

Matt Reagan, a youth pastor at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, estimates that over the course his 17+ years of youth ministry experience, God has used him to produce at least 100 pastors, youth pastors, church leaders and overseas missionaries. This doesn't count all of the business leaders, construction workers, doctors, factory workers and so on who are now shining the light of Christ in their workplaces as a result of Matt and his team's investment in them when they were teenagers!

Just like every professional baseball team has a farm club where young players are recruited, coached and trained to be game-winning professionals, every youth ministry is a farm club for the church at large. When you disciple students, you are working with the young players and training them to hit home runs and base hits for God as they prepare for the big leagues.



JESUS-STYLE DISCIPLESHIP

The benefits that flow out of a solid disciple multiplication strategy are immense. But how do you build a healthy, sustainable **Gospel Advancing** discipleship strategy for your youth group?

With people.

Because disciples make disciples.

Maybe this goes without saying, but the world of youth ministry can be so fast and furious that sometimes it is simply easier to set up a program, choose a curriculum and then assume that disciples are being made. But designating a program as your "discipleship program" does not necessarily mean that your efforts will yield the kind of fruit Jesus called us to produce when He told us to "go and make disciples."

Programs and curriculum don't make disciples. People do. An effective disciple multiplication strategy is built on relationships. Just look at how Jesus made disciples. He poured into a small group of individuals over a period of three years—which is roughly the same amount of time that the students under your spiritual care are likely to be in your youth group. And they went on to turn the world upside down!

So let's follow Jesus. Let's follow His philosophy of ministry. Let's do what He did. And let's do it the way He did it.

Still, there's a looming obstacle when it comes to implementing a disciple multiplication program that's built on relationships, isn't there?

Time.

Relationships require time—because they require love and nurture. Which means you need people to help you. People who are passionate about helping students grow in their walk with Jesus and who are willing to bring availability, intentionality, creativity and flexibility to this high calling of making disciples who make disciples. But rest assured that with God's help and some strategic effort on your part, you can grow the people you need to help you build a thriving disciple multiplication program. Start small by laying the groundwork, and then expand out from there.

HOW TO LAY YOUR GROUNDWORK

As Gospel Advancing youth leader Jeff Polen puts it, "Faithful discipleship is intentional discipleship. There are a lot of different ways you can do it. It's going to look different from person to person, but it will always necessitate that you're intentional about it."

Making disciples who make disciples doesn't just happen, it takes prayerful, strategic, purposeful effort. So, whether you have an existing discipleship program that's simply in need of a tune-up or you're developing a discipleship multiplication strategy for the very first time, there are several small, practical steps you can take to lay the groundwork for building a thriving discipleship multiplication strategy.



STEP 1: Start with prayer! Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you every step of the way on this journey. Ask God to provide the adults and students you'll need in order to make disciples who make disciples.

STEP 2: Get inspired and equipped. Consider reading <u>4 Chair Discipling</u> <u>by Dann Spader</u>. Spader's "four chair" word picture explains the discipleship process in simple, transferable language that will help you develop your own strategy for disciple multiplication.

STEP 3: Identify your role in the discipling process. One of the first pieces of the disciple multiplication puzzle you have to figure out is your role in this process. Don't lose sight of the reality that one of your greatest priorities must be equipping your adult and student leaders to be disciple makers.

STEP 4: Start with a few students. Identify one or two students who God impresses on your heart and invest in them. Your student discipling methods should be built on relational investment. Discipleship happens best life-on-life. A caring Christian relationship is the very best context for believers to grow. For example, you might want to follow these students on social media, connect with their family or make a point of being at some of their extracurricular activities. In the context of your personal relationship with them, teach them how to follow Jesus—which includes sharing Jesus' message with others. As they share the gospel with their friends, be there to encourage, answer questions and, most importantly, pray for them. Then, as their friends become Jesus followers, coach these students to immediately start to disciple their friends. Train them and equip them how to disciple others. Remind them that they only need to be a half-step ahead of their friends and don't need to have all the answers. Assure them that you will be there for them (for this season of



their life) to help, guide and pray for them.

