

# Session 5

## Disciples of Jesus Groups

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## What is a Disciples of Jesus Group?

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A Disciples of Jesus Group is a small oikos community of disciples, who meet together to evangelize, grow in discipleship of Jesus, make disciples of Jesus, and minister and support each other in the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

There are several basic principles important to disciple groups:

### 1. Disciples of Jesus Groups are oikos-relational groups

Oikos groups can consist of people of different ages, living in the same geographical area meeting in a home at a time that is convenient for the members of the group. There are some groups that meet, and focus on common work location and common interests such as single adults, etc.

### 2. Disciples of Jesus Groups multiply

The group can have anywhere from 4-20 people. This is the vision of Disciples of Jesus Groups. They multiply when they reach a certain size. Multiplication usually takes place when there are 12 in regular attendance. The multiplication is imperative so that the groups may remain small enough to meet the needs of all the members. The group can reach out to new people, with twice the effectiveness when they multiply and form a new group. The mother group gives birth to new baby group that begins the life process anew.

### 3. Disciples of Jesus Groups multiply disciples of Jesus

Disciples of Jesus are made and multiplied in the groups by the ministry of disciple making that takes place in the groups through the Scripture teachings in the groups that focus on helping people grow in discipleship of Jesus. The Servant Leader should especially work with the men and women who come to the group to help them to grow in their discipleship of Jesus. One-on-one disciple making can also take place between the members of a disciples of Jesus group. Everyone should be encouraged to select someone they respect and admire, who is a mature disciple of Jesus to be their shepherd and ask them to help them to grow spiritually in their disciple relationship with Jesus. The miracle multiplication of disciples that took place after Jesus ascended to heaven resulted in the church growing exponentially. One-on-one disciple making produces two disciples > each making another disciple > which produces four disciples, and so on:

$$4 \times 4 = 16, 16 \times 16 = 256, 256 \times 256 = 65,536, \text{ etc. disciples of Jesus!}$$

This miracle multiplication of disciples also holds true for the miracle multiplication of Disciples of Jesus Groups.

#### **4. Disciples of Jesus Groups is a total ministry**

The four major ministries of the church are worship, evangelization, discipleship, disciple making, and pastoral care. As all these ministries take place in a disciples of Jesus group, the group in a sense, functions as a mini church. Its goal is to reach out to parishioners and non-Christians, to evangelize and disciple, and to shepherd the people in their oikos.

#### **5. Disciples of Jesus Groups are relational**

Although the meeting is the gathering point for the group, most of the ministering to members can take place outside the meeting time as they live their day to day lives throughout the week. The meeting is a pit-stop where they come to refuel, to report, to love, and affirm and minister to one another.

#### **6. Disciples of Jesus Groups are charismatic groups**

Disciples of Jesus groups ask the Holy Spirit to come and make Jesus and the Father present in their midst. The Holy Spirit actively inspires the disciples in the groups to grow in the knowledge of all the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit. This is so that disciples can be equipped to minister with the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, and they are able to practice using the gifts in the meetings.

Disciples need the Holy Spirit so that they can go out and evangelize and minister in Jesus' name and help others to become disciples of Jesus and grow more and more to be like Jesus. It is God's plan to multiply Jesus in every disciple, to help them to be other Jesus' in the Holy Spirit. It's very important to make this point: Jesus was the very first charismatic. He was born of the Holy Spirit baptized in the Holy Spirit, and manifested all the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit during His life and in his ministry. The disciples of Jesus imitated Jesus, as Jesus imitated His heavenly Father.

## Disciples of Jesus Group Strategy

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If the Servant Leader is on fire with a spirit of evangelization, that will communicate itself to the whole group and the result will be a vibrant outreaching.

If the Servant Leader is not on fire then the group will become stagnant and may die. As Jesus said, “By their fruits you shall know them.”

The fruits of a vibrant group are new members brought in through the strategy of the bomb! As more members come, the more disciple groups are created!

### Hints to Servant Leaders

1. Think *Evangelization*... It is a way of thinking. The leader’s lifestyle has to become the lifestyle of the group.
2. The leaders, in their own sharing, should keep the focus on outreach - It catches on from the leaders.
3. The leaders should encourage members in their sharing to focus on their oikos. “During the week did anyone have an opportunity to witness to others?” Even when someone gives a personal witness about himself or herself, the leaders should try to steer the witness outward.
4. The leaders should compliment those who bring new members.
5. The leaders must keep the goals for new members before the group.
6. In intercessory prayer, the leaders should encourage prayers for neighborhood oikos – mentioning by name those who are in stress situations (death in the family, hospitalization, new arrivals, etc.).
7. When a group member shares about efforts to evangelize someone, the leader should encourage the member to follow up - to keep praying and to report again the following week.
8. In a sharing, if the leaders feel that the sharer is capable, they should get that person to lead an intercessory prayer in that particular case.
9. The leaders should suggest practical ways of caring for neighbors. Someone in the group is designated to visit the family bringing a gift in the name of the group.

