



**THE  
DISCIPLE MAKER'S  
GUIDE**

Download a  
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of the Disciple  
Maker's Guide:



MARKS

THE SPOT

*If you want to dive deeper into what  
it looks like to make disciples, use the  
QR code below to find a series of  
messages titled, "X Marks the Spot":*



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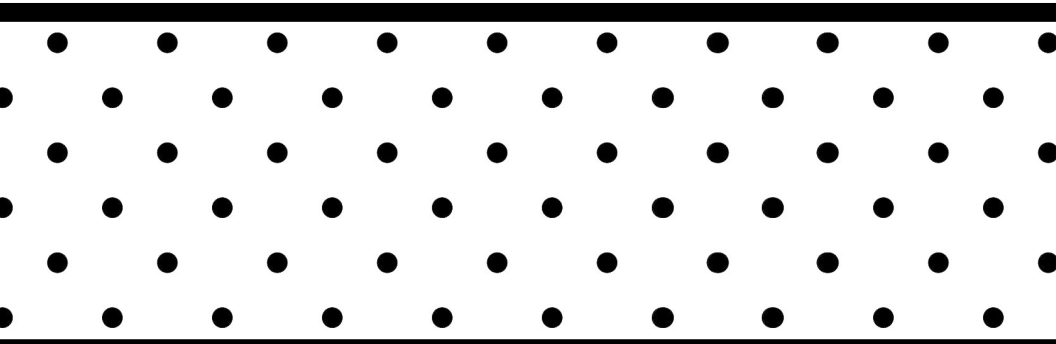
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# Discipleship is **transferable** by design.



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The Disciple Maker's Guide is designed to be a quick reference resource to help you as you disciple others.

Every follower of Jesus is commanded to participate in the mission to make disciples.

In this guide, you will find an overview of the mission Jesus gave His followers, as well as explanations of the different phases of growth that anyone you are trying to disciple may be in.

We've provided detailed examples of **what you may see**, **what you may hear**, and most importantly **what you can do** as you focus on the mission Jesus gave you, to disciple others.

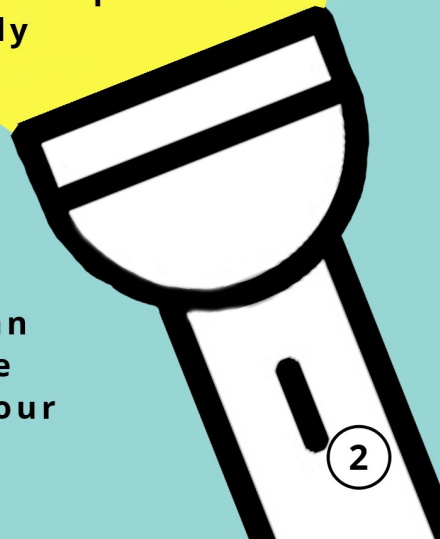
**It has been our experience that most people who follow Jesus want to tell others about Him, but ...**

**they just don't know where to start.**

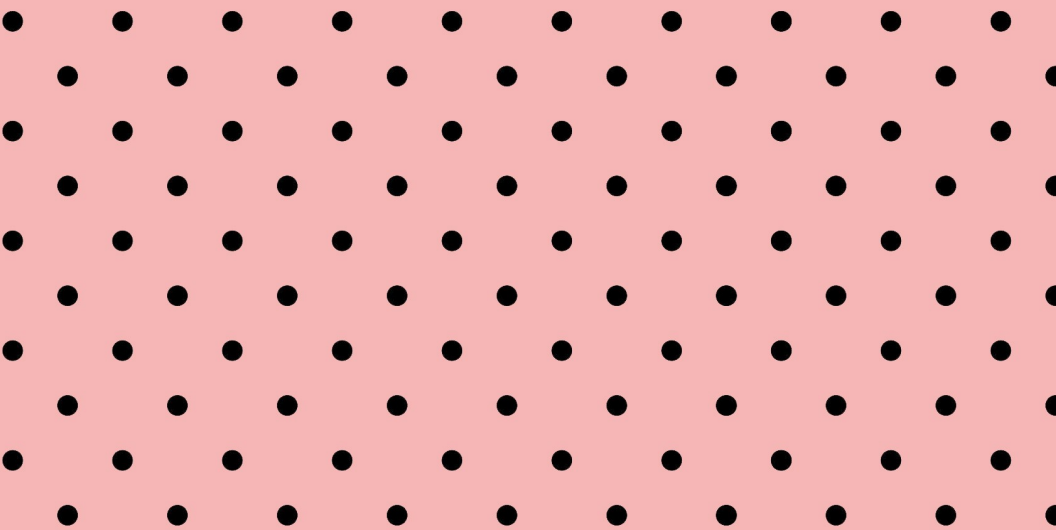
**Maybe you've tried starting conversations or tried sharing your faith with someone else, and didn't see the results you were hoping for, so you got discouraged and decided you were going to leave it up to the professionals.**

