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THE
Watershed
PRINCIPLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Watershed Introduction	4
BALANCE: Show to Grow	7
REACH: Spectating to Reaching	9
TEACH: Information to Transformation.....	11
SERVE: Consumer to Co-Laborer	13
MULTIPLY: Keeping to Sending	15
LEAD: Doing to Equipping	17
NEXT STEPS	19
LEARNING COMMUNITIES	21
Index of Terms	24
Infographics	28-33

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Author: Dr. Scott Sullivan
Editor: Linda Wilkins
Design: Matthew Clark

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INTRODUCTION

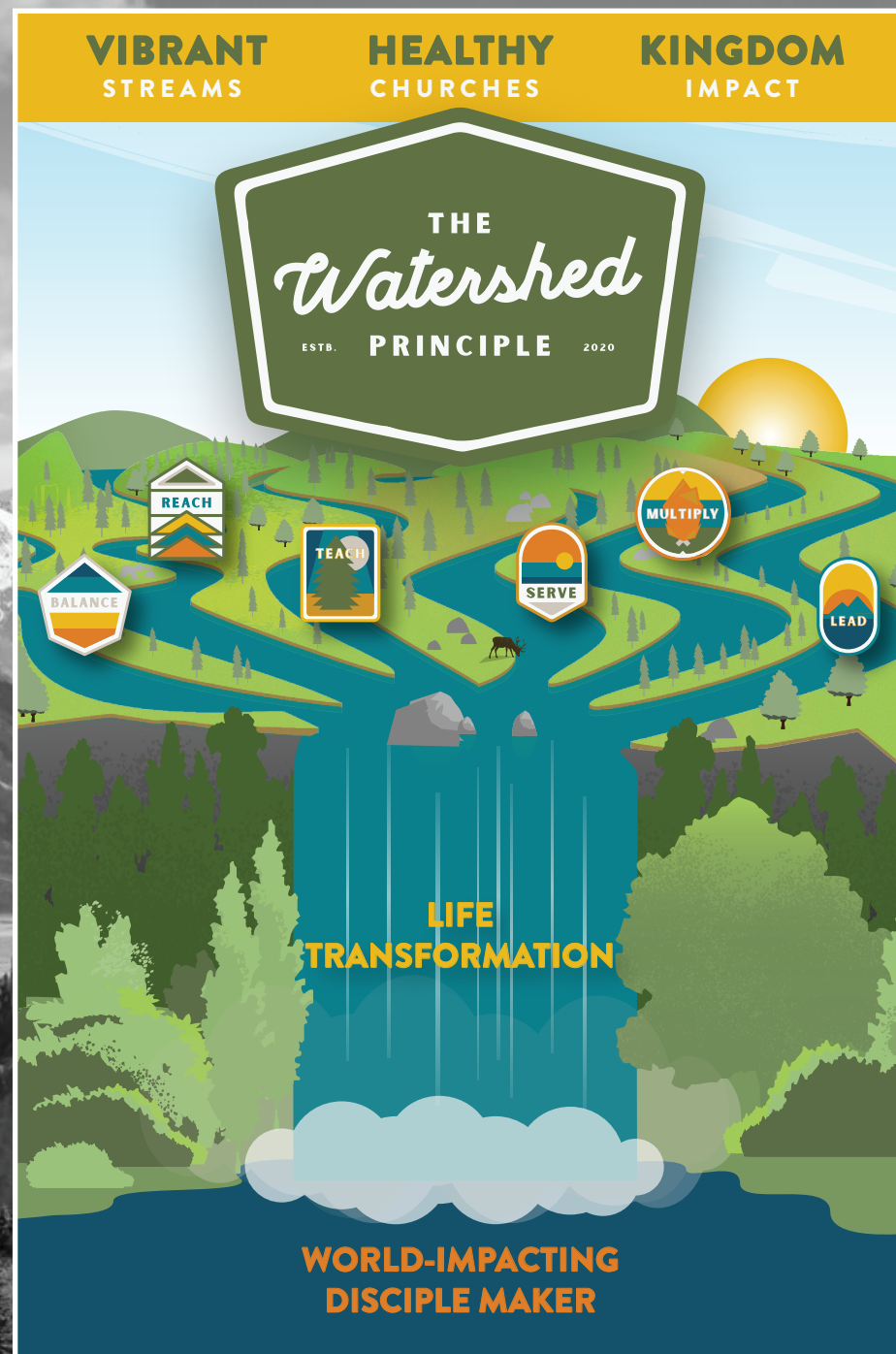
A watershed is a ridge of land that separates water flowing into multiple streams, and it feeds a single body of water. Watersheds can supply entire ecosystems and create vibrant life – as long as the watershed is healthy. The watershed is only healthy if the streams that feed it are healthy. If any of the streams that feed the watershed are sick, then the watershed and ecosystem will suffer.