10. The leaders should have a listing of all the neighbors in their oikos block. They should pool information on families on that list. They should call the rectory office for names.
11. The leaders should encourage reports on families on stress situation.
12. The leaders should encourage newcomers to bring other members of their families.

**Guiding Principle for Disciples of Jesus Group**

*See a need and fill it!*  
*See a hurt and heal it!*

## **Reasons for Making Disciples of Jesus Groups**

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### **God's will is that every person on the face of the earth would be a disciple**

God's will (plan) is that every person on the face of the earth become a disciple of Jesus. We must remember this truth because it is so easy to get smug about the blessings that occur in the church, auditoriums full, God's Spirit present. Yet the only reason a church feels so successful is in comparison to other churches (2 Corinthians.10:12). Compared to the commission which God gave, there is a long way to go to be successful. If churches are serious about fulfilling the Great Commission, the ministry must begin to move daily relationships. We must remember that our goal is not have the church grow, but, according to Christ, our goal is to make disciples of the entire world!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish, but might have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16) He also sent Jesus to establish the Kingdom of God, through Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit. In his humanity, Jesus related to the Father personally, as a disciple of the Father in the Holy Spirit. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit and baptized in the Holy Spirit by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The Father disciplined Jesus in the Holy Spirit, and commanded Him to go and make disciples. Jesus called his disciples to follow him and imitate him to live in discipleship with him. After Jesus' resurrection the disciples were baptized (immersed) in the Holy Spirit and empowered to live in discipleship of Jesus. They were taught to say what he said and do what he did, in the power, fruit, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Then Jesus commanded his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations.

Evangelization, discipleship of Jesus and disciple making is the Father and Jesus' plan to save the whole world in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus reveals the Father, so that when we see Jesus, we see the Father, and we know the Father by knowing Jesus. This shows us and the whole Church that evangelization, discipleship, and disciple making of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit is God's plan for the salvation of the world.

### **Ministry occurs best through relationships**

Discipleship of Jesus ministry happens best when we live in a community of disciples, who love one another. Christians are to minister as they go. Although this makes sense, most Christians do not adhere to it. That is, they do not develop a ministry around the natural webs of oikos relationship-commonality in vocation, family, location or interest. Our sovereign God has surrounded us with people who need our love and Christ's love. We must always think of ourselves as disciples of Jesus, evangelizing to Jesus, and making other disciples of Jesus, and as shepherds to these disciples. We are called to minister in Jesus' name, right where we live, in our families, in our disciples groups, in

our parish, or wherever the Holy Spirit leads us at the moment. Remember, the best place to minister is right where we are!

### **The Church is to minister to the total needs of the people**

Disciples of Jesus groups need to equip disciples in the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit so that they can minister in Jesus' name to the total needs of the people. While meeting people's spiritual needs, we must also deal with people's emotional, relational, and physical needs. The Holy Spirit helps and equips us in doing these. Jesus' basic desire is to heal the hurts of people so that they will come to faith in him and become his disciples. We, as His disciples, help make this happen! Only as we pay the price of service in people's lives, do we earn the right to minister to them!

### **All Christians are ministers and evangelization is the priority of the Church**

Evangelization and Disciple Making is the main commission that Jesus gave his church. Evangelize and disciple – we are commanded to do both. Discipleship always begins with evangelization and the goal is for the disciple to eventually become an evangelizer. Jesus made it clear that the only reason he is delaying his return is so that more people can be saved (2 Peter 3:9). Evangelization, then, has to be the priority! When asked why the Korean prayer groups were evangelistic, the Korean lady answered, “Evangelization is why we are here.”

Most people have the idea that unless they are full time in ministry, God really cannot use them. This is not true! Christians, through Baptism, have received God's Spirit and are commissioned to minister as they go through each day.

Disciples of Jesus are commanded to evangelize and make disciples of Jesus and minister in Jesus' name. Discipleship always begins with evangelization. The plan of Jesus is for his disciples to become evangelists who will make more disciples and grow in the Holy Spirit in transformation to become like Jesus. Every Catholic is called, through their baptism, to live in discipleship of Jesus, evangelize in his name, and make disciples of all nations.