**Solid strategy - but there is one problem with it: Jesus didn't call only professionals to disciple. He told ALL of His followers to make disciples.**

**This guide is designed to shine a light on what you can do today to begin to disciple the people God has put in your life.**



# the great Commission




Then Jesus came to them and said, "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 28:18-20

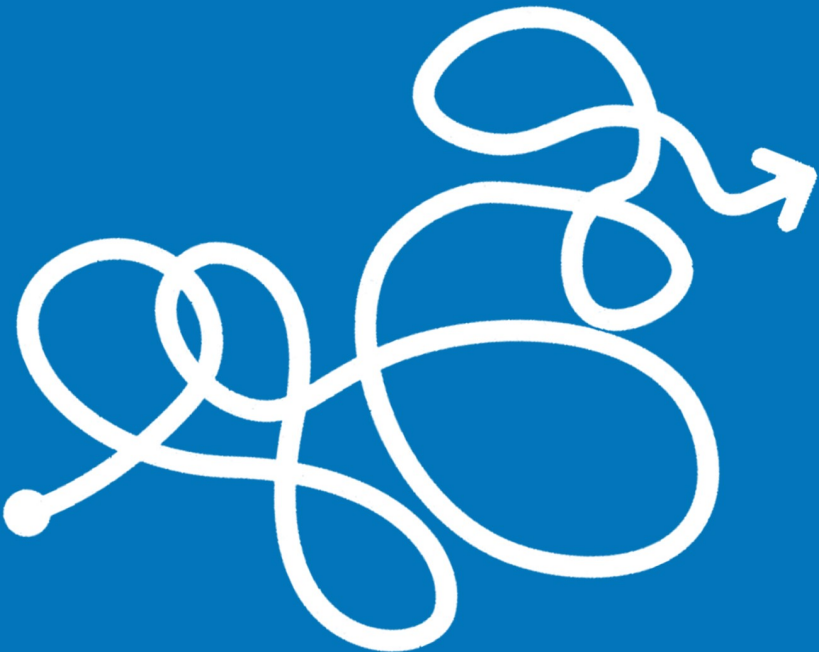


From the very  
beginning of the  
church, Jesus called  
His followers to be  
disciple makers.

From that point on,  
we've been trying to  
figure out exactly how  
to do that. Jesus gave  
us the "what", but He  
didn't tell us how.

# discipleship isn't a straight line

Perhaps that's because Jesus knew discipleship isn't a straight line. It's more...systematically organic. While there is a general progression we all go through on our spiritual journey, each person's path to spiritual growth is as unique as they are.





Historically the church has tried two very different approaches to spiritual growth.

The first was to build a **program** around people's spiritual growth. For example: Come to the 101 class, then you go to the 201 class. At the end of all the classes the assumption is you have "arrived" or "achieved spiritually". The reality is that's not always the case.

# systematically organic

The other model was to hope the people would grow spiritually by **osmosis** or by attending events or gatherings and just soaking up spiritual truths. In theory this method sounds great; however, the reality is that all growing things need care and direction.

We believe a blend of both of these models is necessary for spiritual growth. We believe there are predictable paths for growth, but also recognize that people grow at different rates and in different ways.

The systematically organic approach provides space for people to grow, but also gives the necessary nurture and care needed for that growth to take place.



# keys to making disciples

Since everyone's path is a bit different, we've established three pieces that are necessary to the process to help get you started.

## **Key # 1: An Intentional Leader**

An intentional leader is a disciple maker who knows what it takes to grow spiritually and makes a plan to help others take their next step.

They are able to clearly communicate with and lovingly guide one or more people in their discipleship journey.

## **Key #2: Relational Environments**

We believe discipleship happens best within the context of a relationship because we have a relational God.

Environments that foster relationships help lead to authenticity and transparency.

While there are many environments that can be relational, not all are favorable for making disciples. It is the job of the intentional leader to determine what environment will work best for those they are leading.