In the *Watershed Principle*, ministries of the church are like the streams that feed the watershed. Intentional ministries are the vibrant streams that can produce a healthy ecosystem or culture within the local church. Many watersheds are composed of waterfalls. These waterfalls are the life changes experienced by disciples of Jesus as they consistently participate in intentional ministry.

The ultimate goal of the *Watershed Principle* is to see life change that leads to world-impacting disciple makers. This is the task of the local church.

The *Watershed Principle* starts with streams of intentional ministry. What are the streams that feed a healthy church ecosystem? In the following pages, you will find an overview of six streams that must be healthy in the local church watershed in order to see those waterfall moments.

“The ultimate goal of the Watershed Principle is to see life change that leads to world-impacting disciple makers.”





BALANCE: SHOW TO GROW

As believers engage in multiple layers of ministry, you will see a higher rate of connection, stronger commitment, and deeper levels of spiritual maturity. Providing a balanced framework of ministry opportunities is crucial to grow and sustain a healthy church.

Key considerations:

- The point of the small group or Sunday school class is not just connection but Christlikeness. Small groups and Sunday school are the connector of your strategy.
- Emphasize each layer as Jesus did: Large group, small group, smaller group, and personal devotion. This will create a well-rounded and grounded disciple.
- The large group assembly will be more impactful as it becomes an overflow of believers spending time with Jesus all week long.
- In many churches, the smaller closed group of three to four people are reporting significant long-term life change.
- The disciple's personal daily walk with Jesus is the most foundational element of any disciple-making strategy.

The Six Watershed Streams

These six streams (intentional ministries) must be vibrant for the watershed (local church) to be healthy and create a waterfall moment (life change) that results in world-impacting disciple makers.

Questions to Ask:

- Are you moving believers toward spiritual maturity?
- Are you connecting church members in multiple layers like Jesus did in large groups, small groups, smaller groups, and personal devotions?
- Are you hearing regular life-change stories in the lives of church members?
- Is the corporate gathering seen as the “main show” or one piece of the puzzle intended to reach, connect, and then move people toward spiritual maturity?

RESOURCES:

- ERUPT Infographic, page 26
- New Member Pathway to Disciple Maker infographic, page 28
- Guest Pathway to Disciple Maker infographic, page 29
- No Sweat Next Steps, nosweatevangelism.com/nextsteps

For a list of resources, go to gabaptist.org/discipleship.



REACH: SPECTATING TO REACHING

When believers catch a vision for personal evangelism, excitement will build, confidence will grow, and stories will flourish. Nothing will create more excitement or build more momentum in your church than believers reaching their community for Jesus.

Key Considerations:

- We must move people from being the recipient of the Church’s mission to being responsible for the Church’s mission.
- The majority of lost people in our communities do not frequent our church campuses.
- Any method of reaching the lost will work if God is in it.
- Consider a “This is My Story” emphasis where members are encouraged to share their story in 2-3 minutes on social media. Consider sharing a few of these stories from the pulpit in sermons, training events, etc.
- Evangelism should not be viewed as an option for the growing disciple.
- The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) commands that we advance, not retreat.

Questions to Ask

- Is there a healthy balance of large group and personal evangelism?
- Does the majority of your church's outreach happen on campus or off campus?
- Can your members share their conversion story effectively?
- Can your members lead someone to faith in Christ?

RESOURCES:

- No Sweat Next Steps, nosweatevangelism.com/nextsteps

For a list of resources, go to gabaptist.org/discipleship.