### **The Church is to meet in large and small groups of Disciples of Jesus**

Reference is made in Scripture to the church meetings collectively in large gatherings and also in small groups, house to house. In Acts, this reference is made over ten times. People do have a great desire to be a part of a large group gathering. In fact, the more packed it is at a basketball game, football game or a worship service, the more exciting it is to be present. At the same time, people also desire to be part of a small group. They desire to be more than just a number. They desire the relationship and fellowship of a small group. “We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the church” (Pope Paul VI)

The early Church met for praise, prayer, word, worship and Eucharist in small home churches for 300 years. It was only after the church multiplied disciples of Jesus in small home churches that the disciples of Jesus began to outnumber the pagans and the Roman emperor Constantine made the Catholic Church the religion of Roman Empire. This event ended the persecution of Christians, and the church began to build huge cathedrals so that the small home churches could gather together in the large cathedrals and basilicas. Jesus' plan for the multiplication of himself in every disciple caused an exponential multiplication of disciples. Home churches went to worship together that's why they needed such huge cathedrals.

We need small disciples of Jesus groups now so that we can replicate the small Christian communities, where evangelization, discipleship and disciple making can happen. When a community gets too large for intimacy and friendship it's hard to have Christian Fellowship. It's hard to love one another, because we don't know each other.

### **Disciples of Jesus Groups can be used to bring about parish renewal**

The multiplication of small *Disciples of Jesus Groups* can have a tremendous impact on the whole parish. As Disciples of Jesus Groups begin to grow in number they will impact on the family members, their friends, and other parishioners. Families will be renewed through the influence of the parents on the children and through the marriage enrichment seminars that the *Disciples of Jesus Ministry* put on in the parish. Since Disciples of Jesus ministry is a parish ministry, the whole parish is invited and encouraged to attend the marriage seminars. Ministry members are encouraged to disciple their children to Jesus and help them to grow into becoming disciples of Jesus in the Holy Spirit.

The Disciples of Jesus Ministry also offers *Upper Room Experiences* three times a year as a conversion experience, where parishioners can experience personal renewal in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. As the pastor and staff of the parish encourage and help promote small disciples of Jesus groups in the parish and the numbers of groups begin to multiply, Parish Renewal begins to happen through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **The Ten Purposes of Disciples of Jesus Groups**

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Learn and memorize the ten purposes of Disciples of Jesus groups:

1. Live in a deep intimate personal relationship (discipleship) with Jesus in the Father and the Holy Spirit.
2. Live in love of Jesus and love of one another.
3. Live in the evangelization to Jesus (sharing Jesus with everyone).
4. Live in making disciples of Jesus (in small disciple groups and in one-on-one shepherding).
5. Live in a small community of disciples (in the parish, in the church, in the body of Christ).
6. Live in disciple service and ministry in the parish (giving and receiving support and encouragement).
7. Live in the Gift of Holy Spirit (equipping disciples with all the Gifts of the Holy Spirit).
8. Live in the Word of God (the divinity of Jesus in the Scriptures, and in the Bible).
9. Live in deepening our “Catholic identity.”
10. Live in Personal Renewal, Parish Renewal and Church Renewal.

### **Scriptures referring to the ten purposes of the Disciples of Jesus Group**

- Jesus said to them to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4: 19)
- Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, (in my power) and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with (in) you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 18-20).
- So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

- All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image (of Jesus) from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).
- I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how I will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13: 34-35).
- Bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).
- All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him. “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” (Matthew 11:27-30)
- He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Father will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? (Mark 8:34-37)
- “Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, (amen,) I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:18-20)

*“Modern man/woman listens more willingly to witness than to teachers, and if he/she does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (Pope Paul VI)*

## **Disciples of Jesus Groups: Size, Meeting, and Enlisting**

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### **Size of Disciples of Jesus Group**

Once regular attendance in a small group surpasses 12, the group ceases to function as a small group. As a group has a total of 16-20 people in membership or regular attendance of 12, it should multiply.

### **Disciples of Jesus Group Meeting Times**

Disciples of Jesus Groups can meet anytime during the week. Most groups find an hour and a half for the meeting as ideal. This time frame provides for adequate sharing, study and prayer time. The meeting should always end with people wishing they could meet longer. A cardinal rule of group meeting is:

Never meet longer than two hours. Individuals can stay longer, but people who have baby sitters or other things pressing need to have a time by which they can leave. Have a set time at which people know they can leave.

### **Enlisting members of Disciples of Jesus Groups**

All Disciples of Jesus Groups begin with a core of people who are church members or regular attendees of church. This core, including leaders, could be as few as four people, and could be a maximum of eight. The core will consist chiefly of people who live in the same geographical area. The members of the group will be enlisted in one of three ways:

- Those in geographic area who have signed up for a Prayer group
- Those in geographic area who the leader already knows and desires to enlist
- Names given to the leader by the Area Leader and jointly enlisted

The core members will agree to:

- Attend the group regularly
- Invite oikos members to the group
- Take a responsibility within the group
- Receive more training

## **General Principles of Disciples of Jesus Groups**

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Disciples of Jesus Group is not a new idea. It's important to realize that disciples of Jesus small groups is God the Father's plan because the Father disciplined Jesus and commanded Jesus to go out and make disciples. Of all the ministries in the church, Disciples of Jesus Ministry is the only evangelization ministry that Jesus started. Every other ministry in the church has been started by human beings, certainly through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and they are good.