STEP 5: Start with a few adults. In addition to these students you're pouring into, identify the two or three leaders who you want to pull in the closest. Pray over this decision, because these are the individuals you will tap when it's time to expand your discipling process beyond the one or two students you're starting with personally. Who you choose to pour into will have significant implications for the ongoing effectiveness of your disciple multiplication strategy. Of your entire leadership team, these individuals should be the ones you invest the majority of your time into. This needs to be time outside of any regularly scheduled leadership meetings. Making these relationships a priority will enable you to multiply your efforts down the road far beyond what you could do flying solo.

STEP 6: Set expectations early. The adult and student leaders you pour into should be very clear on the expectation that they will multiply out what you're investing in them by pouring into others. They are the foundation for broadening your disciple multiplication strategy. Some of these relationships will develop into lifelong friendships, others will be seasonal. Regardless, like the proverbial pebble in the pond, the impact of the time you invest in them will ripple out into the future far beyond what you'll ever see this side of heaven.

STEP 7: Assess and adapt. The advantage of starting small is that your initial discipling efforts can serve as your "Beta Test." In these early stages, it's your job to continually assess and evaluate what's working and what isn't. Gather input from others. Then improvise and adapt based on your learnings before you begin to scale your strategy.

CUSTOM-BUILD A BROADER STRATEGY FOR YOUR CONTEXT

Once you've laid this beginning foundation as the youth leader and tested and tweaked your discipling approach, what's next?

It's time to build a broader-based relational discipling strategy for your ministry. Obviously, this takes manpower, which is the issue we're about to unpack. But before we do, keep in mind that if manpower is a major concern in your ministry context, you can always continue to keep things small and match your most eager students with the disciple-makers you do have. Only grow your program as you have people ready to step up. If you build a solid, successful disciple multiplication process, with time, you will have a built-in, ever-expanding talent pool that is always being replenished—because once you have students who are being successfully mentored, they can become disciplers of their peers!

UNPAKCING VALUE #4: A DISCIPLE MULTIPLICATION STRATEGY GUIDES IT



As you consider what kind of broader-based discipleship multiplication strategy will work best in your context (one-on-one, two-on-one, small group, etc.), take the time to gather input and ideas from the key leaders in your church, including your Senior Pastor. Involving key leaders early in this process will allow you to benefit from their godly wisdom and will also help you build buy-in from key influencers. Whatever discipleship multiplication plan you eventually decide to go for, it will be more effective if you have leadership alignment early.

ONLY GROW
YOUR PROGRAM
AS YOU HAVE
PEOPLE READY
TO SET UP.

Within your current youth leadership team, it's probably impossible to effectively disciple every student in your youth group, especially as the group grows. But what is possible, is for the adult leadership to pour into a carefully selected group of students and train them to train others to follow Jesus. This can sometimes be challenging because it can feel like you're "playing favorites." You may get some pushback about singling out a few students to pour more time and effort into. It will take a concerted effort on your part to communicate the end-goal vision of disciple-making, which is to build a self-perpetuating process of growing disciples who can turn around and teach others how to follow Jesus.

Don't get discouraged if you get pushback. Just explain that this is the approach Jesus took as He made disciples. From Mark 3:13-14, it's clear that focused, relational investment was Jesus' method for discipleship: "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach." He poured into a few others so they would be prepared to be sent out to pass His message on to others.

It's not that Jesus didn't minister to the larger group of followers who were drawn to His ministry. But He made no apologies about building more deeply into the few so that they would be prepared and equipped to disciple others (John 15:16). And it worked! How can we tell? Because you and I are Christians today because the disciples spread the gospel after Jesus exited the scene! His disciples, infused with the power of the Holy Spirit, turned their world upside down and inside out with the spiritual truths Jesus poured into them and modeled during His time of public ministry! And in turn, they used this same strategy of relational, intentional discipleship as well.

STRATEGIES FOR MAKING TIME FOR LIFE-ON-LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

It's easy to feel overwhelmed with the idea of adding one more thing to our schedule. Everyone is incredibly busy these days, so instead of trying to get your disciple makers to add one more thing to their schedules, encourage them to think of discipling more along the lines of inviting a few students into their life.

What might this look like? Inviting student disciples over after school to help get dinner ready for the family, then spending the meal talking about how God's been at work during the past week. Or scheduling a workout routine together where you can spend time talking about God. Inviting students along as you are out and about, instead of going alone...these provide a great opportunity to teach in the context of everyday life.

