



"Go therefore 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 you always, to the end of the age."

*Matthew 28:19-20*

### **GENDER BASED**

Groups of 4 People of the Same Gender

### **DISCIPLESHIP CENTERED**

Friends Challenging Spiritual Growth and Faith

### **MINISTRY ORIENTED**

Balancing Inward Growth and Outward Ministry

### **GRACE SATURATED**

Encouragement and Accountability Grounded in Grace

## ***WHAT IS A CORE 4 GROUP?***

A CORE 4 Group is gender-specific closed group of 4 believers (including the leader) who meet together weekly for the purpose of growing together as a faithful follower of Jesus. A person joins the CORE 4 Group by invitation or by

developing a group on your own after prayer and guidance from the pastor and church leadership.

There are several ministries and Bible Fellowship Groups designed in the church to reach out to those who are lost or those in need of a church family, a CORE 4 Group however consists of believers who desire a deeper walk with Christ. It is not evangelistic in its form or function, but in its fruit: it makes disciples who will then go on to make more disciples.

The format of a CORE 4 Group is not one of a teacher-student, but a roundtable discussion. In their book *The Invested Life*, Joel Rosenberg and T.E. Koshy suggest that a discipleship relationship is “more personal, more practical, and more powerful. A teacher shares information, while a discipler shares life; a teacher aims for the head, while a discipler aims for the heart; a teacher measures knowledge, while a discipler measures faith; a teacher is an authority, while a discipler is a servant; and a teacher says, ‘Listen to me,’ while a discipler says, ‘Follow me.’” This blueprint, sketched by Jesus Christ through His personal example, is how discipleship is accomplished in the lives of believers, and, ultimately, within the local church. When this plan is followed, those involved will participate in three dynamics that result in growth in their personal lives, as well as in the Kingdom: community, accountability, and multiplication.

## ***HOW DO I FIND A CORE 4 GROUP?***

Making disciples in a CORE 4 Group is a major step in our journey of faith as a follower of Jesus. It should flow out of our Bible Fellowship Class or other ministries that you are involved in currently. Of course these Bible Fellowship Classes and ministries of the church including Worship are the “fishing ponds” for CORE 4 Groups. As people form friendships and bonds in these areas of ministry, handfuls of them will decide to take the next step and begin a discipleship journey together in a CORE 4 Group.

## ***IF I WANTED TO BEGIN A CORE 4 GROUP HOW DO I GET STARTED?***

The first step in establishing a formal disciple-making relationship is choosing disciples. Jesus, our example in selecting disciples, spent time in prayer before

selecting men (Luke 6:12-16). The word disciple means learner. Begin by asking God to send you a group of men or women who have a desire to learn and grow. When people approached Jesus about becoming His disciples, our Lord held a high standard. One man said, "I'll follow you, but let me go bury my father." Now, the man's father had not yet died—the man was reaching for an excuse to postpone the kind of commitment that Jesus expected of him. Jesus responded with something that the man would have understood to mean, "You can't do that. The kingdom is too important."

Your CORE 4 Group should consist of F.A.T. believers: Faithful, Available, and Teachable. A faithful person is dedicated, trustworthy, and committed. Consider a potential disciple's faithfulness by observing other areas of his/her spiritual life, such as church attendance, Life Group involvement, or service in the church. Faithfulness is determined by a commitment to spiritual things.

Discern an individual's availability by his willingness to meet with and invest in others. Does this person carve out time to listen, study, and learn from others? Is he accessible when called upon? Does she have a regular quiet time with God of reading the Word and praying? Availability is measured by a willingness to serve God.

After discerning that an individual is faithful, available, and teachable, prayerfully approach him or her and ask, "*Would you be interested in being a part of a Core 4 Discipleship group and praying together?*" Many people are open to that. All you have to do is ask. We don't recommend that you say, "*Would you like for me to disciple you?*" as this question may come across in a derogatory manner. Keep in mind that men should disciple men, and women should disciple women.

## ***HOW MANY PEOPLE SHOULD BE IN A GROUP? WHY JUST 4?***

Because accountability works well in a smaller setting, the ideal size of a disciple-making group is 3 and you. We recommend that you do not have more than 4, and remember that a one-on-one relationship is not ideal.

## ***WHERE SHOULD WE MEET?***

Find a meeting place away from the church. Restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, diners, and homes are all good options. Meeting outside the church

in the community encourages your group members to publicize their faith. Be sure to select a place that is convenient to all group members.

## ***HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE MEET?***

Ideally, you should meet once a week for about 45 minutes to an hour. You can meet more frequently, but it is important that you meet at least once a week. It is important to remember that discipleship is about the relationship between you and your group members, not about checking a requirement box. Disciple-making is a way of life, not a program.

## ***WHAT SHOULD CORE 4 MEETINGS TOGETHER LOOK LIKE?***

Here are some elements that your weekly times together can include:  
Begin with prayer.

Have a time of intentional conversation by briefly sharing the highs and lows of the week. You can also share celebrations and praises.

Discuss the suggested CORE 4 Question or Topic of the Week. These CORE 4 Questions and Topics will be given each week in the Sunday Worship Guide or made available on the church website.

Always bring the Word of God and be sure to base the discussion on Bible Truth and application. A great way to do this is to share HEAR journals from the week. The goal of studying the Bible is to apply the Word of God. Remember, knowledge without application is useless information.

Here are some good application questions to utilize:

- What are you hearing from God, and what are you doing about it?
- What is God teaching you, and how is it affecting your life?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there an action or attitude to avoid?
- Is there a principle to apply?

Spend a few moments asking questions and keeping each other accountable. All accountability should be saturated with grace, not legalism. You can't expect what you don't inspect.

Share prayer requests and close with prayer.

## ***WHEN DO WE BRING THE CORE 4 GROUP TO A CONCLUSION?***

Always begin with the end in mind. Your group should meet for 12 months at the most and they should expect that final date from the very beginning. Some groups develop a closer bond, which results in accelerated growth; others take longer. We do not recommend meeting for longer than 12 months. It is ok if someone in the group desires to leave the group and begin their own group. Some will not want to start another CORE 4 Group because of the fellowship and bonds formed within the current group. But a group that does not intend to multiply will defeat the goal of disciple-making. Remember, the goal is for the men and the women of the group to replicate their lives into someone else, otherwise you are only getting together with friends and not engaging in discipleship that Jesus has commissioned us to do.