

A Spiritual Growth System Case Study

Here is one example of a discipleship process of ministry. This is the text used by New Song Community Church in their Spiritual Growth brochure.

Once per year, New Song's pastors teach on the spiritual growth process. As often as possible, they refer to the brochure. They draw attention to the process. Everyone gets an opportunity to hear and understand that taking these spiritual steps will help them grow.

As you review this process, write down ideas that may be helpful to you as you design a process of discipleship. Note ideas that will not work in your culture. Write down how those ideas might be adapted in your setting. And, write down new ideas that will work in your setting.

Remember, you are developing a process, a system, not copying someone else's.

The Spiritual Growth Process

Spiritual growth is a process that requires the practice of habits which help us think and act more like the Lord. They enable us to feel more like He does about the world we live in. We designed the following steps in our spiritual growth process to help each New Song Church member take personal responsibility for his or her spiritual growth.

Some of the steps are individual (like reading a book). Others require the help of a more mature friend (meeting together one to one). Most require participating in a Small Group. We encourage members to follow the steps listed below, checking them off as they are completed. When they come to a step they haven't completed, it becomes their next assignment.

The 100 Level = Worshiping Regularly

The 100 level is designed to help you take initial steps of growth in your ip with Christ. The order of these steps is only a suggested order. If you want to know what your "next step" in Christ is, simply read down this list and put a check mark next to each step you have already taken. When you come to a step you haven't completed yet, that is your next step.

- Attend worship services regularly
- Receive Christ
- Get baptized as a new believer
- Invite people to church regularly
- Volunteer to serve somewhere at your church
- Attend a new members class

The 200 Level = Taking Responsibility or My Spiritual Growth

The 200 series is designed to equip you to take personal responsibility for your own spiritual growth.

Join a Small Group

Recommended studies for Small Groups:

- *The God Questions* (by Hal Seed)
- *Experiencing God* (by Henry Blackaby)
- *The Purpose-Driven Life* (by Rick Warren)
- *Financial Peace University* (by Dave Ramsey)

Watch "SOAP" video (by Wayne Cordiero) and begin a daily Bible reading program

Volunteer in an on-going ministry

Read *The Life You've Always Wanted* (by John Ortberg)

Acquire a Mentor

Recommended materials for mentoring relationships:

Topical Memory System (from the Navigators) Bible Study Methods (by Rick Warren)

Read *The Treasure Principle* (by Randy Alcorn)

Read *Prayer Coach* (by Jim Nicodem)

Participate in a community service event.

Notes:

"SOAP" is a systematic approach to a devotional time developed by Wayne Cordeiro "FrontLine" is New Song's ministry to the poor and needy of our community.

The 300 Level = Maturing as a Christ-Follower

Following Christ is a lifetime adventure of discovering God's ongoing plan for your life, character, behavior, and service. The 300 series is designed to train those who are committed to growing in Christ while helping others to do the same.

Attend "a class on how to mentor someone

Become a mentor to someone else

Participate in a Short Term Missions Trip

Read "The Church of Irresistible Influence" (by Robert Lewis)

Watch Andy Stanley Luke 15 video on evangelism

Pray through "Operation World" (by Patrick Johnstone)

Watch Rick Warren's Catalyst conference video

Read good books

Recommended reading:

- *Ordering Your Private World* (by Gordon MacDonald)
- *The Secrets of the Vine* (by Bruce Wilkinson)
- *The Life God Rewards* (by Bruce Wilkinson)
- *Hearing God*, (by Dallas Willard)
- *Eternity in Their Hearts* (by Don Richardson)
- *Rediscovering Church* (by Bill Hybels)
- *The Four Loves* (by C.S. Lewis)
- *The Screwtape Letters* (by C.S. Lewis)
- *The Practice of the Presence of God* (by Brother Lawrence)
- *Winning with People* (by John Maxwell)
- *The Rise of Christianity* (by Rodney Stark)

A mature disciple never stops growing. Continue to seek Him!

Notes:

No one will ever complete the 300 level, because no one will ever become fully mature in Christ.

If you adopt this model, you can add to your 300 level later, because it will never be complete.

But once many of your people have completed the 100 and 200 level, it is difficult to change them because then people will think you are making them start all over again.

In the "good books" section, the pastors of this church have tried to create a well-rounded list of books that have impacted them personally. One concept of discipleship is that the unique experiences of one's spiritual mentors ought to have an influence on the spiritual development of their protégé

The Leadership Track

Some Christ-followers are gifted and called to lead others as they follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). The Leadership Track is designed to teach you the principles of godly leadership and help others experience the joy of leading.

Begin listening to Andy Stanley's Leadership podcast

Read LEADERSHIP books

Recommended reading:

- *Next Generation Leader* (by Andy Stanley)
- *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* (by Ken Blanchard)
- *Courageous Leadership* (by Bill Hybels)
- *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day* (by John Maxwell)

Attend a conference or Training Event for your area of ministry

The purpose of showing you this example is not to tell you that you should adopt this process as is, but to give you an idea of what a step-by-step spiritual growth process can look like.

Do you see how this works and why the church developed its process this way?

Note: The church that developed this process took seventeen years to put all these pieces in place. They believe they still haven't perfected their end of the process.