Discipleship doesn't have to be a coffee house Bible study, although that's great. Inviting a student to join in with an ongoing ministry responsibility (soundboard, foodbank, homeless ministry, hospital visits, music, etc.) models service. Praying for the lost while out for breakfast, talking through passages of Scripture while shooting hoops or lifting weights, serving at a soup kitchen and engaging in gospel conversations—these and any number of other creative ideas are all ways to engage in a disciple multiplication strategy without getting burnt out or overwhelmed. (You know the gender rules when hanging out with students. Make sure you and your people follow them).

The goal is to let students see their disciplers in different situations. Students can learn a lot if we give them a window in on everyday life with Jesus! This was how Jesus discipled His followers, right in the middle of doing life together—whether they were walking through Samaria, fishing on the Sea of Galilee, walking past a vineyard or stopping to help

a person in need—Jesus looked for natural opportunities to teach His disciples about the things of God.

With a little forethought and intention, we can take the busyness of life and make it count for something significant—something eternal. When you look back on your own teen years, can you honestly say that it was the talks you heard at camp or the fun you had during a summer youth group adventure that impacted you most? Likely, it was a personal conversation during a long drive, around a campfire, over a meal or on a hike when your youth leader or another adult engaged you on a deeper level. Those are the memories that stick with us across the years.



Asking good questions that trigger thoughtful conversation is a great place to start. Jesus was an expert at asking questions that nudged people deeper. "Who do people say the Son of Man is? ...Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13-20). "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" (Matthew 9:28). "Do you love me?" (John 21:17). "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord', and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46).

Of course, questions need to fit the spiritual maturity level of each student, but the goal is to sprinkle in questions that make them think about their life and their walk with Jesus more deeply. Here are a few examples of conversation-starting questions...



- What has God been teaching you lately?
- If you could ask God one question, what would it be?
- When you get older, do you think you'll stay around this area or move someplace else? Why?
- Do you have a best friend? How long have you known them? What are they like? What do you like to do together? Do they know Jesus? If not, do you have a plan for how you might be able to introduce them to Jesus?
- What would you do with the money if someone gave you \$100,000,000?
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
- What was the best thing that happened to you during the past school year?
- What are you most looking forward to about next year at school? What are you least looking forward to?
- If you could know the date of your death, would you want to know it?

Some of the greatest lessons in evangelism happen when teenagers see us sharing the gospel with someone at the park or a restaurant when they least expect it! Model how to do it, then look for opportunities to let them be the one sharing the gospel. Make the most of every opportunity to show your students what it looks like to live a life that is fully devoted to Jesus.

Keep it simple. Don't overcomplicate the disciple multiplication process. However, if you or your people prefer a more formalized approach to discipleship, there are a lot of great curriculum and programs that can provide structure for these discipleship relationships. For example, you might choose one of Dare 2 Share's many <u>student devotional books</u> and get together weekly to talk about what you're learning together.



Whatever discipling resources you decide to use, it's important to keep focused on the gospel and disciple multiplication. When students meet regularly with an adult who cares and there is a focus on Jesus and His resurrection power, significant life change WILL happen.

CREATING A DISCIPLE-MAKING FUNNEL

Discipling students is one thing, but developing students into disciple-makers themselves is a critical aspect of creating fully devoted followers of Jesus.

One of the most powerful discipleship relationships in the context of youth ministry happens when a student is able to lead their friend to Jesus and is then empowered

to help that friend grow in their relationship with Christ. This is the beauty of an effective disciple multiplication strategy! The "funnel" of new disciple-makers is continually being fed by the students themselves! Additionally, tapping into the potential of your students to disciple others extends your reach and multiplies your Kingdom impact, by providing these leadership-caliber students with disciple-making skills that will last them a lifetime. This also provides you with a growing pool of disciplers as you build your disciple multiplication strategy.

We find the apostle Paul describing the multi-generational fruit of this approach in 2 <u>Timothy 2:2</u>: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

In this single verse we see three generations of disciples being intentionally made and multiplied relationally, person-to-person, with intentionality.



1ST GENERATION: Paul invested in Timothy.

2ND GENERATION: Timothy invested in reliable people.

3RD GENERATION: These reliable people invested in others.

So right from the earliest stages of your adult-to-student disciple multiplication strategy, you should begin to build in a challenge to the core students being discipled that they are being poured into so that they will, in turn, be equipped to meet with another student and pass on what they are learning about following Jesus. Setting the expectation of disciple cycles needs to be a high priority in your disciple multiplication strategy from the earliest stages. It will be much more difficult to add this key step later, if you don't cast a vision for this ultimate outcome early.

