

Foundations of Faith

Discipleship Lessons

Trainer's guide

Vision for the lessons

These seven discipleship lessons are a tool for disciple-makers to help lay a biblical and reproducible foundation of faith in a new or ungrounded disciple. These lessons are meant to spur dialog and life change, this is not a “fill-in-the-blank” exercise. Use these lessons as a tool in the broader context of life-on-life discipleship (Prov. 27:17)

Purpose of the Lessons

Lesson One: To review the gospel message, to find assurance of salvation, and to equip the disciple in knowing and sharing the Steps to Peace with God including 6 memorized scriptures, the bridge illustration, and their testimony.

Lesson Two: To equip the disciple to pray, to read & to obey the Bible, and to begin a devotional life.

Lesson Three: To explain God's purpose for the church and to encourage active participation.

Lesson Four: To encounter and embrace the perfect, Father heart of God

Lesson Five: To introduce the disciple to the person, work and baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson Six: To lay a foundation for ongoing Christ-like growth through victory over sin, obedience and love.

Lesson Seven: To motivate the disciple to life-long participation in the Great Commission.

The Process

Life on Life: These lessons are designed to be used in one on one or small group conversation. Don't look at it as a workbook. Rather look at it as a discussion guide.

Self-Discovery: The lessons are designed to **let the scriptures teach the disciple**. Let them seek on their own to understand and communicate what the scripture says. The trainer's role is to clarify and teach as needed to ensure accurate understanding

Reproducing: Cast vision from the very beginning that you expect them to be able to train someone else in the lesson when they are finished. They will need to take notes in a way that will help them to remember and reproduce the lesson.

Practice: As time allows, let them repeat a story or explain a section to ensure that they have caught it.

Obedience: At the end of each lesson is a box entitled, “Your Response This Week.” Review these with the disciple at the end of the lesson and encourage them to follow them. **Our goal here is not just to retain information but to obey all we hear (Follow Jesus).**

Accountability: At the beginning of each lesson, ask them if they followed through with the assignments for the week. If they did not, encourage them with the importance of obedience and follow through. **Set realistic but challenging goals with one another and agree to be accountable.**

Keep in mind

- Some lessons have several sentences of written text. A trainer can either have the disciple read it to themselves or they can read out loud together. Have them explain it in their own words. Instruct as needed and give them an opportunity to ask questions. Note: This will be particularly important on the baptism of the Holy Spirit on lesson five because this topic is very difficult to capture in just 2-3 verses.
- The trainer should be familiar with the stories in a lesson before beginning. Recommended stories are provided, but a trainer may substitute their own story as long as it is reproducible.
- Scriptures in *italics* are optional during the lesson. The disciple can look them up on their own if they have a question.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What are these lessons for?

These lessons are intended to lay a firm foundation in the life of a new believer as well as provide a simple reproducible tool for disciple-makers. The first lesson is a review of the gospel. Some may discover that they are not a believer. Our hope is that everyone in our church would be equipped to use the simple Steps to Peace with God (the “bridge illustration”) and their personal testimony to lead someone to the Lord as our primary evangelism tool. These lessons are the initial follow up, discipleship tool.

Taking someone through a lesson is not really my style. Do I have to use these?

We are encouraging everyone to use these lessons, even if it’s not your normal style. We believe there will be tremendous benefits in having something that is simple and reproducible for everyone. We are realizing that the mark of true discipleship is not only personal growth but also helping generations of others to grow. These lessons can allow generations to pass down spiritual truths in a simple way easy enough for anyone to do. We do encourage you to incorporate your own style into these lessons while still using the content of the lessons as your template. And remember, this is not about filling in the blanks, this is a tool to aid in life-on-life discipleship

Do I have to use the stories you give us?

These are simply suggestions if you don’t have any stories of your own to use. We tried to pick stories that are easy for people to relate to and easy to share, but if you have a better story, feel free to use it! (Recommended stories are at the end of this trainer guide)

What do I do if someone I meet with does not want to do them?

If you meet someone who doesn’t want to do the lessons, then simply move on to someone who is interested and open. We’re aware that not everyone will be responsive to the Lord (Luke 8, story of the seed and the sower).