TEACH: INFORMATION TO TRANSFORMATION

The goal of teaching God's Word is transformation, not connection. Connection may be the first stone on the pathway to spiritual maturity, but Christ-likeness is the goal.

Key Considerations:

- We have crippled too many new believers by leaving them to feed themselves. Instead, we must model biblical discipleship by guiding them to feed themselves and multiply the gospel seed that was shared with them.
- Learn to teach the MEAT of the gospel: Motivation, Examination, Application, and Takeaway. When appropriate, ask learners to consider how they plan to live out what they learned, which is the ultimate takeaway.
- People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Caring for people will earn the right to share truth then give accountability.
- We must move beyond thinking that teaching only happens in a room in the church building.

Questions to Ask:

- Is the goal to teach a good lesson or move people toward spiritual maturity and Christlikeness?
- Are you focused on behavior modification or life transformation?
- Are group members learning doctrine and spiritual disciplines?
- Are all group members being encouraged to lead and serve at some level in the church?
- Is the focus of the group or class on connection or Christlikeness?

RESOURCES:

- MEAT Explanation, page 31
- No Sweat Next Steps, nosweatevangelism.com/nextsteps

For a list of resources, go to gabaptist.org/discipleship.



SERVE: CONSUMER TO CO-LABORER

One of the most challenging pivots for churches to make is helping their members understand that every believer should serve, not sit.

Key Considerations:

- This is the most undervalued of the six streams.
- Every church should have a mission's strategy that encourages members to serve in various ways.
- Three connections every church member should make: Jesus, small group/Sunday school class and a service team.
- Unfortunately, most churches do not have a system in place to facilitate the critical connection of members serving on a service team.
- There are four opportunities where you can teach church members about serving: New member or discovery class, small group/Sunday school, pulpit, and in training sessions with teachers/ leaders.
- A great place to begin teaching members what a genuine disciple looks like is in a new member or discovery class. See resources on gabaptist.org/discipleship.

Questions to Ask:

- Is every active member of your church on a service team?
- Does your church have a systematic way to help members understand their spiritual gift(s) AND find a place to serve based on that giftedness?
- Have you mapped out every possible role in your church where a person could serve? Do your members know what these service roles are? Do they understand that every member of the church is expected to be on a service team?
- Do leaders talk regularly about the church being a lay-led organization and that the body of Christ must serve regularly for the church to function efficiently?

RESOURCES:

- Acts 1:8 Missions Portfolio, gabaptist.org/missions

For a list of resources, go to gabaptist.org/discipleship.

**MULTIPLY: KEEPING TO SENDING**

When church members understand their responsibility to multiply their faith, experience the joy of birthing new groups, and see big gospel impact through their efforts, it will become a contagious, all-consuming pursuit.

Key Considerations:

- It's been said that the greatest failure of the Southern Baptist Convention in our lifetime has been our inability to multiply ourselves and increase gospel impact.
- The enemy will do all he can to tear down the multiplication of groups in your church.
- Multiplication does not happen by accident. Leaders and church members must make a conscious choice to be a disciple and make disciples.
- Think in terms of sending capacity more than seating capacity.
- Consider the difference between multiplication and addition in relation to reaching the world with the gospel. Go to page 31 for the infographic.

Questions to Ask:

- Are you holding on to your best leaders or launching them?
- Are your groups starting new groups? Are you starting any new groups with unbelievers and unchurched people or starting with people from existing groups?
- Is leadership consistently verbalizing the plan to multiply groups and raise up new leaders?
- Is discipleship at your church making a global impact?

For a list of resources, go to gabaptist.org/discipleship.



LEAD: DOING TO EQUIPPING

Great leaders understand that we don't find time for what is most important, we make it. Be viciously committed to conquering your calendar and prioritizing personal integrity. Perhaps the best thing we can do for our congregation is to model a daily walk with Jesus and equip believers to do the same.