### **Key # 3: A Reproducible Process**

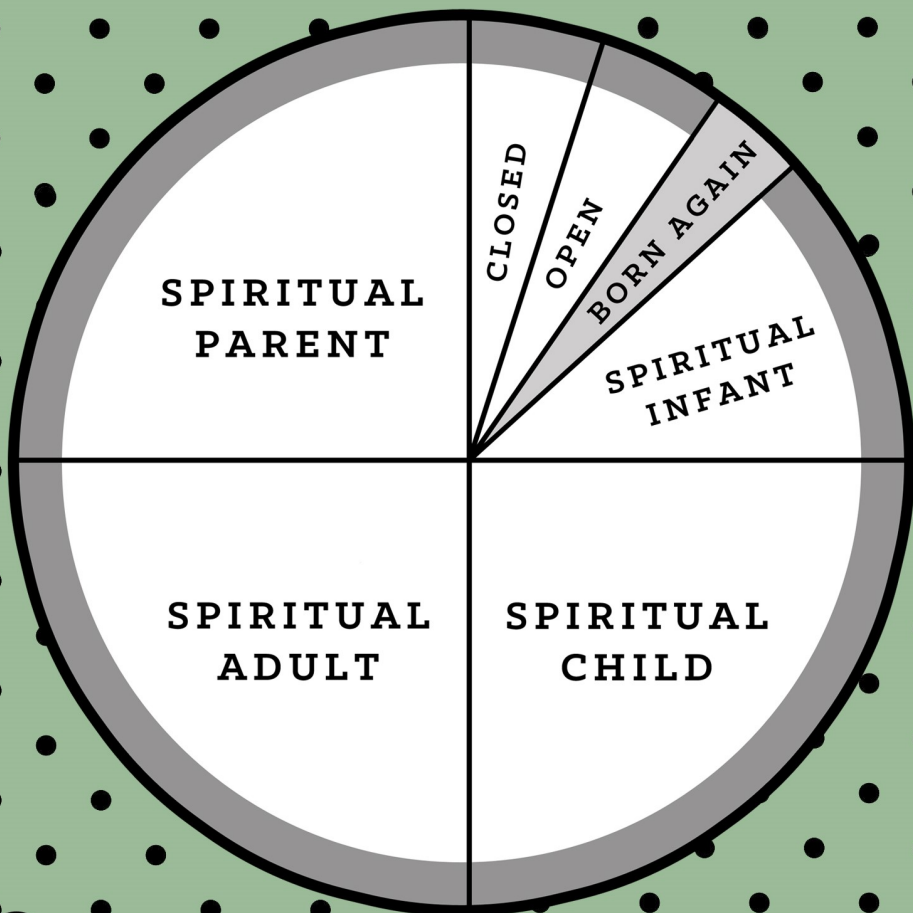
This is the systematic part of the systematically organic growth. It is a way to set some boundaries and help an intentional leader stay on track.

It also helps those who are growing as disciples to become disciple makers themselves. This guide is the first step in a reproducible process.

The goal of this guide is to help you navigate the discipleship path for yourself and others by helping you identify where someone is in their spiritual journey. In each section you'll find a description of a spiritual growth phase, along with some ways to identify someone in that phase.

Once you've identified the phase someone is in, you'll find some easy next steps to help them become the person God created them to be: **a disciple who makes disciples.**

# GROWTH PHASE OVERVIEW



# PHASE: **CLOSED**

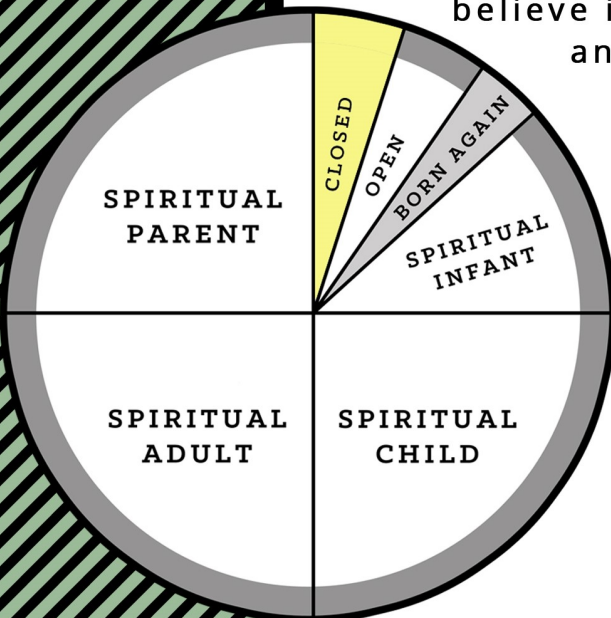
This phase is characterized by resistance and/or rejection.

characterized by:

**RESISTANCE**  
and/or  
**REJECTION**

This is a person who either actively rejects the idea of a higher power or may believe in another deity and is opposed to any kind of spiritual conversation that challenges their current worldview.