Am I supposed to teach these lessons or let the person just work through it on their own?

The interpersonal relationship you develop with people as you take them through the lessons is absolutely necessary in order for this to work. This is why we’re asking everyone to go through it with a trainer; we don’t want anybody to do it alone. It’s even more helpful if you’re able to go through it with a small group of 3-4 people. Our goal is to obey the great commission by teaching others to “observe all that [Jesus] commanded.” This will include instruction that leads to more self-discovery from the scriptures.

What if I don’t have someone to take through the lessons?

Talk with your Home Group leader and let them know. There may be a need there. We also encourage you to actively share the gospel. As you sow widely, you will invariably come across new or young believers to take through these lessons.

Can these lessons be used with people of different cultures?

Yes, that’s our hope. We designed the lessons so that they can be easily used cross-culturally. Stories and illustrations can be different but the principles will translate to any language. We recommend that you learn them now so that you will be prepared wherever you make disciples.

The lessons seem pretty basic. Does everyone have to go through it? Do I have to do it with someone else?

We are asking everyone to go through these lessons. Successful discipleship is not only knowing the material yourself, but being able to pass it along to someone else. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” This is the heart behind our desire to have everyone do these lessons. The way for these spiritual truths to take root in your life is to not only hear them but to transfer them to others. Some say that on average, we remember 20% of what we just hear but 80% of what we both hear and teach.

I notice that there is lots of accountability in these lessons. Why?

As children of God, the way we change is by having other people in our lives who are helping us move forward in our relationship with God. Accountability is important because we want you to pass the lessons on to others, and being accountable helps this happen. We all know that we often struggle in reaching our goals, and walking with others helps us keep pressing forward.

I feel uncomfortable with the idea that “I know more than someone else” I am supposed to “disciple”.

Ho do I take a friend or peer through these lessons?

Discipling someone who has been a believer for a while may seem awkward. Yet our conviction is that everyone needs someone else to take initiative in their life. Many “mature” believers have no idea how to disciple someone in a simple, reproducible way. We believe these lessons will be a helpful review for many but a critical tool for everyone who desires to obey the great commission. If you are meeting with someone you consider a peer in the Lord, then treat them like a friend. Invite them into a relationship where you can sharpen each other. Ask them if they are okay with you taking the initial lead. This can often be an indicator of whether or not someone is teachable, wanting to grow and willing to be accountable. Lastly, focus your energy on the hungry. Someone hungry for God will want to learn from anyone.

Stories in the Foundations Discipleship lessons

These are simply suggestions if you don't have any stories of your own to use in the "Foundations of Faith" lessons. We tried to pick stories that are easy for people to relate to and easy to share, but if you have a better story, feel free to use it!

Lesson One

Story on sin and our need for God – Harriet Tubman story

Harriet Tubman was a devout Christian, God used to help dozens of men and women find freedom from slavery in the mid-1800s. Born into slavery herself in Maryland, Tubman was beaten and whipped by her various owners as a child. When she was 29, she escaped from captivity. Soon after she returned to Maryland to rescue her family. Slowly, one group at a time, she brought relatives with her out of the state, and eventually made thirteen missions to rescue over seventy slaves using a network of safe, antislavery houses known as the Underground Railroad. Harriet would engage slaves in the fields inviting them to follow her and offering them a chance at freedom.

Unfortunately many of the slaves were to leave. Some of the slaves that had kind masters were comfortable with their lives and were too afraid to risk getting caught. At the end of her life, as she reflected on her experience with the Underground railroad, Harriet Tubman was quoted as saying, ***"I could have saved more slaves, if I could have convinced them they were slaves."***

Experiencing the freedom that we can find through Jesus, begins with recognizing that you are enslaved to sin and that there is something better.

Story on grace – Story of Two Brothers

There were two brothers who were identical twins. On the outside they were identical, but on the inside they were very different. The first brother was very good and honest, and when he grew up he became a judge. The second brother was evil and sinful, and when he grew up he became a criminal.