Key Considerations:

- Pastoring can be the most difficult job on the planet.
- It takes doing and equipping when it comes to ministry success. If you are doing ministry alone and not equipping, burnout is in your future and you are limiting generational disciple making.
- Character is paramount in leadership. Without it, leaders rarely finish well.
- High capacity leaders understand that much of organizational success flows from the character of the leader and his ability to lead the body of Christ to buy in to vision.
- Church members will imitate what you celebrate, so make sure you model joy in ministry and share a vision to which it's worth giving their life. If not, you may just find a church

full of exasperated and conflicted believers looking for the next best thing.

- Authenticity is the apologetic of this generation. Be real. Lead by example. Love people. Speak truth.
- Many leaders grew up in a ministry model where they did most of the work of the church themselves in order to justify their salary. We must focus less on “doing for” and more on “doing with.” Model the life of a disciple, intentionally invest in others as they learn to lead, then trust the disciples to lead.

Questions to ask:

- Are you personally discipling anyone?
- Are leaders in your church multiplying themselves or creating church member dependency?
- If you die or move, can the ministry sustain health and growth?

For a list of resources, go to gabaptist.org/discipleship.

NEXT STEPS

1. Based on what I have learned in The Watershed Principle, which stream(s) do I need to focus on this year?

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2. What can I work on this week that will make a difference in my life personally and/or professionally?

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3. What is my next steps plan toward developing a world-impacting disciple-making ministry?

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4. What resources do I need to gather in preparation for this journey?

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5. Because accountability is the engine for change, who will I invite into this journey to help coach me along the way?

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*Need assistance? Contact your regional consultant by visiting

gabaptist.org/discipleship.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Now that you understand the six main streams of a church that must be vibrant to maximize church health, let's look at the Georgia Baptist Discipleship leadership pipeline. Learning Communities are the inner circle of disciple making leaders among Georgia Baptists.

Learning Communities exist to:

- Sharpen, encourage, and resource one another personally and professionally
- Collect and discuss best practices
- Finish the task of leading our family and ministry well

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a host?

The person in the group responsible for keeping the group organized and focused.

How often will they gather?

We suggest three or four times per year, but they can meet as often as they desire or as necessary. You can also choose to meet virtually or in person. These are decisions for the group.

How large is the ideal group?

The ideal group is made up of six to eight people. It has to be large enough to have energy but small enough for the members to know one another well. These groups are intended to go deeper than surface-level relationships.

We are stronger together!

Who leads the group?

The host will coordinate and help keep the group focused. Your regional discipleship consultant will work with the host to assist and resource the group. The group is not really lead by any one person but rather a collaboration of leaders.

Who chooses the topics that the group will discuss?

Your discipleship consultant will suggest a list of topics and the group will choose the topic to discuss. The group will speak into the topics being discussed. Your discipleship consultant is glad to provide training, speaker, ideas, etc.

What are the benefits of a Learning Community?

- Memorable fellowship
- Professional collaboration
- Honest conversation
- Personal accountability
- Skill development

When should we begin and who should we invite?

The groups should begin as soon as possible. Choose a date in the next six weeks and put it on the calendar. You should invite local church leaders who are like-minded and willing to commit the time.

Should there be food at the gatherings?

Food is always welcome, but it should not be the focus. Do not allow much time to be spent eating and drinking.

What does an ideal Learning Community gathering look like?

The ideal, in-person meeting time has fellowship with light refreshments. Personal prayer needs are shared, discussion had, and soul care extended to each of the members, whether online or in person.

**Great leaders
understand
that we don't
find time for
what is most
important, we
make it.**

INDEX OF TERMS

Disciple

A committed passionate follower of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3-6).

Ex: The word Christian is used 3 times in the New Testament and the word disciple is 269 times. The command given in the Great Commission is to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

Discipleship

The life-long process by which a disciple of Jesus Christ grows toward Christlikeness and multiplies the experience.

Ex: Local church leaders must create a pathway by which disciples of Jesus are involved in an intentional discipleship process that is relational and biblical.

The Gospel

The “good news” that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, offers forgiveness of sin as a free gift to all mankind through His willing death on a cross, and invites us into an eternal relationship with God through Jesus.

Ex: The gospel of Jesus Christ is only good news if unbelievers receive it before they die.

Healthy Church

A church that is growing and reflects the character of God as Scripture reveals it.

Ex: A healthy church will be known for impacting its ministry area and making disciple makers that reach the nations.