As a result, they are closed off to the idea of Christianity.



# closed



## What you see ...

When you're around someone who is in the closed phase, they will often shut down the conversation any time it becomes remotely spiritual. Sometimes they just quit talking. Other times they may mock religion or try to change the subject quickly.

You may see this person become defensive when spiritual subjects are discussed. This could come from a place of insecurity in their own beliefs or possibly an arrogance that wonders why anyone would believe anything different than they do.

Either way, you'll be hard-pressed to have a conversation of a spiritual nature that lasts more than 30 seconds with this person and your relationship may suffer if you try to force it.

## What you hear...



- "I don't believe in God."
- "God is just a crutch for weak people."
- "I prefer to think for myself instead of having some guy in a robe tell me what to think."
- "Religion is just a bunch of myths/fairy tales."
- "I'll just live a good life and take my chances."

## What you can do ...



The best thing you can do for someone who is in the closed phase is pray for them.

- Pray that God softens their heart and opens them up to conversation.
- Pray that God would give you the wisdom to know when to bring up the topic and also when to back down.
- Pray that their path would cross with others who can show them God's love.

Meanwhile, make sure you're doing everything you can to show them the love of God.

- Model, to the best of your ability, what it looks like to live and love God's way.
- Go out of your way to do kind things they may not expect.
- Be ready to have a conversation about why you chose Jesus, should they ask.



## How the Church can help:

- There are lots of people who would be willing to pray with you. Make sure you let someone know who you're praying for by name.
- See if you can get this person to join you when you spend time with others who are living as disciples of Jesus.
- Your church may provide meals or childcare for special holidays where the closed may be served without feeling like they're being "sold" religion.
- Your church can provide a safe environment to practice sharing your story.

*"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."*

*- James 1:27*



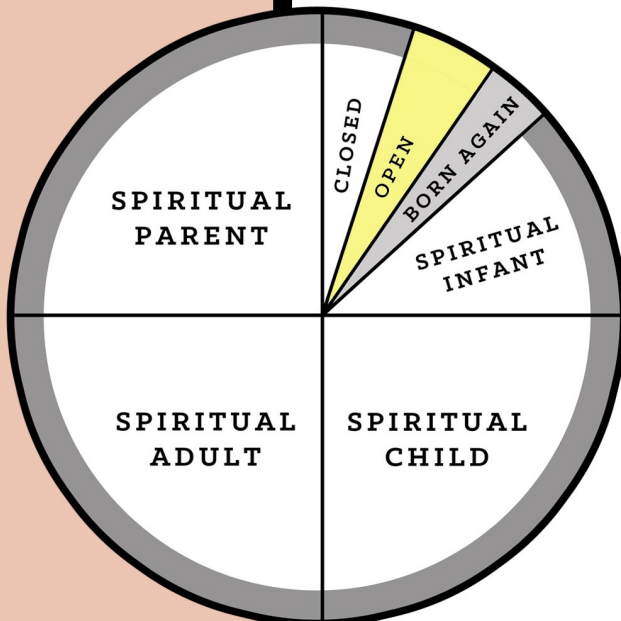
**PHASE:**

# **OPEN**

This phase is characterized by questioning and curiosity.

characterized by:

**QUESTIONS  
and  
CURIOSITY**



This person believes there is more to life than just what we see here, but they see a lot of possible explanations and they're open to all of them, including Christianity.

# OPEN



## What you see ...

Someone in the open phase is pursuing meaning for their life. They want to find their purpose and they're willing to look everywhere to find it. They're very open to spiritual conversations and willing to listen to what you have to say. They may ask questions or challenge your beliefs, but in contrast to the closed phase, it comes from a genuine desire to understand.

You might see someone in this phase attend a Sunday morning service quite regularly. They may not be there every week, but given their searching and the number of other things that they could be doing, once a month could be considered a regular attender.

You'll also see this person continually consuming content from a variety of sources. They may send you YouTube videos about spiritual topics or search online for information about diverse religions.

## What you hear...



- "There are lots of ways to get to God or a higher power."


- “There has got to be more to life than this.”
- “I know there’s a God, I just don’t know that Christians are right.”
- “I’m not sure I can be on board with a loving God that would send people to hell.”
- “Why do you think Jesus is the only way to heaven?”



## **What you can do ...**

Much like the closed phase, a person in the open phase needs to see an example of God’s love lived out. However, with this person you can bring up spiritual topics more freely.

- Give them a safe place to ask questions and be transparent when you don’t know the answer.
- Explore answers with them, refraining from judgement.




The most important thing you can do for this person is to be prepared to share your faith.

