

The Discovery Process Overview & Explanation

OVERVIEW

The Discovery process is a powerful method for leading people to become obedient followers of Christ. Discovery encourages behaviors that lead to growth and spiritual maturity but in order to work, it needs to stay with an inductive approach to scripture. Any member of the group who slips into deductive reasoning can potentially destroy the process. When every person in the process becomes a guardian of the inductive process, it never leads to heresy, but rather releases the life-transforming power of the gospel

A Discovery Group is facilitated by using eight simple questions. These questions, or steps, are carefully designed to bind a group of people together as they explore the Word of God in a non-threatening environment. At the start of each meeting, participants will share what they are thankful for and challenges they are facing. It is followed up with a report on their efforts to practice what was discovered the previous gathering. Next is an inductive Bible study in which participants learn what the scripture reveals about God and about people. Obedience to the passage is stressed as they discuss what it will take to obey the passage – and through their earlier reports on how well they did in living it out the previous week. Each week, each participant is asked to share either the lesson or the method with others. The results are shared with the group each week. Rapid practice and sharing is the key to reproduction

Pace & Purity keeps the Discovery groups faithful to the inductive process.

Pace-keep the responses brief. Be sure to say this at the beginning of the process.

Purity-The passage preaches, not any person. Stick with the passage of scripture in front of the group – no “hyperlinking” to other passages or “rabbit trailing” to other passages, sources, experiences, and opinions! No individual may impose his or her “insight” on others – stick with the plain and simplest meaning of the passage in front of the group. Any individual may challenge any other individual for “hyperlinking” in the group with one simple question, “Where does it say that in this passage of scripture?” A member of the group may reference a passage the whole group explored in a previous Discovery session, though, since we do want to build from week to week.

In order for the Discovery process to work, every member of the group must “own” the rules and process. Every member of the group becomes a guardian of the process.

Discovery is not DMM but a catalytic tool for Disciple Making Movements. Some leaders and people often mistake the Discovery process as the solution to all things including Christian education, biblical illiteracy, spiritual formation, evangelism, missions, etc. Although Discovery has those “tendencies” it will have limited impact on the community if it does not directly connect to the DMM process what we call the DMM Wheel. Every Disciple Making Movement around the world has these five realities.



EXPLANATION

***“When my word goes forth, it shall not return empty or void,
but will accomplish the thing for which I sent it.”***

Isaiah 55:11

This verse encapsulates Discovery. God's Word is active and unstoppable. There is absolutely nothing “mystical” about Discovery, but it is God-honoring. Here's why:

1. The Discovery process focuses on the Word and the Word alone. Therefore, it transcends culture, opinion, language, heresy, and experience.
2. Discovery gets the teacher, dvds, and other ‘book studies’ out of the way, allowing the “True Teacher”—the Holy Spirit—to teach, heal, forgive, convict, save, comfort, rebuke, encourage, anoint, proclaim...
3. People directly engage God's Word. In doing so, He—He alone—receives the glory as He proves Himself faithful over and over again enlightening the hearts of people to discover who He is directly from His Word. As a result, we will be more likely to be in a mature, loving relationship with the Father and will discover how to join Him where He is already working.
4. There is a dependency on God to reveal Truth—and He does—every time.
5. He delights in speaking through people; He speaks through His word and through people to reveal Himself in the Discovery process. That is spectacular to see unfold.
6. It is stunning every time to see God at work—especially with those who are seeking or who are young in their walk with Christ.
7. Discovery is relentless in shepherding towards transformational living through: personal authenticity, accountability, personal responsibility, evangelism, prayer, community building and acts of service.
8. We've experienced very little of people “getting tired” of Discovery mostly because the group is experiencing the God of the Bible through obedience and engaging the lost, helpless and hopeless with the Gospel.