One day, the evil brother committed a crime that was punishable by the death penalty. He was arrested and put in jail until the day he was to appear in court. On that day, he walked into the courtroom he saw that his brother was the judge sitting at the bench. He thought, "Yes! I'm going to be okay! I'll probably still be prosecuted but at least I won't get the death penalty, even though that's what I deserve."

At the end of his trial, however, the jury found him guilty and his brother sentenced him to death in three days time. As they were taking him out of the courtroom he was thinking, "I can't believe my brother did that to me! Why did he do that?" He sat alone in jail for two days, desperate because he knew his life was going to end.

The good brother came to the jail to visit him on the second day and proposed a plan. He said, "Let's exchange clothes with each other, and then you can walk out of here free. I'll take your place...it'll all work out in the end." The evil brother thought it was a great idea, so they traded clothes and the evil brother left while the good brother stayed in his place.

The next morning at six o'clock, the evil brother came back to the jail, curious to see what would happen to his brother. He climbed on top of a wall so he could see when they brought his brother out. As he peeked over the wall to see what was going on, he heard a volley of shots, and his good brother fell to the ground dead. The evil brother fled in shock, and eventually found his way to his brother's house. He went inside and he found a letter on the desk, addressed to him. It read:

Brother,

You committed a crime, so someone must die.

I love you, so I took your place. From now on,

please live a different life.

This is a picture of what Jesus did for us when he took our sin onto himself. This is a picture of grace.

Lesson Two

Testimony on when and how you started spending time with God – Personal Testimony

Share your experience in spending time with God. When you started. What you do. Encouraging ways that God has use prayer, the Bible and a devotions in your life.

Story on the power of prayer - 16 Guards

During the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya in 1960, missionaries Matt & Lora Higgins were returning to Nairobi one night through the heart of Mau Mau territory, where Kenyans and missionaries alike had been killed and dismembered. Seventeen miles outside of Nairobi their Land Rover broke down, and Higgins tried to repair the car in the dark but could not get it started. They spent the night in the car and prayed Psalm 4:8 over and over, “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.” In the morning light, they were able to repair the car. A few weeks later, the Higgenses returned to America on furlough. They reported that on the night before they left Nairobi, a local pastor had visited them and told them of a visit from a local Mau Mau member. The man said that he and three others had crept up to the car to kill the Higgenses, but left in fear when they saw the sixteen men surrounding the car. “Sixteen men?” Higgins asked, “I don’t know what you mean!” While they were on furlough, a friend of the Higgenses named Clay Brent asked them if they had been in danger recently. Higgins asked him why, and Clay said that on March 23, God had placed a heavy burden on his heart. He called the men of the church, to pray together until they felt the burden lift. The Higgenses asked, “How many men were at the prayer meeting?” Clay responded, “Sixteen.”

-Touch the World through Prayer, 1986

Story on the authority of the Bible (optional)

In 1946 God was moving through an organization called Youth for Christ. They travel to various cities organizing evangelistic rallies. In March of 1946 two preachers boarded a plane together to begin rallies in London. They began drawing 100’s and 1000’s to the meetings and saw many people saved. One of the predominate preachers was named Charles Templeton. Charles was regarded at the time as the best evangelist in his generation. Yet upon his return from England, Charles began questioning his faith. ***“Is Jesus the only way to heaven? That sounds arrogant claim.”, he thought. And “how can a loving God allow on this evil and suffering in the world?”*** These questions plagued him as they have many of us. He withdrew to a seminary where his skepticism was fueled by secular criticism of the Bible. In those years he rejected the Bible as collection of myths and inaccuracies. Then he renounced his faith in Jesus withdrew to Canada to become a writer and news commentator. In 1996 he wrote a book of his memoirs entitled *Farewell to God, my reasons for rejecting the Christian faith*, he questioned the validity of the Bible. Before he died he said in an interview, *“Those years of indecision were the most trying and troubling of my life. I found myself rethinking the story of Jesus of Nazareth and for all it’s intrinsic fascination, it was not the same. It was if someone I loved had died. No one in history has touch the hearts of men and women as Jesus did. He held the highest moral standard and showed the greatest compassion I have ever heard of. His wisdom is unsurpassed. Everything good and decent and pure that I know I learned from Jesus. And if I may put it this way. I miss him.”* The other preacher on those London crusades was Billy Graham. Billy during the 1940’s faced the same questions about the authority of the Bible but came to a different conclusion. In his autobiography, he recounts a moment of deep questioning, He went into the forest and put his Bible on a stump and called to God, “O God There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it which I have no solution. There are many seemingly contradictions. There are many areas in it that do not seem to correlate to modern science. I can’t answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions Charles and others are raising. But Father I am going to accept this as your Word by faith. I will allow my faith to go beyond intellectual questions and doubts. I will believe this to be your inspired word.” In my heart I knew a spiritual battle had been fought and won. Billy Graham has gone on to become one of the most effective evangelists in history.