- Know your story and how to tell it.
- Give a clear explanation of the death and resurrection of Jesus and what it means for us and invite them to follow Jesus.
- Continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you as you interact with them. *If they don't choose to follow Jesus now, you're not a failure.* Not everyone accepted an invitation to follow from Jesus himself.



## **How the Church can help:**

- A small group or a couple of friends can be great places to practice telling your story. Have someone listen and give you feedback on anything that's confusing.
- When you're exploring questions you can't answer, use knowledgeable people in the church to help give you easy to understand answers.

- 
- Of course, a great way to grow in your knowledge of the Christian faith is to spend time reading your Bible. Your church will have resources to help you learn to read the Bible and understand what you are reading.
  - From Sunday services to small groups and beyond, the church can help someone in the open phase to find a sense of belonging, as well. This is something they're usually lacking as they wander from one spiritual experiment to the next.

*"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

**MOMENT:**

*Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*

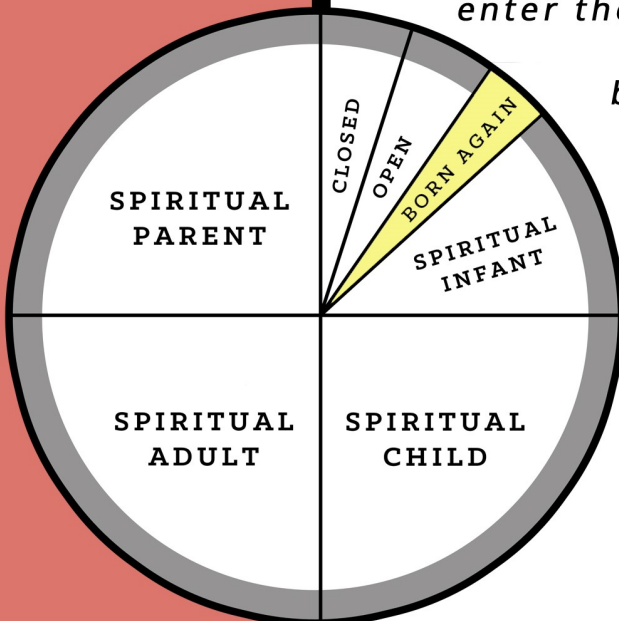
*"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked.*


## **BORN AGAIN**

*"Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"*

*Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*

*- John 3:3-7*






If you've spent time around Christians, or maybe even if you haven't, you may have heard the term "born again" describing followers of Jesus.

You may have even been as confused as Nicodemus was when Jesus used this phrase.

The Jewish people used to believe that they were guaranteed life with God because they were born into the nation of Israel, God's chosen people. Jesus tried to tell them He had come to redeem all people, not just Israel.

When Jesus said one must be born again, He used a term that literally means "born from above". By giving up our own wants and desires, choosing to follow Jesus and allowing His life to flow through us, we gain a new birth, a new spiritual life. When God's Spirit lives in us, we become His children, heirs to eternal life with Christ.

Being born again is not a phase someone goes through; it is a significant moment in which they are given new life.



This happens when they **hear** the good news about what God has done for them; **confess** that they cannot earn salvation and need a savior; **accept** God's gift of grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus; **choose to live in obedience** to God as a response to His goodness.

To mark this special moment and make our choice public, Christians get baptized in water. We do this as an outward sign of the life change that is taking place inside of us through God's grace. In baptism, we symbolically die to our own desires and are buried with Christ in the water, then raised up with Him into new life.

This step in a person's spiritual journey should not be taken lightly. After all, it is part of the Great Commission given to us by Jesus. It is the moment we go from exploring spiritual ideas to an acceptance that Jesus is the only answer to the problem of sin and repairing this broken world.

Once we've heard, accepted, and chosen to obey, we are born again into a whole new world of discovery as a spiritual infant...



**PHASE:**

# **SPIRITUAL INFANT**

characterized by:

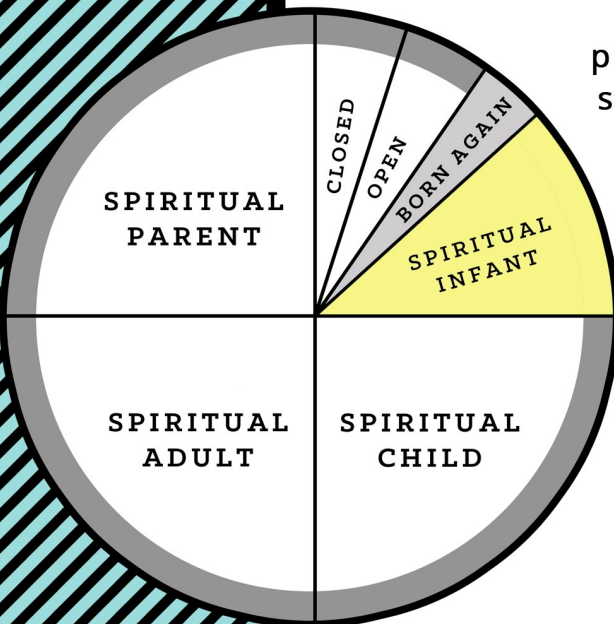
**DISCOVERY**

This phase is characterized  
by discovery.