However, Discipleship of Jesus and disciple making of Jesus is the Father's and Jesus' plan for the miracle multiplication of disciples in the world. It's amazing that as far as the definition goes, there is only one Disciple of Jesus Ministry in the parish! Now if this is true, and this is Jesus' plan for the miracle multiplication of disciples in the world then, we are on the right track! We are on the cutting edge of what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church. We are 100% in God the Father's and Jesus' will and plan.

We are in the Holy Spirit's will and plan to multiply Jesus in the world in the power and gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit. I encourage you to get excited about this. We are excited because we have Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit living in us. We can really help our parish come alive and be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit and we will have an influence on the people in the parish, our families and friends, and in our communities.

The Acts of the Apostles shows the impact and the vitality of small disciple groups and how they experienced the Holy Spirit. The gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit are at work in disciples of Jesus. One person with a desire and hunger for the Lord is enough to spark and inflame a group. One group, in turn is enough to ignite a dormitory, a military barracks, a business office, or a neighborhood. A few motivated men and women are enough to penetrate and saturate a parish community with Christ centered disciples. Initially the real question is not one of quantity, but one of quality.

### **1. Disciples of Jesus Groups Are Flexible**

Each group can easily change its procedures or functions to meet changing situations or to accomplish different objectives. Because of its informality, it has little need for rigid patterns of operation. It is free to be flexible as to the place, time, frequency and length of its meetings. These small groups can react quickly and easily to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. They can easily disband when they have fulfilled their purpose without upsetting the local parish.

### **2. Disciples of Jesus Groups Are Mobile**

Small group can meet in a home, office, shop or nearly any other place. They're not bound to the building that we call "church." It can go to where the

people are (or where the action is) and does not have to rely on persuading strangers to enter a foreign environment.

### **3. Disciples of Jesus Groups Are Inclusive**

A small group can demonstrate a loving, welcoming, openness to all kinds of people. When a person is invited to a small group devoted to prayer and scripture sharing, and has no commercial agenda, they can relax, because they have nothing to fear. The Holy Spirit will help us to bear fruit, good fruit.

### **4. Disciples of Jesus Groups Are Personal**

Christian communication often suffers from being formal and impersonal. Often a church can seem too large, too slick, too professional, and therefore too impersonal. But in a small group, relationships are person to person, and communication takes place at the personal level. That is why, contradictory as it may seem, a small group may really reach more people than the mass communication media. The mass media reaches millions of people superficially but only a few profoundly. The church should use all available forms of communication, but in proclaiming a personal relationship with Jesus, nothing can substitute for the person to person, love relationship.

### **5. Jesus' Plan is for Discipleship of Jesus Groups to Multiply by Reproducing Themselves**

Small group is effective only while it is small, but it can easily reproduce itself. It can multiply like living cells multiply into 2, 4, 16, or more, depending on the vitality of each cell. At this time in the disciples of Jesus ministry we have 15 groups. If all the groups had Jesus' vision for the multiplication of disciples of Jesus groups, in three months we could have 30 groups. If they multiplied again in six months, we could have 60 groups. Look at the miracle multiplication of disciples of Jesus we could produce. With an average of 15 persons to a group, 225 disciples would become 450 disciples at the end of nine months we would have 900 disciples of Jesus in our parish.

### **6. Disciples of Jesus Groups Can Be an Effective Means of Parish Evangelization**

Evangelization is most effective in a parish that uses small groups as its basic methodology. A parish will find that a small group provides the best environment in which sinners can hear the convicting winning voice of the Holy Spirit and come alive spiritually through their faith in Jesus. The Holy Spirit, can use these groups to make ordinary members into totally committed

disciples of Jesus. Robert Raines testifies in new life in the church, “have watched proportionately more lives genuinely converted in and through small group meetings (or prayer, Bible study and the sharing of life than in the usual organizations and activities of the institutional church.”

### **7. Disciples of Jesus Groups in a Parish Require a Minimum of Professional Leadership**

Here is the way that every parish can make use of its talented and gifted parishioners to lead small disciples of Jesus groups. The Holy Spirit is raising up lay men and women in our parishes and inspiring them to become active in evangelization to Jesus and disciple making of Jesus. In the ordinary parish there is no place for them to work. A Disciples of Jesus Ministry in a parish can be the most effective vehicle for these gifted and talented and committed Catholics to use their spiritual gifts in service to Jesus, the pastor and the parish. Experience has shown that such leaders can be found in the average parish. A staff of trained professionals is not required.

