

FISHERS OF MEN

Discipleship Ministry For Relational Evangelism

Leadership Training

FOR THE *FISHERS OF MEN* SERIES

"COME, FOLLOW ME," JESUS SAID,
"AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN."

AT ONCE THEY LEFT THEIR NETS AND FOLLOWED HIM.

MATTHEW 4:19-20

SCOTT J. VISSER

NOTE TO READER:

THE PAGES FOLLOWING CONTAIN SAMPLE PAGES WITHIN CHOSEN CHAPTERS. THEY DO NOT CONTAIN THE COMPLETE CHAPTER.

To all who desire to prepare
so that you know enough,
dare enough and care enough
to catch men's hearts for Christ.

Roll up your sleeves.

It is time to get started.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1	The Case for Relational Evangelism	9
Chapter 2	Beginning With the End in Mind	17
Chapter 3	Equipping the Team	22
Chapter 4	A Reality Check	27
Chapter 5	The Preacher, the Teacher, and the Coach	31
Chapter 6	Making a New Factory for the New Product.....	37
Chapter 7	Discipleship Dynamics	39
Chapter 8	Discipleship Structures	67
Chapter 9	Discipleship Tools.....	95
Chapter 10	Fitting it all together.....	118
Chapter 11	Leadership Skills	123
Chapter 12	Overcoming Discipleship Hang-ups.....	137
Chapter 13	Starting a Fishers of Men Group.....	143

IS *FISHERS OF MEN* FOR YOU?

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

“0” means you strongly disagree. “5” indicates that you strongly agree.

1. I desire to obey Christ and make disciples. _____
2. Relational evangelism sounds better to me than “stranger evangelism.” _____
3. I would like interactive experiential discipleship rather than passive listening. _____
4. I would like to learn about discipleship dynamics, structures and tools. _____
5. I would like to be part of a group that focuses on outreach. _____
6. I would like coaching rather than just talking and listening. _____
7. I would like to equip myself and others so that we become people who know enough, dare enough and care enough to lead others to faith in Christ and help them grow in Christ. _____
8. I want to follow Christ and truly become a fisher of men for Him. _____
9. I would like to try a fresh, new, biblical approach to discipleship. _____
10. I would like to stretch out of my comfort zones and take on a discipleship challenge with others. _____

Total _____

Score

Comments

0-9

You do not want to read this book.

10 -19

Perhaps this book will change your mind.

20 – 29

This book will light new fires for evangelism.

30 – 39

You are going to like this book.

40 -50

You are going to love this book.

Chapter 1

The Case for RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

Relationship is one of the strongest influences in the world. People will sooner follow a friend than they will follow the preacher. In fact, the pull of relationship is so strong that many will turn from what is right and follow what is wrong in order to keep a relationship.

We are called to turn people to God. It is a daunting task and we seek the best methods to bring the most success. Evangelists work with teams to reach the masses. Churches present powerful evangelistic dramas and draw in hundreds. Groups engage in servant evangelism to win good will and give their church a good name. Others take the confrontational approach, addressing strangers in public places, confronting their sin and urging them to faith in Christ.

**Relationship is one of the
strongest influences in the world.**

Many like myself have engaged in all these efforts. And the truth is, whatever the method, new converts still need relationships. Otherwise, when the dust settles after all the work, few remain connected. They need people who know enough and care enough to help them continue to grow and walk with Christ.

This book will help you prepare yourself and others to become those kind of people. Other styles of evangelism certainly have their place. However, this ministry prepares people for relational evangelism. Here are several reasons why:

1. Jesus believes in relational evangelism.

... they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. *John 10:5*

Jesus taught about the importance of relationship in the parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10.,,,

[The next page includes an insert from Chapter 2.]

FISHERS OF MEN

Discipleship Ministry For Relational Evangelism

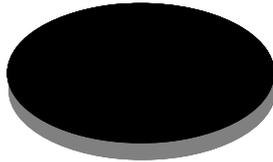
SERIES PREVIEW

Unit Two

Proclaiming the Promised Messiah

Unit Goal

To prepare to proclaim Christ as God's Messiah promised by His prophets - because people need to realize who Jesus is before they will listen to what He said.



Unit One

Committing to His Call

Unit Goal

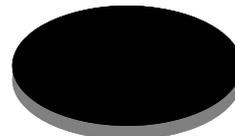
To join together and prepare our hearts to hear and follow Christ's call to be fishers of men.

Unit Four

Telling My Story

Unit Goal

To learn how to confidently and competently present the Good News of Christ by sharing my testimony with others.



