

HOW TO BEGIN A DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

A. HAVE A GOAL

1. The four manuals for group leaders on making disciples have the following goals:

- (1) To grow yourself to become a mature and functioning Christian (disciple of Christ)
- (2) To help other Christians to grow to become mature and functioning Christians
- (3) To equip and train Christian group leaders, workers and church leaders to serve, especially to make disciples.

Caution. The contents of these leadership manuals do not make a person a disciple of Christ. Spiritual growth comes only when a person himself *believes* in the truth and *practises* the truth in his daily life! "God has given the Bible to us, not just to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives!"

2. The disciple course has the following characteristics:

- (1) The Dota course is biblical.

The course is based on the Bible as the Word of God.

- (2) The Dota course is participatory.

Everyone in the group participates in every part of the course!

- (3) The Dota course is affordable.

Students only need a Bible, notebook and pen. Only the group leader uses the manual.

- (4) The Dota course is adaptable.

The group leader can adapt the course to his purpose and to the needs of his students without changing the materials.

- (5) The Dota course is creative.

The students are encouraged to think, to develop their own convictions, to be inventive and to use their skills.

- (6) The Dota course is practical.

The manuals teach practical methods and the students are taught to apply what they learn.

- (7) The Dota course is transferable.

Students who have completed one manual may use the same manual to train others.

B. MAKE A PLAN

1. God.

What does God say that you should do? Allow God to guide you through the Bible and the Holy Spirit in prayer.

2. Needs.

What are the needs of the people you want to train? Observe their lives and listen to what they say.

3. Opportunities.

What are your opportunities, abilities, resources and difficulties?

4. Adjustments.

Which adjustments should you make in your plan? What is the number of people that you want to train? How mature is every participant? What are his abilities and capacity? How much time does he have available?

5. Place.

Choose a suitable place and time to meet. Can all the students reach the meeting place? Is it a place without distractions?

C. RECRUIT COMMITTED PEOPLE

1. Recruit students.

- (1) Requirements.

Prayerfully look for students who are faithful, available and teachable (FAT)(2 Timothy 2:2).

(2) Inform

Invite them to participate in a disciple programme. Inform them well about the programme and expectations.

2. Ask the students to make a commitment to the following 5 standards.

(1) To be faithful.

“I will come to every small group meeting”.

(2) To be prepared.

“I will do the homework assignment before I come to the small group meeting”.

(3) To be teachable.

“I am willing to learn and to apply what I learn”.

(4) To be loving.

“I will help the other group members to grow”.

(5) To be accountable.

“I am willing to share my progress and struggles within the small group”.

Give the students two weeks to pray about it and make their own decision together with God concerning what they will do and then to inform you.

D. MAKE USE OF MATERIALS

1. The Bible.

The Bible is your most important source for teaching and training. Always use the Bible in your training.

All participants try to use the same Bible translation.

2. Manuals.

Use the four Dota manuals “Go and make disciples” as the programme for your teaching and training.

3. Whiteboard.

Make use of a whiteboard to write and draw.

4. Notes.

Encourage the students to write down notes as completely as possible.

5. Internet, Radio and Television.

Group leaders and students will benefit from making use of the Dota radio programmes, satellite TV programmes, CD’s and Internet websites.

E. MULTIPLY SMALL GROUPS

1. Encourage students to begin their own discipleship group.

When you have completed one, two or all four discipleship manuals, challenge the students to begin their own discipleship group and to make use of the same materials. Sometimes two of your students can team up to start a new discipleship group (Luke 10:1-2).

2. Dota manuals are meant for only group leaders.

After the completion of one of the manuals, those students, who will teach the discipleship training course to another small group of people, may receive a copy of that manual.

3. Continue to meet with the new group leaders.

Continue to meet with the new group leaders of the disciple groups on a regular basis in order to give them opportunities to share how they are doing as group leaders, to discuss their questions and problems, to pray together for their group and to train them further. All new group leaders need a mentor or coach.