The Discovery process is much like a cake: it needs to be **tasted first** in order to really “get it”. Then, after tasting it, a discussion of why it was so good and how it was made is more profitable and enlightening. It's the “tasting” that makes the difference, as the ingredients below don't “wow” or convince. But like most good cakes, it's about simple, good ingredients—mixed in the right way and in precise amounts—that make it work. The same is true with the Discovery process and how it was developed over time and experimentation. Millions have come to faith in Christ and thousands of churches have been created as a result of Discovery being the engine for Disciple Making Movements.

By way of observation, everyone initially wants to “tweak” the Discovery process—especially those who've not tasted or tested it. We advise to stay the course for a year. Watch and see God honor this process. The words, the order, and the purpose behind each ordered step have immense value and intentionality. You will find that in “tasting and seeing it” that the Lord, indeed, is good.

The best thing that you can do is obey what God is telling you to do in the passages. Discover with a group of people including family, coworkers, neighbors, or small group **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. Start a Discovery Group with no more than four or five and begin to use the Discovery process weekly. Don't be surprised to see results quickly and consistently as people in your group obey the Word. You will eventually see others who want to join your group. The best thing to do with them is to start a new Discovery Group with them.

Taste and see

THE DISCOVERY PROCESS

	16 Words	What to say...	Purpose/Instruction
1	Thankful?	What is something you're thankful for?	<p>Positions our hearts to be grateful, models prayer, practices gratitude and proper perspective on life.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please record responses on your paper for each person.</i></p>
2	Challenge?	What was a challenge you or a loved one had this past week?	<p>Everyone has challenges. This question allows every person to be vulnerable and transparent about his or her needs. Push for concerns they have for someone in their community, school, family, and workplace.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please record responses for each person to refer back to when you get to question #8.</i></p>
3	How did it go?	How did it go?	<p>Based on the previous week's passage ("I will statements"/ "Share"/ "Serve.")</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>It is helpful to record responses on your paper for each person for accountability and storytelling of what God is doing in your Discovery Group.</i></p> <p>(Be discerning when you have seekers in your group to pray here or not.)</p>
Pause	R-R-R-D <i>Read • Read • Re-tell • Details</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reader 1 – reads passage 2. Reader 2 –reads the passage again from another translation if possible. 3. Re-teller – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask them to listen as both readers read. b. Paraphrase, not interpret, the story from memory. c. The Re-teller should feel NO pressure to capture every detail because... d. The group will fill in the gaps with any missing details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit all 3 people first before you read. • This brings focus where everyone can hear what God is saying. • Be sure that the Re-teller does NOT interpret, but simply paraphrases the narrative/theme/parable. • A benefit of this practice is that it actually equips seekers and believers to tell Bible stories from memory when in conversation with others during the rest of their week.

*4	<i>God?</i>	<i>What does this passage say about God?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage each person to write down the responses to help him or her with their individual “I will” statement after question 6.
*5	<i>People?</i>	<i>What does this passage say about people/man?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, they can always go back later to recall what the Holy Spirit was saying during the Discovering. Encourage them to do further study if desired. • Notice the *asterisk. This is very important. The asterisk asks, “Where is THAT found in the passage?” Meaning, there is to be NO hyperlinking to any other passage, sermon, verse, or text. Why? • It keeps the “sheep away from the wolves.” If I allow “Good Theologian John Doe” in—as good as they are—I’ve now opened the door for someone to potentially reference whomever your poster-child is for erroneous theology. • Coach’s note: By not hyperlinking, this allows the “non-seminarian” and the “seminarian” to be on equal footing. When you allow hyperlinking, you disenfranchise and alienate others in the group who aren’t as “churched up.”
6	<i>I will . . .</i>	<i>How will your life change when you obey this passage?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is where life change happens. Give a minute or so for people to meditate and ask, “God, what do you want me to do because of what I’ve heard and seen?” (As a result each person in your group becomes intentional and specific.) • Make sure they begin their response with “I will...” • Coach’s note: It will take some time but the stronger the “I will” statement the more you will see life change. We use SMART language to help strengthen “I will” statements. Specific/Measureable/Action-oriented/Realistic/Time-bound
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here, Discovery promotes evangelism and intentional “living out loud” what I’ve learned so others see and know.