Unit Three

Telling God's Good News

Unit Goal

To become a faithful messenger of God's Good News and to help people be reconciled to God by putting their faith in Jesus, His Son.



n.



OUR MISSION

We are getting prepared to follow Jesus and to catch men's hearts for Christ – one step at a time.

Chapter 4

A Reality Check

Anyone in the teaching or preaching ministry for any length of time knows that teaching alone does not necessarily produce results. Many people have already heard lessons on these things and still have never led one person to Christ. Many Christians have gone to church their whole life and still have not become successful fishers of men. If the church were a factory, sooner or later we might dare come to the conclusion that our process is not creating the end product Christ described. We are producing defective parts! Worse yet, no one is taking notice. If someone does take notice, they might be criticized for being negative. Who's going to blame the teachers? They are doing their best. Who's going to complain to the people. It would not likely be well-received. However, the truth is, if most Christian educational institutions were car manufacturers, we would have been out of business years ago. When cars are defective, someone eventually demands a product recall.

We are not building cars. We are making disciples. What should we do? Should we continue with the same procedures and hope that our end product will improve on its own? That won't work. If we continue teaching as usual, we will get the same product as usual.

**If we continue teaching as usual,
we will get the same product
as usual.**

Chapter 6

MAKING A NEW FACTORY FOR THE NEW PRODUCT

In football terms, to build a winning team, the coach must develop effective practices. In manufacturing terms, to build a new product one needs to build a new factory. After all, whatever comes off the assembly line is a result of the processes on the assembly line. BB gun factories don't build bazookas. If you want bazookas, you must build a bazooka factory. That factory must then be fitted with facilities, tools, and a power source capable of running the bazooka building machinery.

To create evangelistic disciples, we need an evangelistic discipleship factory. This factory must be powered by discipleship dynamics to enlighten and energize the work. These dynamics would deal with attitudes like getting real, making real achievements and voluntary accountability. The process of learning would be like the assembly line. It must be fitted with new discipleship structures to achieve the new end product. These classroom structures (or activities) include discussion groups, memory verse work, study times, and practice sharing the good news with others. Finally, the factory must be fitted with new discipleship tools to complete the new tasks required. Real progress always requires tools. Tools help people make progress together. The tools provided for this factory include memory verse cards, progress charts and even a test to help people see if they actually learned what they set out to learn. After all, the goal is not to only hear information. That could be done quickly and easily. The goal is to learn the information well enough so that the team can share it confidently and compassionately with others.

Chapter 7

DISCIPLESHIP DYNAMICS TO ENLIGHTEN AND ENERGIZE THE EFFORT

Discipleship dynamics are the power sources that provide the light of spiritual insight for the workers. When people see properly, they respond properly to their surroundings. Proper insight creates new mindsets to accompany new efforts. These dynamics are the invisible forces in the heart and spirit that produce action and change. As electricity puts machinery into motion, the spiritual power in these dynamics motivates people into motion. Finally, these dynamics not only affect the individual, they create a positive chemistry within the team. Negative dynamics between people and the Lord are like grains of sand in the machinery. A positive dynamic is like oil. It lubricates the parts and frees them for smooth motion.

Would you like this kind of spiritual light, inner power and positive chemistry working in your evangelistic team? Read on. You will discover eight discipleship dynamics to empower your new factory.

GETTING REAL

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. *James 4:6*

Getting real is the courageous work of allowing the team to know who we really are rather than what we want to appear to be. We take off the mask of pretentious perfection and admit that we have not arrived, we acknowledge that we need practice, and we will probably make mistakes and drop the ball while we practice.

Getting real includes accurately identifying where we are. It is the willingness to say, “This is not necessarily where I want to be but it is where I am.” This is the first step to getting to where the Lord wants us to be. After all, who can give us accurate direction if we don’t give our accurate starting point? We must recognize and communicate the present location of our heart if we desire to make progress from there. Here are some examples: Why would anyone attempt to become more obedient to Christ if they are not willing to face the fact that they are at times disobedient to Him? Who endeavors to learn more of the Gospel if they never dare admit that they don’t know enough about it to capably lead others to Christ? Would people ever pray for courage with each other if they did not confess that they are sometimes afraid? How will we ever get to the place where we love lost people more than our personal pleasures and material belongings if we don’t get real enough with God and others to recognize it and admit the problem? Why work on our mental ability, verbal skills, spiritual strength and our character if we do not dare admit our deficiencies in these areas? In other words, why ask for directions if we don’t admit we need them?