### **8. Disciples of Jesus, Groups are Adaptable to the Institutional Church**

Small disciple groups can be introduced without bypassing or undercutting the church organization. The serious incorporation of small groups into the overall ministry of the parish requires some adjustments and is bound to eventually raise some questions about priority. The small group Ministry is best seen as an essential component of the church’s structure and ministry, not as a replacement for the church.

### **9. Disciples of Jesus Groups are Jesus’ Plan for World Evangelization**

When Jesus commanded his disciples with the great commission to go and make disciples of all nations, small Disciples of Jesus Groups in every parish, was his vision and plan. The scripture confirm this, and we need to get back to Jesus’ plan. When Jesus called his disciples to come and follow him, he formed a small group of 12 men, and he disciplined them to himself. Jesus multiplied himself in his disciples in the power, gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself started the first disciples of Jesus ministry in the church. In imitation of Jesus there should be a Disciples of Jesus Ministry in every parish, making disciples of Jesus. Let us follow Jesus’ example and go and make disciples, of Jesus, of all the people in our parish and to whomever the Holy Spirit leads us.

## **10. Disciples of Jesus Groups are the Perfect Follow-Up to Evangelization in the Church**

Follow-up is the major weakness in the church. We evangelize to the church and make Catholics, but we leave them there as baby Christians. There is really no vehicle to help people grow in their Catholic life.

Discipleship of Jesus groups is the answer to that problem. If we have helped a person in one of our church ministries, we should encourage them to become a member of a Disciples of Jesus group. We would be helping them to become disciples and grow in their personal relationship with Jesus. They would also grow as active members of the parish using their gifts of the Holy Spirit in ministry.

## The Disciples of Jesus Group Meeting

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### Setting the stage before the meeting

It is important as the Disciples of Jesus Group prepares to meet that they set the stage for a successful group meeting. The physical arrangements can be important. The following suggestions will help considerably:

1. We must ensure proper ventilation. Disciples learning will be inhibited if they are too hot or too cold.
2. We must be sure to have proper lighting.
3. Arranging the group in a circle so that the members can see each other is conducive to good participation.
4. We must be ready to handle disturbances: telephone, pets, doorbell, and cell phones, etc.
5. Turn on the outside lights.
6. Put out the welcome sign and directions, if needed.
7. We must avoid:
  - telephone interruptions
  - tall plants and cut off the view
  - someone sitting in a doorway
  - scheduling the meeting at a time inconvenient for non-participating family members
  - seating men on one side and women on the other
  - seating people so close to each other that they feel uncomfortable
  - insisting everyone sit on chairs, or that all sit on the floor
  - smoking
  - a blaring television or radio

## Disciples of Jesus Group Recipe

What ingredients will make a disciple of Jesus group successful? Here is an almost surefire recipe:

- Start with one person with a desire to live in discipleship of Jesus.
- Sift in a few other eager disciples of Jesus, plus some others who want to meet Jesus and know him better.
- Blend in a balanced, interesting course of study.
- Add a couple of prayer and another couple of preparation.
- Stir in a tablespoon of common sense.
- Drop in a pinch of humor.
- Skim off the control, pride, selfishness and hypocrisy.
- Season with generous portions of acceptance personal interest and love.
- Remove preachiness and holier than thou attitudes.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to transform hearts to live in discipleship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we follow this recipe for small disciple of Jesus groups. They will almost never burn, over bake, sour, or fall flat.

## Events during a Disciples of Jesus Group Meeting

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As the group meets, ten things should occur:

### 1. Contrition Prayer, Examine, Repentance

The meeting starts with an examination of conscience of the sins that we committed since our last DOJ meeting. We also want to check on any sins of omission. We pray that we will have a contrite and humble attitude of repentance. The praise and worship leader will then lead the group in a contrition song.

### 2. Praise and Worship

Praise and worship are best expressed through song. We may not be used to singing in a small group. So, we may use our song books to sing the praise songs that the praise and worship leader has chosen. The singing starts with widely joyful songs of praise to Jesus. The song leader, through prayer and the Holy Spirit chooses songs that will lift our hearts to Jesus and get the group to begin to get into the spirit of praise and worship. It's best that the leader choose songs that the disciples are familiar with, and they are anointed by the Holy Spirit. The praise songs are lively songs with upbeat rhythm that are interspersed with vocal praise to God. The Spirit of prayer and the choice of songs began to express thanksgiving to God. Now the attitude of worship is encouraged by slower songs that express love and worship.

It's best, of course, if there are instruments to help the singing to create a spirit of worship.