This person is often  
brand new to Christianity.

Much like our  
physical infants,  
spiritual infants  
are busy  
embracing  
an exciting  
new world.

There will be  
a lot of new  
milestones  
to celebrate,  
but a lot of  
falling down  
in the process.



# infant



## What you see ...

People in the infant phase are very dependent on others. Much like physical infants haven't developed the skills to care for themselves, spiritual infants rely on others to help them grow in this phase. Infants need lots of individual attention and care from more mature disciples.

It's normal to see someone in the infant phase get confused about spiritual topics easily. They often mix in spiritual concepts from sources outside of Christianity because they haven't learned enough about Jesus to know the difference.

Spiritual infants tend to grow steadily, but the growth is often slow. It's not uncommon to see someone who has attended church services for years still be a spiritual infant, expecting someone else to feed and care for them.

## What you hear...



- "I don't need the church to be a Christian."
- "I can read the Bible on my own. The church just wants my money."

- “Does the Bible really say ... ?”
- “What is heaven really like?”
- “How do you pray?”



## **What you can do ...**

Biblical teaching is the most important thing to help infants grow. You can...

- Join them in reading the Bible together.
- Pray with them.
- Help them find reliable sources for spiritual answers.
- Sit with them in church services.
- Spend time with them outside of church activities, letting them see what following Jesus looks like in the real world.
- Give them encouragement and praise when they do things well.



## How the Church can help:

- Provide resources to begin reading and applying the Bible.
- Help answer questions.
- Connect them to other Christians for support and growth.
- Introduce infants to spiritual habits that will help them grow
- Teach Christian doctrines.
- Provide ways to serve others so infants can begin to build some spiritual muscle.

*"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"*

**PHASE:**

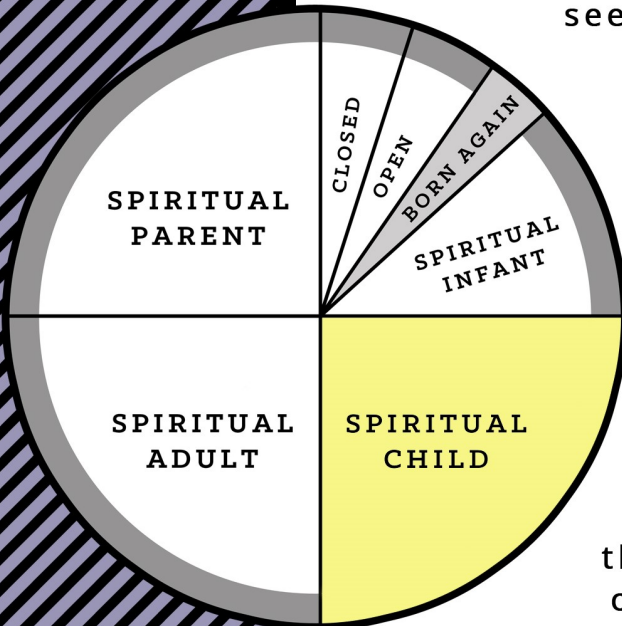
# **SPIRITUAL CHILD**

characterized by:

**SELFISHNESS**

The child phase is characterized by selfishness.

This can be difficult for someone in this phase to see and/or accept.



A spiritual child is adjusting to a whole new way of thinking and living and will naturally see all of these new ways through the lens of how it affects them first.

# child



## What you see ...

Someone in the child phase is often very active in church activities that they enjoy. Because of this the child phase makes up a very large percentage of the volunteer base at most churches.

Spiritual children are often very black and white in their thought process with very little room for grey. This can lead to them being very insecure about concepts they don't understand and overconfident in things they think they understand fully. In this way, they can be both insecure and overconfident at the same time.

Like infants, their growth is steady, but often slow. This is a very messy phase as they develop relationships and habits that can help their growth, but frequently take two steps forward and one step back. Occasionally, it may even be one step forward and two steps back.

## What you hear...



- "I'm just not being fed here."
- "I love my group! Why would we add more people? I like it the way it is."