TRACK PROGRESS AND CAPTURE STORIES

As a youth leader, odds are that you are a highly relational person. But even if administrative functions come easily for you, we encourage you to recruit someone to keep track of all of these discipleship relationships. Finding someone with the gift of administration and a heart for making disciples who make disciples will be a huge long term blessing for you, the students and all the adults involved. One of the most helpful elements of tracking progress is capturing stories. Life transformation is inspiring. As your ministry grows and there is an increasing need for adults to disciple teens, it will be these stories of life transformation that will inspire more people to get involved. Stories of impact will be hugely beneficial for recruiting both adults and students into your discipleship multiplication process.



GET OTHERS INVOLVED

At some point, you may want to look outside of your current volunteer team. Be on the lookout for men and women who have a heart for disciple multiplication. Look for people who are actively sharing their faith, have high integrity, humility and godly character. These are the sort of people you want pouring into the teens in your ministry.

A great way to go about identifying which adults to approach would be to involve the rest of the church staff and other church leadership to help make a list of people who you could approach to disciple students. As you describe your discipling strategy to the church leadership, clearly articulate what you are trying to accomplish and how you plan on getting there. Be prepared for the fact that, historically, many churches have defined discipleship as 2-3 people meeting at the same time every week for coffee and Bible study. There was typically a set curriculum, some specific training that a discipleship leader had to go through and an official stance on what was acceptable or unacceptable. If you are encouraging more of a life-on-life approach to discipling relationship through your youth ministry, expect some questions about how this process works and be ready to explain any safe-guards you have in place, e.g., two-to-one student to adult ratios, matching individuals up by gender and so on.



BUILD IN REWARDS

Generously reward the discipling behaviors you want to encourage! Write a note of encouragement. Buy your students a devotional. Organize a special pizza party night. Or plan a bigger event. "Three Generation Retreats" are a creative reward idea that carry a great return on invest. The idea is to coordinate simple, yet exciting, retreats for those that have bought into the disciple multiplication strategy. For example, if you have an adult who is discipling a student who is discipling a younger student, the three of them would receive a special invitation to a unique retreat. Because this wouldn't be a whole youth group event, there would be a lot more options for creative places to go for this kind of get-away. These could be planned for a couple times a year and serve the dual purposes of rewarding commitment and solidifying and deepening these discipling relationships.

AIMING FOR EXPONENTIAL IMPACT

Whatever strategies you choose to broaden your discipleship strategy, remember the point: making disciples who make disciples. This is true at the leadership level, and it's true at the student level too. Be intentional, be creative, be flexible, keep it simple, and clearly communicate the vision.

Ultimately, multiplication is the key to a Gospel Advancing movement. Consider the following mathematical illustration. How long would it take to reach the world for Christ in the following two scenarios:

Through Addition: If 10 evangelist led 1,000 people a day to Christ it would take **1,753** years to reach the world's current population of just under 8 billion people.

Through Multiplication: If 10 disciples reproduced themselves each year by leading one other person to Christ, who in turn, leads one other person to Christ, after **30 years** there would be over 10.7 billion disciples. In other words, more people than are on currently on the planet.

One thousand seven hundred fifty-three years vs. thirty years. This is the power of multiplication!



Jesus poured into a small group of individuals over a period of three years—which is roughly the same amount of time that the students under your spiritual care are likely to be in your youth group. Disciple multiplication is what made the early church grow so quickly. People came to Christ, and then, in turn, shared the good news with their friends and family, who came to Christ and shared the gospel with others.

This same principle of exponential growth that was true in the early church can also be true in your community. As the teenagers in your ministry begin to reach teenagers with the gospel, disciples will be made, matured and multiplied as students reach students with the good news!

These discipleship multiplication insights and strategies we've just unpacked will help you build Gospel Advancing Ministry Value #4: "A disciple multiplication strategy guides it," into your youth ministry. Since everyone's setting is unique, feel free to improvise and adapt as you experiment and prayerfully discern what will work best in your own ministry context. May the Holy Spirit guide and empower you as you custom-build your own disciple multiplication strategy that advances the gospel for the sake of God's Kingdom and glory!





www.gospeladvancing.org | www.dare2share.org