

Disciple-Making Movements

This document provides an *overview* of a DMM, and describes its essential and distinctive pieces: the “Person of Peace,” a Discovery-based Bible Study, and the importance of gaining access to communities.

The Ultimate Goal of a DMM

A DMM involves a handful of pieces. Each piece is important and needs to work sequentially with the others. If you aren’t careful, it is easy to care more for individual pieces and lose sight of putting the pieces together to launch a movement. It is important to remember, the goal of a DMM is to see unchurched, dechurched, and unreached *groups* of people learn to apply the truths of Scripture in their own lives, and become faithful disciples of Jesus.

What is a DMM?

A Disciple-Making Movement (DMM) seeks to replicate the disciple-making activities of the early Church as seen in the book of Acts – a powerful movement of the Holy Spirit that involves a rapid and organic multiplication of *groups* of people who choose to live a life of obedience as a disciple of Jesus Christ that begins within groups and moves outward.

The above features of a DMM differentiate it from other strategies for making disciples (e.g. focusing on the individual, emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge, or encouraging participation in an existing local church). A DMM can, however, take different forms and feature distinctive elements. This overview considers one way of doing a DMM.

Although a DMM eventually multiplies at a rapid pace, upwards of hundreds of groups and thousands of people, things tend to start slow and consist of a considerable amount of “unseen” work in the early stages. A DMM, particularly in an urban setting, will typically involve:

- A large amount of consistent, intercessory prayer throughout the city
- Considerable time spent building relationships in order to discern “people of peace”
- Consistent and specific prayer for these relationships, especially the “people of peace,” and patience to allow God to set the pace for progress and growth
- Identifying the natural groups of people that already exist in the city

The importance of recurring prayer attests to the truth that a DMM is a supernatural movement of the Spirit. God is already at work in the city. Launching a DMM involves finding out where he is working, and then faithfully, prayerfully, and creatively deciding how to best respond to what he is doing. Therefore using human effort to manufacture “spiritual” movement in the city should be avoided.

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Those wanting to start a DMM must be ready to wait on God, be able to discern his activity in the city, be willing to follow when he gives direction, open to the supernatural and prepared to respond to spiritual warfare, which is inevitable.

Learning to recognize and rely on the Spirit of God will prove critical when looking for a “person of peace” and initiating a Discovery-based Bible Study (DBS).

What is a Person of Peace?

In Matthew 10:5-20 and Luke 9:1-6, 10:1-12, Jesus sends the disciples into neighboring towns and instructs them to proclaim repentance and the good news of the Kingdom, cast out demons, heal the sick, and raise the dead. Jesus tells them he is already at work in the towns where he is sending them, and their job is to figure out where he is working. They will know where he is working by identifying a “person of peace.”

This is a person who responds to what the disciples are doing in each town they enter. This person welcomes friendship with the disciples, responds positively to the power of the Kingdom demonstrated by the disciples, receives what the disciples have to say about God, and provides for the disciples in a practical way.

However, the passages say some towns will be without people of peace. If no person of peace can be found, Jesus instructs his disciples to wipe the dust off their hands and move to the next town.

Why is the Person of Peace important?

This can't be underestimated: for a DMM to flourish in a particular community, it must begin through the relationship with the person of peace. The person of peace makes way for a study of the scriptures with groups of people who share something in common – “affinity groups.” Examples are families, sports leagues, clubs, art colonies, commuters, etc. This person is the gateway through which the good news reaches these groups. Although the person of peace may not lead a DBS, she plays a crucial role in giving shape to the DMM. It may take days, even months to find this person, but this relationship is crucial to eventually launching a DBS.

How do I know someone is a Person of Peace?

David Watson, a pioneer of DMMs who works with Cityteam International, nicely captures the idea of a person of peace when he says, “The person of peace is the bridge to the people... if you have to convince someone to read the Bible, they aren't a person of peace.”