The *Fishers of Men* Discipleship Ministry was given birth in an atmosphere where people dared to “get real” with God and each other. I was the pastor of a small church in Linton, Indiana. It was the early months of 2007 and I had just finished a three-week series on personal evangelism. To be honest, I had a gut feeling that the messages didn’t even make a dent. The church was made up of stable, mature Christians, most of whom had attended for many years. They were committed to the church and each other. The problem was the church did not

Chapter 8

DISCIPLESHIP STRUCTURES TO PROMOTE PROGRESS

Discipleship Structures are the way class time and people are organized to create an atmosphere where discipleship dynamics emerge and move the group towards the goal. The old structure of rows of chairs facing a lectern is removed. A new kind of arrangement is implemented. The old lecture and listening is also radically remodeled. New structures that promote active discipleship rather than passive listening are implemented. Let's look at these structured learning activities now in closer detail.

Structure #2

COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUPS

Cooperative learning groups are the heartbeat of the *Fishers of Men* discipleship series. Small groups of two work together for the purpose of helping each other learn, gain witnessing skills and grow. They fulfill God's desire expressed in Ephesians 4:

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. *Ephesians 4:16*

“Cooperative Learning Groups” are usually referred to as simply “Small Groups” in the workbooks. It sounds less technical. However, as the groups understand *cooperative* learning, they will know how to relate to each other and reap the benefits.

Cooperative Learning Groups engage in the following three basic activities:

1. Scripture reading and discussion
2. Personal Coaching Time
3. Small group prayer

Let's look at each in more detail.

....

**To obtain better results, we must
engage in better activities.**

Chapter 9

DISCIPLESHIP TOOLS TO COMPLETE THE WORK

Discipleship tools are like the hammers, screwdrivers, and wrenches needed to assemble the end product. People serious about a project always prepare themselves by purchasing the right tools and learning how to use them. Some discipleship tools help people learn. Others help them remember. Some help students focus in the right direction, measure their progress, or confirm that they have truly learned what they set out to learn. Finally, the same tools that help them learn can also be used to help others learn. Let's open up the tool box and look inside.

Discipleship Tool #2

THE UNIT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES PAGE

The unit goal describes the general aim for the workbook. It answers the question, “Why are we meeting together?”

The unit objectives are the steps of progress required to help each student achieve the unit goal. These objectives are laid out in the following three categories:

1. Learning objectives
2. Personal growth objectives
3. Specific action objectives

Here are the benefits this tool offers:

1. It provides clear direction.
2. It unites the team with common purposes.
3. It mobilizes the team to make measurable progress.
4. It helps the team attain the goal.

Taken from Fishers of Men Unit 2: Proclaiming the Promised Messiah

UNIT GOAL

To learn how to proclaim Christ
as God's Messiah promised by His prophets
because when people realize who Jesus is
they will listen to what He said.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learn how to:

- Explain five key truths about Messianic Prophecy.
- Share seven key prophecies and their fulfillments by Christ.
- Share four reasons why prophecy is significant to our faith.

PERSONAL GROWTH OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you to experience

- Strengthened faith in Christ based on prophetic evidence.
- Confidence to share Messianic Prophecy with others.
- Increased motivation to share Christ through the prophets.

SPECIFIC ACTION OBJECTIVES

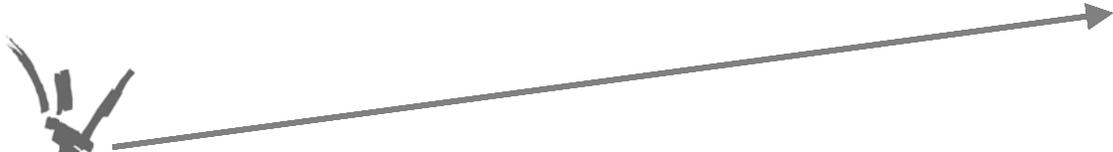
During this unit you will

- Tab key Messianic prophecies and fulfillments in your Bible.
- Use Personal Focus Cards to help you remember and learn.
- Share Messianic prophecy with at least one person.

PROGRESS POINTS

TO FULFILL THE VISION

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. *Hebrews 12:1*



Working with an accountability partner from the group, check the boxes that show your progress.