- “Can’t wait for Sunday so I can get filled up!”
- “I wish we had \_\_\_\_\_ ministry. I need something like that.”
- “Why do we have to sing so many old hymns/ new songs? I just don’t worship that way.”

## **What you can do ...**



The biggest shift for someone in the child phase is the shift from being fed to feeding themselves. You can help that by:

- Helping them read the Bible on their own and discussing later.
- Lots and lots of encouragement when they do things well.
- Provide accountability for developing other spiritual habits.
- Introduce them to others who have good habits and help them develop relationships.
- Encourage them to take their faith public.

- Send frequent texts of prayer for them.
- Help them see things from a perspective that doesn't revolve around them.



## **How the Church can help:**

- Providing areas to serve others instead of focusing on themselves.
- Resources for developing spiritual habits.
- Encouragement.

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."*



**PHASE:**

# **SPIRITUAL ADULT**

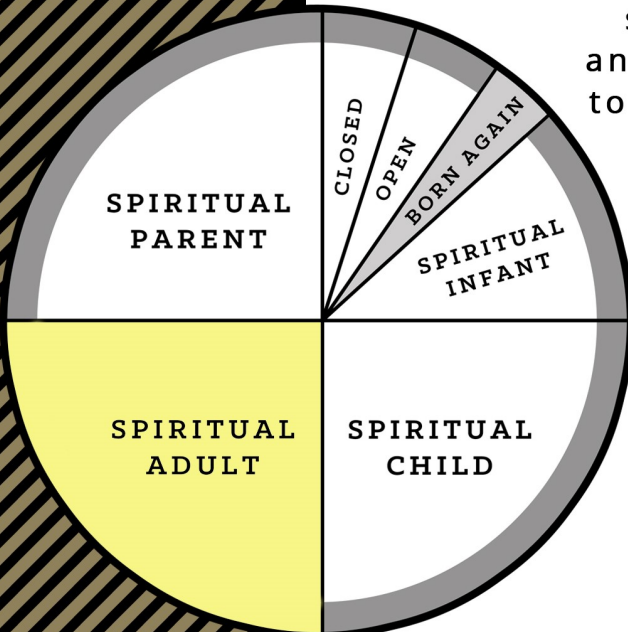
characterized by:

**HUMILITY**

The adult phase is characterized by humility.

Disciples in this phase have experienced significant spiritual growth and are beginning to find motivation beyond themselves.

Their own desires haven't gone away, but they've grown in their ability to sacrifice for others.



# adult



## What you see ...

A spiritual adult is no longer dependent on others for their spiritual growth. Because they've taken responsibility for their own growth, their spiritual habits become much more frequent and better developed.

Their faith is much more public and they begin to grow at a much quicker rate.

A new lens through which to see the world has developed for the spiritual adult. They are Kingdom-minded instead of seeing only the earthly benefit to their actions.

As a result, while they still participate in serving activities, their role begins to shift from service to ministry.

## What you hear...



- "I have a question about something I've seen in my quiet time."
- "I'm willing to lead, but I don't know how."
- "How can I help get more people involved?"

- “I noticed this need. Would it be okay if I put something together?”



## **What you can do ...**

- Encourage them to identify and use spiritual gifts.
- Help deepen relationships with others.
- Show them how to share their faith with others.
- Allow them to “shadow” you as you lead others.



## **How the Church can help:**

- Assist in identifying spiritual gifts.
- Provide relational environments to take things deeper.
- Provide opportunities for ministry during and after serving.
- Leadership growth resources and opportunities.

**PHASE:**

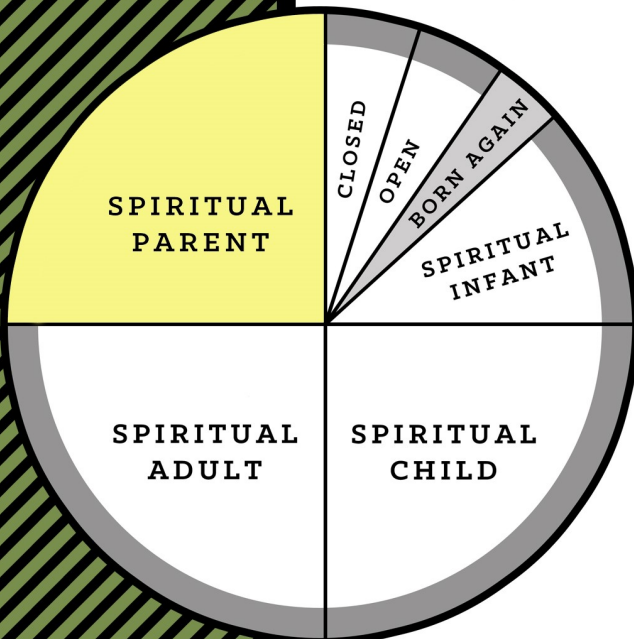
# **SPIRITUAL PARENT**

characterized by:

## **REPRODUCTION**

The parent phase is characterized by reproduction.