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Characteristics of a Person of Peace:

- Expresses interest in spiritual topics and activity
- Demonstrates hospitality and opens their house
- Is sensitive to others' needs and sustain others in some way
- Is connected to a community; this person is not a loner
- Welcomes spiritual discussions and demonstrations of spiritual power
- Is trustworthy
- Has identifiable spheres of influence
- Has a hunger for moral and spiritual growth
- Expresses an eventual interest in Jesus and the Bible
- Expresses an eventual willingness to read the Bible

Biblical examples of the person of peace include: the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia (Acts 16), Jason (Acts 17), and Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18).

Gaining Access to Communities through the Person of Peace

The persons of peace provide access to the natural groups of people in the city. Finding a person of peace is neither immediate nor easy. It will often require some foundational activities that consist of: prayer throughout the city, spiritual mapping, establishing relationships with people of influence, an eye for identifying established groups of people, and the ability to recognize where God is working and how to appropriately respond.

If you can find a person of peace without laying this foundation, then focus on cultivating that relationship and move it toward the launch of a DBS. According to David Watson,

Find a person of peace, establish a firm relationship with this person, and coach this person into learning how to influence her affinity group. At some point, formalize this influence by launching a DBS where everyone in the group learns how to study the Bible, apply the Bible to their own lives, and care for the people around them.

The DBS provides those who don't identify themselves as "Christian" an opportunity to consider life with God and begin practicing a life of discipleship with Jesus without the pressure to make a verbal commitment or "confession" of belief. However, by practicing this kind of life, the hope is to see people eventually proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior, faithfully follow him in all aspects of life, and spread that good news to others.

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What is a DBS?

This type of DMM uses a simple tool called a Discovery-based Bible Study (DBS) with a person of peace and that person's natural affinity group (e.g. family, fraternity, sports league, club, art colony).

A DBS is a simple yet effective way for people to explore scripture together, discover its truth, and decide how to appropriately apply these truths in life. Those who participate in a DBS also begin to practice some vital aspects of being a disciple of Jesus. During each meeting, groups have an opportunity to express gratitude, share personal needs, figure out ways to meet needs, and share what they are learning with others outside the group. These practices encourage a lifestyle of worship, ministry, and evangelism.

In order to encourage discipleship that is characterized by knowledge and obedience, this way of studying scripture does emphasize practicing truth, and not simply learning truth. Each study begins with a word for word reading and writing of a portion of scripture, a time of interpretation, and concludes with group members deciding how to demonstrate what has been learned in a simple, practical, and personally-meaningful way throughout the week.

The structure of a DBS is, however, careful to guard against manufacturing "truth" by returning the discussion to what the scriptures say. When group members respond to what they read in scripture, the accuracy and truthfulness are always evaluated by going back into the text to review what it says. The words of God are living, breathing, and able to speak into people's lives and achieve God's redemptive purposes. This way of studying the scriptures places a premium on the authority of scripture and the role of the Holy Spirit as a teacher for those who study the scriptures, yet who do not yet identify themselves as Christians or followers of Jesus.

This emphasis on the scriptures may trouble people who think of the Bible as a tool used by Christians to argue with those who disagree with them, while reliance on the Holy Spirit as a teacher will likely make others uneasy and apprehensive. In light of these concerns it is good to remember Jesus' teaching regarding this role of the Spirit in the gospel of John (Jn. 14:25-26), and the guidance Scripture provides for flourishing and living the right kind of life.

This concludes the overview of the essential and distinctive pieces of this type of DMM. The progression of each piece in this movement is as follows:

1. Lay a foundation in order to find a person of peace
2. Find a person of peace and cultivate a strong relationship with this person
3. Launch a DBS in an affinity group through the person of peace

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For those who would like to learn more about the Discovery-based Bible Study, the following pages provide specific instructions on how to lead a Discovery-based Bible Study.

Instructions for a DBS:

Although a DBS can be tweaked to accommodate needs, the ideal study is comprised of 5-7 people, considers 1 passage at a time that is no more than 7 verses in length, occurs in an environment agreeable to discussion, allows time for Pre-DBS discussion, and asks the Post-DBS questions.