### 3. Teaching

Generally, the teaching will be evangelistic and encourage discipleship of Jesus. DOJ group meetings are meant to help members grow in their discipleship to Jesus. Discipleship is an immersion into Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit in which transformation into becoming like Jesus in all his attributes. The focus of the teachings then should be in helping disciples grow in the attributes of Jesus. Evangelization to Jesus will take place as Jesus is proclaimed and increased commitment to Him is encouraged. The primary source for the teachings in a DOJ group is the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

One of the primary objectives of the teachings in a DOJ group is to help members to be immersed in the word of God.

#### **4. Discussion of the Teaching**

The teacher should stress that due to limited time, point should be made briefly. The leader should facilitate the discussion in such a manner that the discussion is kept on the topic of the teaching and applied to life experiences. Intellectual discussions should be avoided because they are sterile.

Everyone must be encouraged and given a chance, as much as possible, to be involved in the discussion. Should the discussion digress, the leader should use his or her discernment to re-direct the discussion back on track.

#### **5. Sharing**

As a disciple group meets faithfully, some of the greatest ministry occurs as group members share what Jesus is teaching them and what is happening in their lives.

Pay close attention to what members say; it is in sharing that most needs in their lives surface. All sharing should be in accordance with the ABC of sharing. Accurate, Brief, and Christ centered. It should be mentioned also that all sharing is confidential. Confidentiality is a major help in getting people to share their testimony, their needs and hurts.

#### **6. Business**

Announcements from the servant director or the disciple group leader should be mentioned as briefly as possible. This is a good place to remind the group about the good order of the meeting, if the need arises.

Servant Leader should encourage all disciples of Jesus to attend all of the DOJ ministry events. One of the best evangelization tools is to invite your friends and fellow parishioners to come with you to all the DOJ ministry events. All the events that we put on in the disciples of Jesus ministry is to benefit the parish and help bring about parish renewal.

#### **7. Intercessory Prayer**

This part of the disciples of Jesus meeting flows directly from praise prayer. Intentions received from the office or the Servant Director should be included at this time. DOJ group members should be encouraged to pray for their personal intercessions. Before the meeting starts, it's a good thing to assign individual members to pray for certain general intercessions. It's a good practice to appoint a leader of the prayer intercessions in the group meeting. Encourage everyone to contribute a prayer. Our Catholic dimension is highlighted by the invocation of the intercessions of Mary and the saints.

## **8. Healing Prayer**

It's good practice for the Servant Leader to form a healing prayer team. The leader should discern those members of the group that have the gift of healing. The leader may invite those who are in need of special prayers for healing to make that needs known.

## **9. Closing Prayer**

Closing the meeting with a prayer helps all those attending the meeting to know that the meeting is finished.

## **10. Hospitality and Fellowship**

Hospitality and fellowship consists in a simple dessert or bread and juice. Bonding and friendships happen at this time.

## Guide to Conversational Prayer

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“Amen I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it should be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name there I am in the midst of them.” (Mt 18:19-20)

Jesus desires fellowship and communion with us. We have the opportunity to enter into a new dimension of intimacy with Jesus. Conversational prayer is the way that it can happen during personal prayer and intercessory prayer in a DOJ group. It is an informal prayer, where the objective is to speak conversationally with Jesus from our hearts. In conversational prayer, we must pray briefly aloud several times. There is no need to worry about impressing those who hear us. We should be less concerned with the form of our prayer or with the specific words than with simply communicating with Jesus, speaking to him and listening to him.

### 1. Start praying rather than sharing requests

Much of our valuable prayer time can be taken up in sharing requests rather than praying. Usually the one with the burden for someone or some situation will be the one to initiate prayer for that person or situation.

### 2. Pray about one topic at a time

It is important that we pray topically as much as possible. One disciple may pray about a sick person and the second disciple can stay on that topic by asking for strength of the family while the sick one recuperates. Then another disciple may pray that the family’s financial needs will be met during this lengthy illness. When there is a pause, someone may change the topic. For example, after a pause, a disciple may pray for help in having a consistent quiet time. Another disciple may request that this quiet time be more meaningful. Another may pray that he/she will have time to meditate on the Scriptures, which he/she reads during the quiet time. We may want to avoid skipping from topic to topic. The prayer time should not be disjointed, but time and we can join in meaningful prayer in which we agreed together concerning the requests at hand. From our heart, we want to be praying along with the person who is praying aloud. He/She will then in turn be praying quietly along with us as we pray out loud.

### 3. Pray briefly in intercessory prayer

We will pray briefly, if we pray about only one aspect of the subject. We may wish to leave the other aspects of the subject to other disciples. By each person praying briefly, we each get to pray again sooner than if each person

were to pray longer. This keeps everyone attentive and involved in what is being prayed about.

#### **4. Pray spontaneously, not in sequence**

We must not pray around the circle. Let each person pray for that which is his or her concern. For example, if six subjects are prayed over in conversational intercessory prayer time, we may have a vital concern in only three of them. We should not pray for something about which we are uninformed or not motivated. In intercessory prayer there is freedom to pray when we are ready to pray about a situation that we believe we should pray for. We must always let the Holy Spirit guide us in who and what we should pray for.

