
WHAT IS AN APPRENTICE?

Once we become followers of Jesus, he begins to mature us into disciple-makers, as he did with his original twelve. He invites us along on the journey of maturing others into disciple-makers. In the context of groups, we refer to this as an apprenticeship.

An aspect of our role as leaders is to identify spiritual maturity in our people. Those who are ready or almost ready to begin making disciples are incredible candidates for the role of an apprentice. The goal of the apprenticeship is to train, equip, and release people in your group to begin making disciples themselves as leaders of their own groups.

STEP 1: How to Identify an Apprentice:

Identify through prayer and observation someone who is **Faithful, Available, Intentional, Teachable, and Humble**. An apprentice is a maturing believer with a growing interest in serving others, using their God-given skills, gifts, wisdom, and abilities, probably a young adult or spiritual parent. These might be people who are underdeveloped and overlooked, not necessarily the most enthusiastic or outgoing person in the room. Affirm their gifts and invite them to become an apprentice (someone who supports the group leader and is being developed to eventually lead their own group). Give them time to think and pray about it.

STEP 2: How to Train an Apprentice:

Think of training as modeling + talking, the way a coach may demonstrate and explain a skill before asking a player to practice that skill. Follow this pattern:

I do. You watch. We talk.

I do. You help. We talk.

You do. I help. We talk.

You do. I watch. We talk.

You do. Someone else watches.

An apprentice is so much more than someone to cover your group when you are busy or out of town. Here are a few examples of opportunities to develop them as leaders:

- ❖ Prepare and pray together before the group
- ❖ Debrief with them after group to identify the immediate needs of group members
- ❖ Ask them to print copies of the participant guide
- ❖ Prepare for a group meeting with you and watch you lead
- ❖ Prepare with you and lead portions of the group
- ❖ Prepare and lead the group themselves
- ❖ Join you for a follow-up meeting with another group member
- ❖ Connect with another group member during the week for discipleship
- ❖ Call to encourage and pray with a group member
- ❖ Be on the lookout for connections to encourage between group members for discipleship
- ❖ Create a meal schedule or prayer email, or delegate to a group member

- ❖ Pray specifically for people
- ❖ Schedule a social outing or delegate to a group member

STEP 3: Next Steps

After specific time of delegating tasks and debriefing with your apprentice to encourage them, set them free to minister within your group. Ask them to meet with other members for discipleship. Ask them to pray about branching. Invite them to attend Discipleship Training weekend. Release them to lead their own group (branch).