It is imperative that the group leader *facilitates* and does not teach the DBS discussion. The point of the study is for the group to *discover* for themselves the truth in scripture under the instruction of the Spirit of God. This also goes for certain conventions and practices in the group. Although the facilitator may be used to ending Bibles studies in prayer, it is up to the group to decide how to end the time. If the group decides to end each study with prayer, this decision should come from the group's study of scripture.

It is also important the group leader provides enough Bibles or copies of the passage for all group members.

As people express a desire to join an existing group, the group leader will need to discern when it is better to add new members to the existing group or encourage people to begin a new group. Groups should remain small to allow for ample discussion between all group members, but groups also remain small in order to encourage rapid growth and multiplication.

The following is an explanation of the 3 parts of a DBS: the Pre-DBS Discussion, the DBS, and the Post-DBS questions. Although each part is important, if time is sparing, spend the time on the DBS.

Pre-DBS Discussion:

This discussion develops a sense of community and encourages characteristics and habits of discipleship under Jesus.

This discussion is comprised of 3 simple questions:

1. What are you thankful for this week? (If the group has begun mentioning God's provision for them during the week, you can tailor the question, "What can you thank God for this week?")
2. Is anything causing you anxiety or difficulty?
3. Is there any way the group can help? (If there aren't needs in the group, ask if the group knows of present needs in the community the group can help address.)

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The 5 Steps of a DBS:

Step 1: Have someone in the group read the week's passage out loud.

Step 2: Take a piece of paper and divide it into 3 columns. On the left, at the top of the first column, write, "What does the passage say?" At the top of the middle, second column, write, "What does the passage mean?" On the right, at the top of the third column, write, "What am I going to do?" *On the next page is an example of how to format the DBS sheet.*

Step 3: Under "What does the passage say?" have each person in the group copy the passage word for word by hand. Once everyone has copied the passage, it is sometimes helpful to go back and circle important words, and have one person in the group give a verbal summary of the passage. Once the verbal summary has been given, the facilitator should ask if anything important has been left out.

Step 4: Under "What does the passage mean?" have each person tell the passage in her own words by writing down what she thinks the passage means. Once everyone has finished putting the passage in their own words, the facilitator should ask a few people to share what they wrote.

Upon hearing something that is contradictory to what is said in the passage, or not explicitly stated in the passage, it is okay for group members to ask, "Where did you see that in the passage?" This is an opportunity for the group to discuss the passage together, begin to discern truth, and self-correct if people make contradictory comments. Rather than shutting down the conversation by telling someone their comment contradicts scripture, follow up questions create further discussion and discovery and encourage the group to become personally vested in the passage. It is the facilitator's responsibility to communicate the importance of this discussion within the DBS.

Step 5: Under "What am I going to do?" have each person decide on something simple, practical, and personally-meaningful they can do in the next week that demonstrates the truth of the passage. The facilitator can prompt a response by asking, "If this passage is true, what is one thing you will do this week to demonstrate its truth?"

Give people time to let the truth of the discussion sink in before they write something down. It can sometimes take 5-10 minutes of rereading the passage and thinking about what has been said before people decide what they will do. If people are comfortable, have each person share what they are planning to do in the next week. These decisions are often referred to as "I will" statements. For example, "This week *I will*..."

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Post DBS Questions:

1. Is there someone outside the group who might benefit from this passage? Could you share the passage with them this week?
2. What is the day and time for our next meeting?

Begin the meeting the following week by discussing the previous week's "I will" statements and whether group members shared the previous week's passage with anyone outside the group, before going into the Pre-DBS discussion.

Example: How to format a DBS Sheet

<i>What does the passage say?</i>	<i>What does the passage mean?</i>	<i>What will I do?</i>
<i>Luke 9:1-6</i> <i>And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority...</i>		<i>This week I will ...</i>