Praying spontaneously does not mean praying thoughtlessly. While another person is praying on the subject at hand, we have time for the Holy Spirit to confirm in our heart how he would like us to pray.

As we start praying as a group, there will also be a few moments of silence, while disciples quiet their heart and focus their attention on praying effectively. We should not be afraid of silence.

Normally, the focus of prayer should start with Jesus and move towards prayer requests. Usually in a group it is best to start with praise and thanksgiving. Someone may start praising the Lord for his greatness, and another will praise his power. Still another might praise Jesus for his faithfulness. Another may thank God for a neighbor who has recently trusted Jesus in their life. Another may thank Him for the abundant life he/she has in Christ.

We may then pray for needs within the group. We will find that our relationships with others in the group will grow more personal as we pray for each other.

We might pray for needs outside the group. The number of needs is limitless. We can pray for those needs, but praying for our own oikos should be a priority.

By praying conversationally, we will experience a new excitement about being in a disciple of Jesus group. We'll find that the time goes by much more quickly than we might expect. You will also find that it leads to more praying, both in the group and when we are alone.

Take notice of the personal prayer needs of other disciples during the sharing time, so that in the intercessory prayer time we will remember to pray for our fellow disciples of Jesus.

Some of our disciple groups, have a prayer bond at three o'clock in the afternoon every day when each of us disciples of Jesus pray for all of the disciples in our group.

One of the most effective ways of praying in intercessory prayer is to pray in tongues. Praying in tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit, a powerful gift in intercessory prayer. Just say the person's name, and then pray in tongues. The Holy Spirit who knows what the needs are for that person, will go into that person or situation and help, heal, comfort, console, or make right what is wrong..

### **Guide to Intercessory Prayer**

1. Don't share about prayer, just pray!
2. One topic at a time
3. Be brief
4. Be spontaneous, pray from the heart

## Sharing Time in a Disciples of Jesus Group

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One of the most meaningful parts of the disciples of Jesus group meeting is when disciples share from their lives and from the Word.

### Two Forms of Sharing Time

1. From our life Experiences

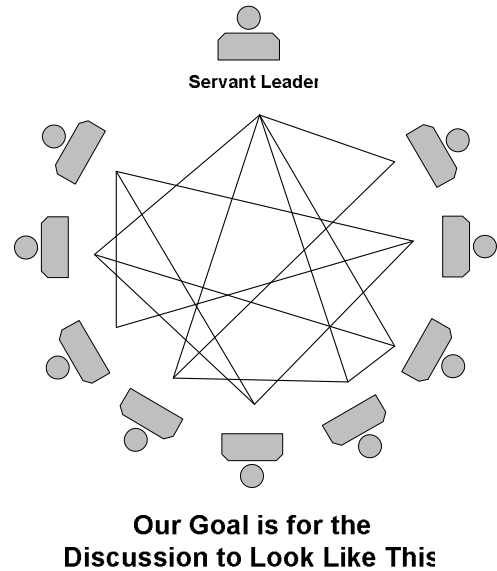
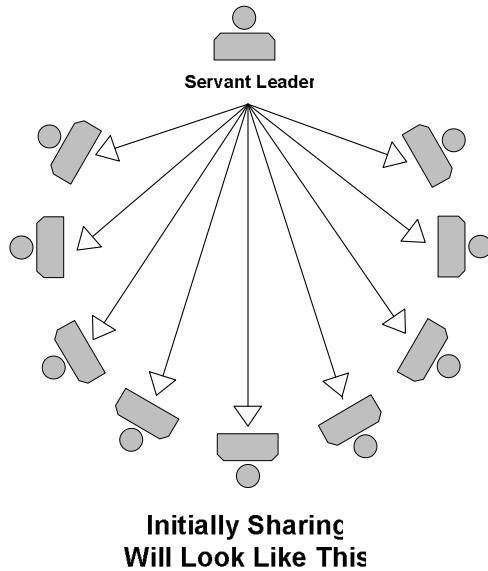
Sharing Time provides an opportunity for the DOJ group members to catch up on each other and find out what has happened during the past week. The DOJ group will actually be a family of love and concern. This sharing time is the greatest opportunity to share in each other's joys and sorrows. Inspiration for evangelization, and growing in discipleship of Jesus comes from hearing what other disciples of Jesus are experiencing in their daily life.

2. From the Word of God in the Scriptures

As we encourage disciples to have daily quiet times, and immerse themselves in the Word of God, they will often bring to the meeting specific things which Jesus has revealed to them. Probably this sharing from the word is our best application of what Paul exhorts us to in Colossians 3:16 teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.”