Streams

The flow of a continuous current in a specified direction.

Ex: Church leaders should intentionally manage the six major streams that lead to a waterfall moment (life-change) and results in world-impacting disciple makers. If the ecosystem (church culture) downstream is unhealthy, then the problem is most likely an unhealthy stream above the waterfall.

Waterfall

A cascade of water falling from a height; characterized by sequential stages that must be completed before moving to the next phase.

Ex: Multiple streams feed the waterfall and creates a beautiful display that is explosive and life-giving. The waterfall moment in the local church is the “life change” experienced by genuine disciples of Jesus.

Watershed

A ridge of land that separates water flowing to multiple streams; marking a turning point.

Ex: The streams of a watershed must be healthy upstream to create new life downstream.

Watershed Principle

Vibrant streams (intentional ministries) produce a healthy ecosystem (church culture) that lead to waterfall moments (changed lives) and result in new life (world-impacting disciple makers).

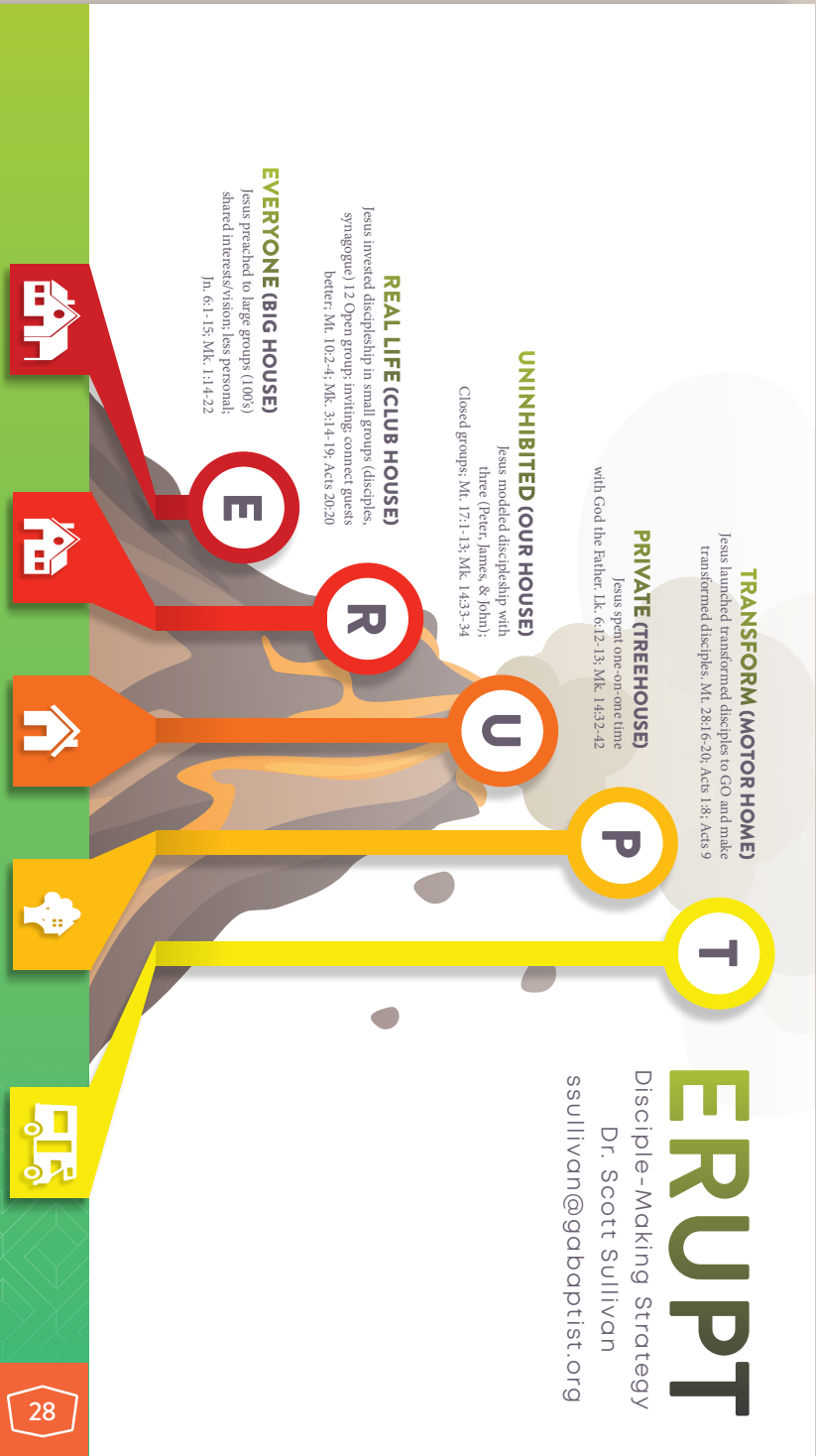
World-Impacting Disciple Maker

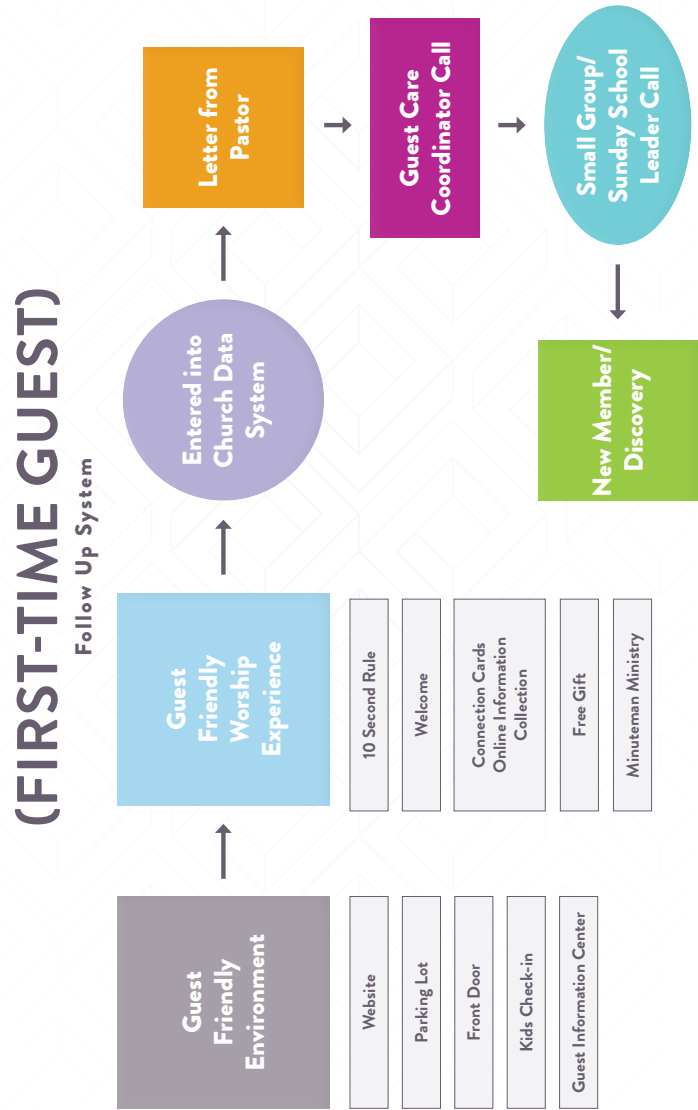
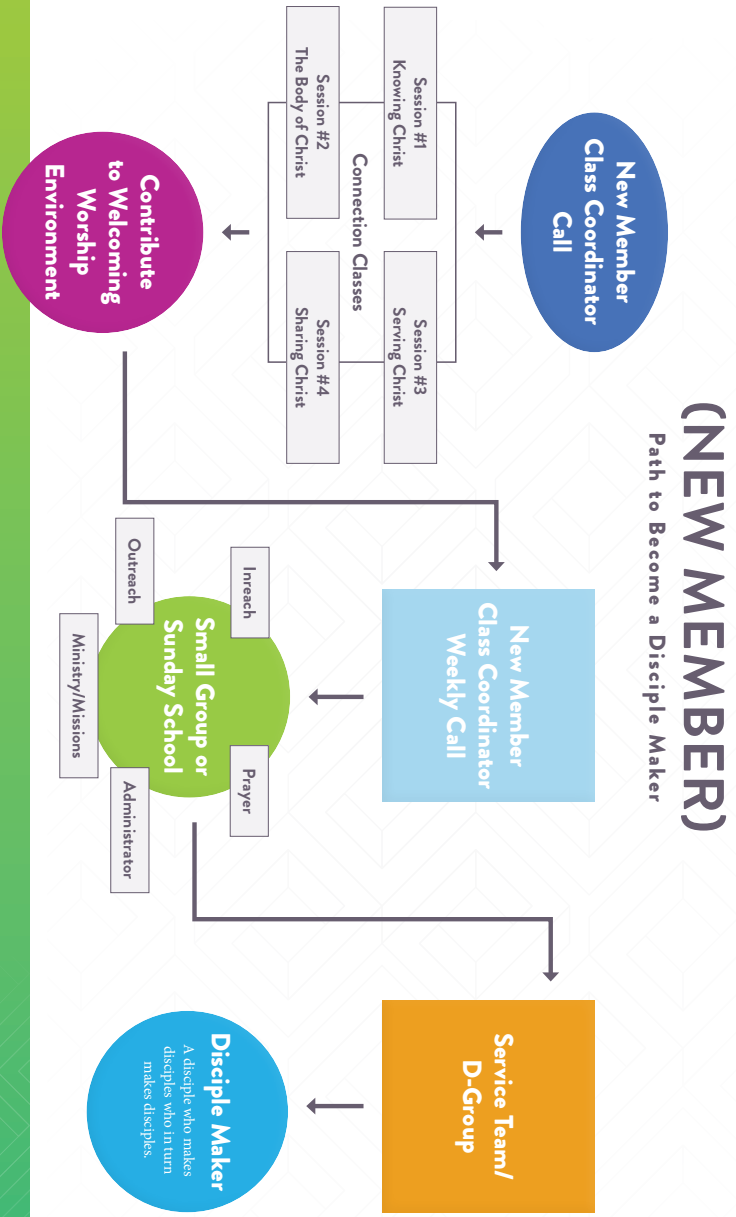
A disciple of Jesus Christ that seeks to know Christ, to imitate His character, and to multiply the experience through intentional relationships.