I browsed over this course and see that I need it. ●

I believe Jesus wants me to learn these things. ●

I will make this study a high priority for Christ. ●

I will set aside time for this study at home. ●

I learned five key truths about Messianic Prophecy. ●

I tabbed five key truths in my Bible. ●

I used the five key truths Personal Focus Cards. ●

I learned the seven predictions and their fulfillments. ●

I tabbed the seven predictions and fulfillments in my Bible. ●

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. *I Corinthians 9:24-26*



I used the Seven Predictions Personal Focus Cards. ●

I learned four reasons why prophecy is significant. ●

I learned five ways to prepare for outreach in prayer. ●

I passed the unit test with 70% or higher. ●

I am prepared to proclaim Jesus as God's Messiah promised by His prophets. ●

I shared Messianic Prophecy with someone else. ●

I completed this unit! ●

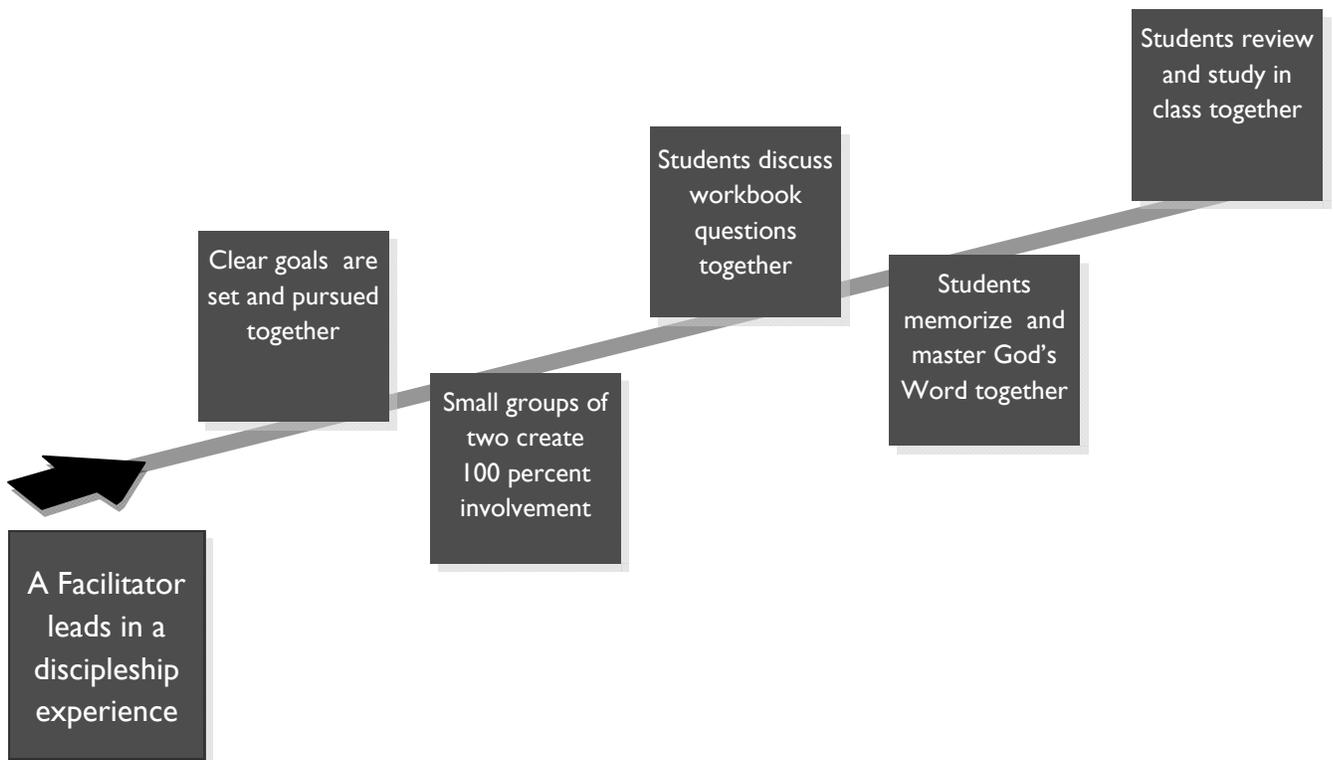
I promise the LORD to tell others what I learned. ●