While spiritual parents will continue to grow themselves, they will also be intentional about reproducing this kind of spiritual growth in others.



# parent



## What you see ...

The easiest way to spot a spiritual parent is to look around them. Of course, you'll see them learning and growing, but you'll also see those around them growing. Their ministry doesn't just happen at church organized activities. They minister daily to the people God brings across their path.

Previously, we saw Spiritual Adults who were Kingdom-minded. They considered God's Kingdom as they made decisions and grew in their faith. Spiritual Parents could be viewed as Kingdom-focused. They are intentional about making sure the Kingdom of God is growing. They have personally accepted the mission to be a disciple who makes disciples.

## What you hear...



- "How can I help this person get involved?"
- "Would you like me to help lead?"
- "I shared the gospel with \_\_\_\_\_ today. Will you pray for them?"

- “How can I help you take your next step?”

## **What you can do ...**



- Challenge them to continue finding new people to disciple.
- Encourage them as you see growth in those around them.
- Share what you’re learning and help them continue to grow.



## **How the Church can help:**

- Make connections with people who need spiritual parents.
- Give clarity around the mission we’re engaged in.
- Provide a community of other parents who can keep each other accountable.
- Continued growth and teaching opportunities.

# DISCIPLE MAKER'S PRAYER

*God,*

*Show me the people  
you've put right in  
front of me.*

*Give me courage to  
daily take intentional  
steps toward growth  
in my life and in the lives  
of those you've entrusted  
to my care.*

*Grant me patience,  
humility, and perseverance  
for the journey forward;  
that we may become  
more and more like you.*

*Amen.*

you are  
**HERE**



**Hopefully this guide has helped you identify the spiritual phase of the person you're discipling and given you some ideas on how to help them take their next steps.**

**At the same time, it's also important to be able to recognize where you are spiritually and make sure you are being disciplined by someone.**

**Take a few minutes to look back over the guide and see where you find yourself.**

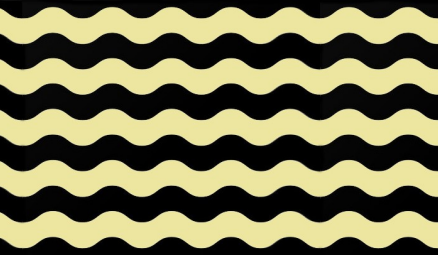
**Be honest. You may not be as spiritually mature as you'd like to be, but that's okay. We're all on a journey.**

**Getting an accurate picture of where you are right now is the first step in being able to take your next step.**



# NEXT

Ask someone you trust if they will help you grow as a disciple of Jesus. If you're not sure who to ask, find a staff member from your church and ask if they'll help you identify someone.



No **curriculum**  
or **class** will  
create **disciples**  
all by itself.

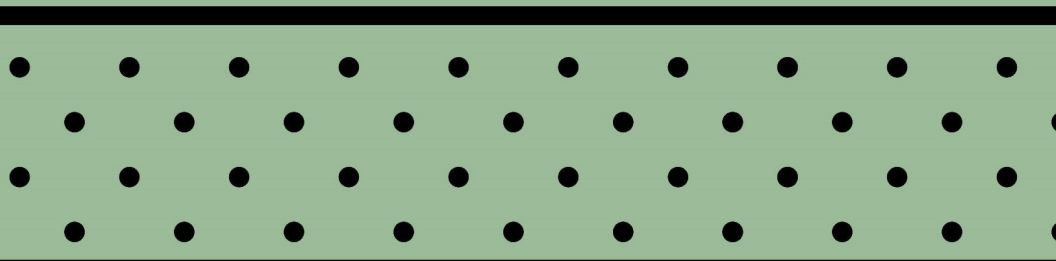
Disciples are made in relationship  
with other disciples.

We're excited that you've chosen  
to commit yourself to growing and  
helping others grow as a disciple  
of Jesus.

It won't always be easy,  
but it will absolutely  
be worth it!

Just remember  
what **Jesus** told  
his first followers -

---



Then Jesus came to them and said, "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 28:18-20

**name your phase**

**what is your next step?**

**who will you disciple?**

**where can you serve?**

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 28:19-20