7	Share?	Who needs to hear what I've learned?	<i>Record responses from each person on your paper for next week's accountability question #3.</i>
8	Serve?	How can we help with one of the challenges in question #2?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group needs to decide on one of the challenges mentioned in question #2 so the group can learn to serve together by meeting the need of someone in your group or someone outside of your group. • We really want the group to begin doing ministry together weekly to have their lives INTERSECT with each other outside of the confines of the church— to meet a need. Be spurred on to “love and good deeds” and go walk in them. • Don't allow your Discovery Group to be just another holy huddle or small group Bible study. Go do life with each other outside of the church so the lost can see love in action. • A reminder from what Jesus said in Matthew 20:28, <i>“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”</i>

P R A Y (if the group members are believers)

Roles:

1. Facilitator – pace & purity – the Shepherd, not “Teacher”
 - a. Goes first – sets the level of authenticity – models obedience and sharing
 - b. Engages the group members and keeps the group process moving
 - c. Makes group aware of time (about a minute - 90 seconds per person)
 - d. Ensures no one person dominates the group dynamics or process
 - e. Guards the integrity of the model, strictly keeping to the text, allowing no hyperlinking, helps group to have fun in “outing” others in their tendency to hyperlink
2. Reader 1 – reads passage all the way through
3. Reader 2 – same as above (useful to read from another translation)
4. Re-teller – paraphrases, not interprets, the passage from memory.

About the process:

- Questions **1-2** help us to form *community* by expressing our gratitude and challenges. We will begin to realize that we are doing life together. FYI, we use the word “challenge” not “prayer request” because when you have lost people in your group, they may not know what you are talking about or how to react.
- *Prayer*. Please use discernment whether to pray or not. If your group has all Christians in it then it will be very natural to pray or call on someone you know to pray. However, if your group is mostly lost people, then we ask that you be sensitive to how the Spirit is leading. Until faith forms, prayer will be premature for seekers.
- Question **3** ushers in *accountability and responsibility* for action and transformational, missional living from the previous week.
- **R-R-R-D** is the “*special sauce*”. (When is the last time you’ve attended a small group and actually heard God’s word 3 times? If you stopped here, you’d be ahead of 99% of most other Sunday School/small group classes across the country). Participants will be challenged and encouraged to hear someone “re-tell” the passage in their own words. The challenge is “Do *I* have this story firmly in **my** mind and heart, ready to retell it to others?”
- Questions **4-6** are the *core* of the Discovery process. They remain constant and are enough to feast on until Jesus returns. Make sure the facilitator coaches their group to share the scripture verse of their response. This keeps the group accountable and focused on the scripture passage alone. The Word becomes the expert, not any group member.
- Question **6** is the *centerpiece*. It is where we enact and choose to obey what we’ve seen and heard. We take on responsibility and commit to living out something that God has birthed in our hearts or made us aware of through His Word. At first, most of the time the “I will” statements are nothing terribly profound however they will still require effort, intentionality, risk, and loads of faith to execute. The facilitator may have to coach their group to have stronger “I will” statements after the first two-three weeks. The stronger the “I will” statements are the more of a faith-changer it will be for the individual and group. Using SMART language will help to get them stronger as time goes by.
- Question **7**. *Evangelism* – moving from “me” to “thee” – developing a heart to love others – moving outward with my focus – and being like Jesus.
- Question **8**. *Serve/Ministry* – where lives intersect outside of the walls of the church by rendering acts of service. This, too, is a faith-changer when we love and serve like Christ.
- *Prayer*. Please use discernment whether to pray or not. If your group has all Christians in it then it would be very natural to pray or call on someone you know to pray. However, if your group is mostly lost people, then we ask that you be sensitive to how the Spirit is leading.