### Guideline to follow during the sharing time

1. All disciples need to share, to encourage others to share. Sharing our life experiences with each other builds community.
2. Pressure should not be brought to bear on anyone person to share. Be patient, gentle and encouraging. Usually within 4 to 6 weeks, everyone in the group will be sharing.
3. Monopolizing the sharing by making comments on everything shared should be avoided.
4. Remember the rules on sharing, ABC: be accurate, be brief, be Christ centered. Leaders lead the way here by sharing briefly and intimately.
5. Servant Leaders should draw out other members of the group to participate in the sharing.



We must make it a goal to have the sharing from the Word of God, oriented towards living in discipleship of Jesus. There is a tendency to share in generalities instead of really sharing the practical implications from God's Word. There is also a tendency towards talking about controversial subjects that can distract the group. We can help keep the discussion on target by:

- Make your own sharing practical. For instance, instead of saying, "In Isaiah 14:24, I saw how God is sovereign overall." We can say, "I saw it in Isaiah 24:21 and God is in control. And I realize there is no reason to worry about whether I have enough money to buy new furniture. God can and will provide sufficient funds, when the time is right."
- We should draw out of people practical discipleship life applications by asking questions.
- If subjects arise that are irrelevant, and cannot be adequately dealt with, without further study, or would take more time to discuss than is available, we must defer it another time or set up a time to speak privately with the individual who raised the subject.

We must watch the time. To neglect this through casual sharing will devastate the group. At the same time, we could probably spend the entire meeting on sharing and never accomplish anything.

The Servant Leader has to make sure not to let anyone monopolize the sharing time.

## **Praise and Worship through Songs and Music**

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Music and song is the medium for the fullest expression of praise and worship. Song touches the deepest recesses of our soul. Let us look at some Scriptures:

“Speak to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5: 19)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and use same psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3: 16)

“I will sing to the Lord for he has been good to me.” (Psalm 13 :6)

### **Some principles for singing in a small group:**

1. We should not wait until we feel comfortable to include singing in our meeting. We should realize that we may feel awkward, we may not sound great, but God will bless us if we continue.
2. It is good to have someone in charge of leading the praise and worship. Look for disciples with the gift of leading praise and worship. This is a gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. The disciple in charge of the music ministry should plan the songs. Obviously there should be room for spontaneity, i.e. guidance from the Holy Spirit.
4. Musical instruments are optional, keyboard and a guitar can really help disciples to get into the spirit of praise and worship.
5. A good policy to follow is to start with fast songs in praise, and move to meditative songs in Thanksgiving and worship.
6. Whoever leads to song should start the first note, have a comfortable pitch, in the middle of his or her voice range. This will generally be not too high or too low.
7. Singing the songs that are anointed by the Holy Spirit, and singing the favorite songs of the disciples that are present at the meeting.

## **Growth of a Disciples of Jesus Group**

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Growth for a Disciples of Jesus Group will sometimes be painstakingly slow and other times it will come about speedily. If we are faithful and obedient, God will give the growth. His will is always for us to reach out to new people. These people will be added to the group in one of three ways (these are our ultimate goals):

1. Disciples of Jesus Group members will invite oikos members to the group.
2. As people visit Holy Spirit Parish from the Disciples of Jesus Group's area, their names will be given to the Servant Leader. He/she will make a visit and seek to share the gospel.
3. People join Holy Spirit Parish, they fill out a card, and then will be assigned to the Prayer group in the area where they live.

Guidelines for inviting oikos members are:

- We may invite any oikos member who is outside the Church, even if that person does not live in the same geographic area. Reaching the person is a greater priority than keeping geographic principle.
- If an oikos member knows Christ but lives outside the geographic area, we must consult our Servant Shepherd before inviting that person to our group. The preference is that Christians attend the nearest group unless a specific reason necessitates attending a different group.
- We may not invite growing Christians from other churches. It is preferable for these Christians to function in this ministry through their own church.

## **Dynamics of a Disciples of Jesus Group**

*“Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit ... Techniques may be good but even the most advanced ones could not replace the gentle action of the Holy Spirit.” (Pope Paul VI)*



## Individual Study

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Fellowship is derived from the Greek word *koinonia* which means sharing in common. As you examine each of the Scripture texts below, determine what you can share with others and on a practical way to share it.

<b>Scripture Text</b>	<b>What to Share</b>	<b>Way to Share</b>
1 John 4:11-21		
Galatians 6:2		
Galatians 6:6		
James 5:16		

**Session 5: Study Checklist and Completion Sheet**

Name:

Group Leader:

- Read Chapter 6 in *Evangelization in the Modern World*
- Complete Bible Study
- Complete Individual Study
- Know the Ten Purposes of a Disciples of Jesus Group