*THIS TRAINING
WILL PREPARE YOU
TO WIN YOUR RACE!*

(Future date.) I led someone to faith in Christ. ● **THE VISION**

The *Fishers of Men* Discipleship Format

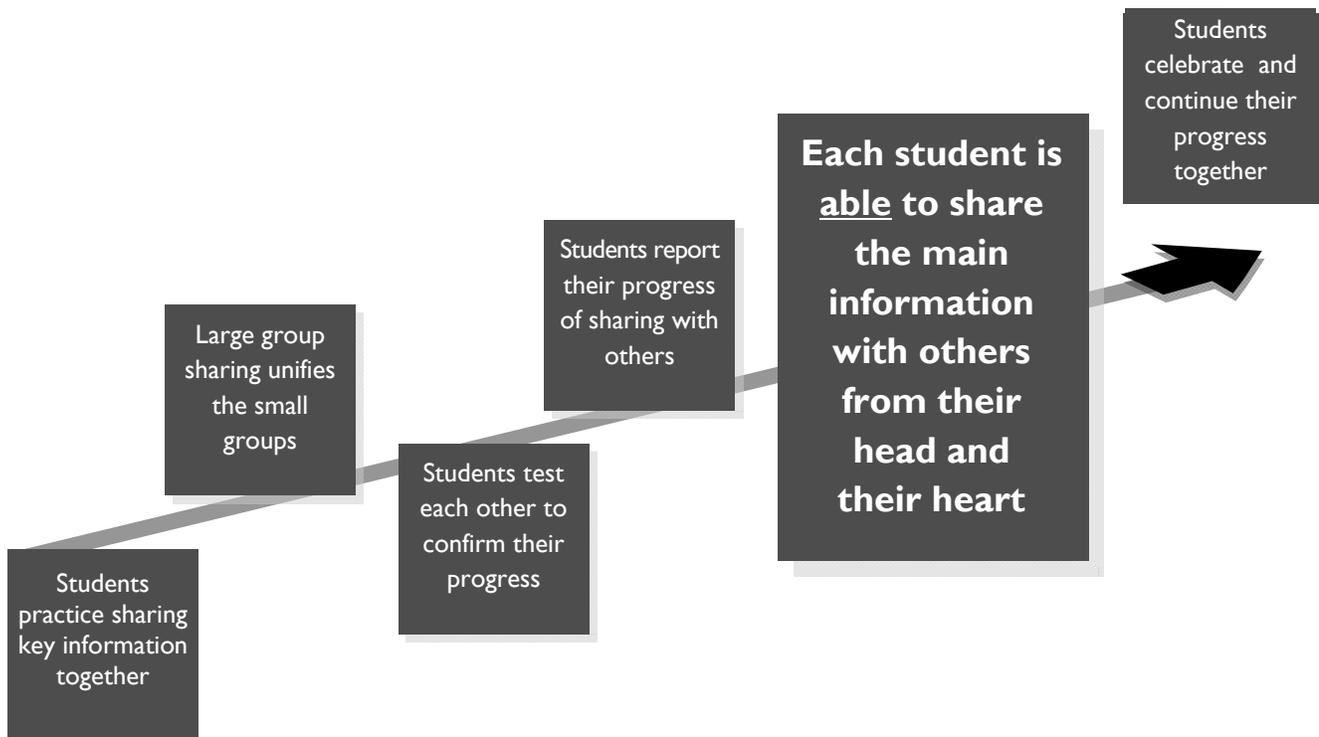
is like coaching a football team and practicing before playing the game.



The Usual Teaching Format

is more like giving a few talks on football and then sending the team out to play.



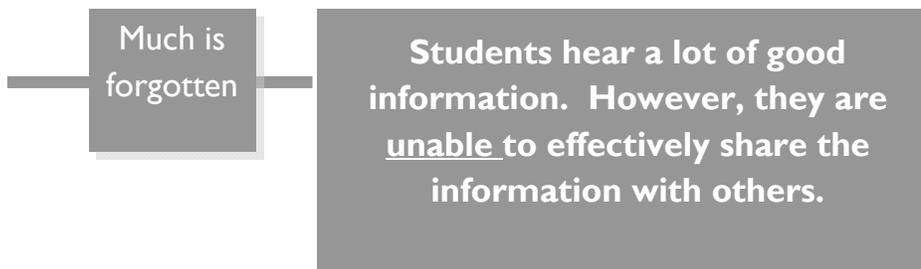


If you were competing with the devil

for the souls of men

and "the score" lasted for eternity,

which training format would you choose?



Chapter 11

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Just as a new factory requires new steps of maintenance, new discipleship structures create new issues that leaders must manage. Knowing about them ahead of time and being prepared will enable you to better serve those you lead. Here are five leadership skills to equip you for work ahead.

Leadership Skill #1

MANAGING SMALL GROUP ISSUES

Small groups are a wonderful structure and provide many benefits. Learning how to deal with some common small group issues will make them even better.