Lesson Three

Story on our need for community and acceptance

A few years ago Tony Campolo was speaking at a conference in Hawaii. One night his internal clock wakes him at 3:00 a.m. with his stomach is growling. He gets up and goes looking for a place to get an early breakfast. He goes into a grungy dive and as he sits there in walk eight or nine prostitutes. He gulps his coffee, planning to make a quick getaway. Then the woman next to him says to her friend, "You know what? Tomorrow's my birthday. I'm gonna be 39." To which her friend nastily replies, "So what d'ya want from me? A birthday party?" The first woman says, "I'm just sayin' it's my birthday. I don't want anything from you. I mean, why should I have a birthday party? I've never had a birthday party in my whole life. Why should I have one now?" Well, when Tony heard that, he said he made a decision. He sat and waited until the women left, and then he asked, Harry, the guy at the counter, "Do they come in here every night? Because the one next to me just said that tomorrow is her birthday. Do you think we could maybe throw a little birthday party for her right here in the diner?" "That's great," he says, "yeah, I like it." So they make their plans. At 2:30 the next morning, Tony is back. They decorate the place from one end to the other. At 3:30 on the dot, the door swings open and in walks Agnes. They all shout "Happy Birthday, Agnes!" Agnes is stunned, her mouth falls open, her knees started to buckle, and she almost falls over. After the cake, Tony asked to pray for Agnes, for her life, her health, and her salvation. When he's finished, Harry leans over, and with a trace of hostility in his voice, he says, "Hey, you never told me you was a preacher. What kind of church do you belong to anyway?" Tony answered him quietly, "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at 3:30 in the morning." Harry thinks for a moment, and in a mocking way says, "No you don't. There ain't no church like that. If there was, I'd join it. Yep, I'd join a church like that."

Testimony on what the church has meant in your life – Personal Testimony

Share your earliest memories of church (involvement, impressions, and misconceptions) and how your view of the church has changed through the years.

Testimony on the joy of giving – Personal Testimony

Recount a time in your life God led to give sacrificially to someone in need. Describe the decision and the joy you experienced. You do not need to disclose how much you gave or to whom.

Lesson Four

Testimony on the need for a loving Father – Newspaper add for Paco

Ernest Hemmingway tells a story of a young Spanish man named Paco who left his father to live a life of sin in the capital city, Madrid. After several months and fearing the worst for his son, the father went to Madrid in search of Paco. He took out an advertisement in the newspaper, which said, "Paco meet me at Hotel Montana noon Tuesday. All is forgiven. Papa." The next Tuesday the father went to the hotel hoping to find his son waiting for him. When he turn the corner and the hotel came in view, he saw a great crowd of 800 men gathered around the hotel. They were all are named Paco. There is something in all of us that needs the love and acceptance of a father.

Story on God's provision – George Mueller

George Mueller was pastor in England for 66 years in the 1800's. He is most well known for the orphan ministry he began. He built 5 large orphan houses and cared and provided for over 10,000 orphans in his lifetime. Before he began his work there were only accommodations for 3000 orphans in all of England. Fifty years after his death there was space for over 10,000 orphans. It is estimated that during his lifetime George Mueller collected more than \$150 million (in today's currency) for the orphans. And according to his testimony and that of others he never asked anyone directly for money except God. When asked why he did this Mueller replied, "the gifts have been given to me without one single individual having been asked by me for anything. The reason why I have refrained altogether from soliciting anyone for help is, that the hand of God might be seen in the matter, That my fellow- believers might be encouraged more and more to trust in Him and that also those who do not know the Lord, have fresh proof that, indeed, it is not a vain thing to pray to God." George Mueller's life is a powerful encouragement to us that we can trust God to provide for us.