Ex: The task of the local church is to create world-impacting disciple makers.

**For more information and to connect
with your Discipleship consultant,
visit gabaptist.org/discipleship.**

INFOGRAPHICS





MULTIPLICATION AND ADDITION CHART

YEAR	EVANGELIST	DISCIPLER	GROUP OF 4
1	365	2	3
2	730	4	9
3	1,095	8	27
4	1,460	16	81
5	1,825	32	243
6	2,190	64	729
7	2,555	128	2,187
8	2,920	256	6,561
9	3,285	512	19,683
10	3,650	1,024	59,049
11	4,015	2,048	177,147
12	4,380	4,096	531,441
13	4,745	8,192	1,594,323
14	5,110	16,384	4,782,969
15	5,475	32,768	14,348,907
16	5,840	65,536	43,046,721

FOCUS ON THE MEAT OF EVERY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

MOTIVATION

Begins BEFORE the meeting and creates a culture of expectation. A small portion is at the start of the lesson. Group members are engaged with the leader and lesson during the week.

***Practice the 3 Week Rule and the 10 Second Rule.**

- 3 Week Rule - Change the teaching environment every 3 weeks to stimulate interest.
- 10 Second Rule - Guests should be greeted warmly within 10 seconds of entering any building.

EXAMINATION

Recognize that people learn in different ways. Provide opportunities for group members to synthesize and vocalize what they learn. Spend the majority of your time in the Word focused on Jesus.

***Guide group members to “own” the Scripture.**

APPLICATION

Woven throughout the lesson. Give time during the lesson/experience to process.

***Help group members connect with scripture and begin to understand the “why” behind the gospel.**

TAKE-AWAYS

Group members commit to specific action(s). Group members held accountable when they verbalize the change they plan to make.

***Challenge group members to live out the gospel and multiply the experience with others.**

The things which you
have heard from me in
the presence of many
witnesses, entrust these to
faithful men who will be
able to teach others also.

2 TIMOTHY 2:2