

Office of Evangelization & Discipleship

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Equip Parish Discipleship Program Overview

What Is Equip?

Equip is a 13 week Discipleship small group program that uses an experiential learning model to help form parish leaders in the basic skills of evangelization. Because Equip is meant to be led in small groups of 4-6 people, each member of the group must participate in sharing their own faith and takes turns leading the content. The Equip program models the missionary discipleship content that it teaches.

**"THE PARISH MUST PROVIDE FORMED DISCIPLES WHO CAN ACCOMPANY THOSE WHO ARE RETURNING TO THE CHURCH AND GUIDE THEM THROUGHOUT THEIR JOURNEY. APPRENTICESHIP "LINKS AN EXPERIENCED CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, OR MENTOR, WITH ONE WHO SEEKS A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."
- DISCIPLES CALLED TO WITNESS, USCCB**

Why Missionary Discipleship?

We see models of discipleship throughout the scriptures (Jesus & The apostles, St. Paul & Timothy, etc...) and throughout the early church (Sts. Ignatius and Polycarp, Sts. Ambrose & Augustine, etc...) and even still in our modern church (Jan Tyranowski & Karol Wojtyla). The Catholic faith is in an incarnational faith that is best expressed through relationship. When we live a discipleship model, we imitate the self gift of Jesus becoming man and sharing life with us. Pope Francis, in the Joy of the Gospel, has called each of us to become actively involved in the work of evangelization, to become Missionary Disciples. Missionary Disciples go to the peripheries of their communities to reach all with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Parish Impact

Much of the recent focus on parish renewal in the United States has focused on a discipleship based methodology. Many evangelization focused movements in the Church, such as FOCUS or Evangelical Catholic, have been very successful in implementing a discipleship based methodology. Pope Francis identifies the parish as a key institution for the renewal of our Church, provided that the parish is relevant to the lives of its members. By becoming oriented in discipleship, we equip leaders in our parishes to reach into all areas of our community and boundaries, ready to walk with people as they return to the parish or join the parish for the first time.

Where to start?

Missionary Discipleship movements within parishes will begin slowly. It is important to begin with a small number of leaders within a parish and first live the model before expanding it more broadly to all parts of the parish. When the leadership and key volunteers of a parish begin living a discipleship based methodology, it becomes easier to infuse the culture of discipleship into all aspects of parish life. While the effects of this type of change of culture in a parish will take time to develop and become visible, the vision is that the parish is establishing a culture that will become the deepest identity of the parish and provide for a lasting and meaningful change to a more missionary mindset in all areas of parish life.

Content Overview:

- I. A Vision of Discipleship
- II. Establishing Trust: Personal histories (two weeks)
- III. Who do you Say that I am?
- IV. Scriptural Foundations of Discipleship
- V. The Mission of the Church: Go and Make Disciples
- VI. Prayer: Personal and Intercessory Prayer
- VII. Kerygma: The Core Gospel Message
- VIII. Testimony: Sharing your witness (two weeks)
- IX. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 - Sharing Life
- X. Recognizing thresholds of Conversion
- XI. Spirit filled Evangelizers