Story on the love of God – Yellow Ribbon story

A rebellious young man who wasted his youth in vice and crime finally came to himself and longed to return home to his father. He remembered how he had bitterly offended, mocked, and even cursed his father several times over when he was with him. So he wasn't sure whether or not his dad would want him back. But he remembered his dad's favorite song, "Tie a Yellow Ribbon" which part of it goes, "Oh, tie a yellow ribbon 'round the old oak tree, it's been three long years, do you still want me? If I don't see a yellow ribbon 'round the old oak tree, I'll stay on the bus, forget about us and put the blame on me..." And so he wrote, "Dad, I've have terribly wronged you. But I miss you and I want to come home but I'm not sure whether you still have a place for me in your heart. Just like your favorite song, would you tie a yellow ribbon around the tree in front of your house, if you still want me home?" While on the bus ride home he anxiously wondered if his dad got the letter, and if he did, whether there would be a yellow ribbon tied around the tree. When he reached the house, he couldn't believe his eyes! Everything was in yellow — the roof, the walls, the fence, the gate. Even the clotheslines were filled with yellow towels and blankets. He got off the bus and when he opened the gate, huge yellow sunflowers greeted him. There was no doubt in his mind how much his dad wanted him back.

Lesson Five

Testimony on experiencing the presence of God – Personal Testimony

Share an experience where you knew that God was real and with you. This could be at salvation or later in your life.

Story on Abiding in God

Brother Lawrence served as a cook in a French monastery in the 17th century. He was a simple, uneducated man who devoted his life to practicing the presence of God every moment, every day. He sought to make continual conversation with God even among the ordinary and routine duties of life. His simple life brought him unsolicited attention. Men, women and children would travel from around the country to watch him in his kitchen cooking and talking with God. In his book entitled *Practicing the Presence of God* he summed his devotion to abiding with God in these words: “there is not in the world a life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God.”

Story on living by the Holy Spirit – Personal Testimony

Share about your first experience in being baptized with the Holy Spirit, or an example of how you lived and responded to the Spirit.

Lesson Six

Story on victory over sin – Personal Testimony

Share an area of sin from your past through which God has helped you have victory and freedom.

Story on surrender – Jim Elliot

In the last weeks of 1955, Jim Elliot along with four other men, made contact with a tribal Indians in the jungles of Ecuador. Their intention was to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to this people, known at the time as the Aucas, who had never heard it. They built a camp on the edge of a river a short distance from the Indian camp. After several very promising encounters with them, the Aucas warriors turned on the missionaries, attacked them, spared them and killed them.

Years later his wife Elizabeth published excerpts from his journals in the book, “Shadow of the Almighty”. It records a statement from Jim’s college years when he was making the decision to surrender his life to follow Christ even unto death. It serves as a mantra today for all of those that would live wholeheartedly for God. Jim wrote, “He is no fool, who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

Story on love – Elizabeth Elliot, Rachel Saint

The death of the 5 missionaries in Ecuador received world-wide attention after a ten page cover article in *Life magazine*. Many were shocked and outraged by news. The families were obviously devastated by the loss of their loved ones. Anyone would have understood if they would have returned home to rebuild their lives. However, a love and compassion for these people, the Aucas, who did not yet know Jesus remained in many of their hearts. In the summer of 1958, Rachel Saint, sister of Nate Saint, one of the missionaries along with Elizabeth Elliot, wife of Jim Elliot returned to the jungle to again attempt to make contact with the very Aucas Indians who had killed their loved ones. The women were received by the tribe and began to share the good news about Jesus Christ. One by one the Indians began to accept Christ and in the months that followed the tribal warfare that had characterized this people had all but ceased. The love and forgiveness of Rachel Saint and Elizabeth Elliot for those they could have easily considered their enemies, opened the door for an entire people to come to hear and see the saving love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

Lesson Seven

Testimony on the impact of life on life evangelism

Share about the person who led you to the lead and / or someone who had major impact on your life personally.