

LIVING ON MISSION

A close-up photograph of a map with several blue pushpins and blue string connecting them, symbolizing a mission or journey. The map is in black and white, and the pushpins and string are in a vibrant blue. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

FIVE WEEK SERIES
VINEYARD YOUTH CURRICULUM

vineyardyouth

LIVING ON MISSION

WELCOME!

to Vineyard Youth Curriculum

Hello, friends. What you hold in your hands is the product of lots of people, lots of prayer, and lots of purpose. As youth leaders in the Vineyard movement, we believe that the work we do with students will have much influence on what the movement will look like over the next ten to twenty years.

We set out to design a curriculum that communicates and reinforces the biblical and kingdom values of the Vineyard while inviting students to embrace the reality that they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Understanding the diversity within the Vineyard movement, we purposely designed curriculum that can be utilized by groups of differing sizes led by either paid or volunteer leaders in any geographical setting or location. Easy, right? We believe we accomplish this by offering a buffet of activities that allow you - the in-the-trenches leader to choose what works for you and your group. We're pretty sure no one will use all of the material proposed, but we're confident some of it will be a good fit for your group.

Each Lesson Will Include:

- Experiential, hands-on activities that reflect a variety of learning styles.
- Large group questions to frame a conversation (I.E., not a lecture).
- Application suggestions to live and reveal the kingdom of God.
- Small group questions.
- Times for you as the leader to tune into what God is doing in you and your students' lives.
- Times for students to hear from God for themselves.

This curriculum is written by youth leaders for youth leaders. If you would like to join the team and contribute your voice to the conversation, we would love to hear from you.

You may not hear this enough, but thank you for what you do. It's important, it's needed, and it's laying the foundation for a new generation of leaders to continue the good things God has already done in the Vineyard movement. Keep up the good work!

Why This Topic?

Two long standing values of the Vineyard are caring for the poor and evangelism. In this series we invited Marvin Suarez, who with his wife Carmen, planted the first Vineyard church in Puerto Rico. Through their passion for the poor, and their evangelism efforts, they have since planted three more. Marvin shares his passion, both from a scriptural foundation and from experience, for living missionally. We think your teens will find this topic relevant and engaging, as you discuss how your group can catch the vision for mission oriented faith.

Helpful Reminders For You, the Youth Leader

In working with this curriculum there are a few ideas we'd like to keep in mind:

Plug in your stories wherever you can. These are bare bones here, you add the meat!

Experiential learning lasts. We've tried to make this as experiential as possible, rather than just providing head knowledge. We encourage you the leader to try it out. Take some risks!

Humor is key. It's hard for us to artificially add this from a distance, but we encourage you to find all chances you can to connect through humor!

Context matters. We don't know what's going on in your group right now, but you do. We encourage you to pray/think about how this message applies to the new ones in your group, the veterans, and the seekers! How does this tie into the message of salvation through Jesus?

These Lessons Are on Video!

Go to vineyardyouthusa.com/resources to view the video teaching for this series.

Each lesson is taught by Christian Dunn, and you can follow along with the written version.

DEVELOPING MY WORLDVIEW

YOUTH LEADER SOUL CARE

STARTER QUESTION

LESSON

When you read the verses below, what do you hear the Holy Spirit telling you?

Genesis 1:27–31a

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

When you hear the word mission, what word, phrase, image, or thought comes to mind?

DEFINING WORLDVIEW

Worldview is usually defined as "the lenses we all wear to interpret how the world works and how it should work." Our worldview is influenced by our upbringing, experiences in life, education, the Bible, music, culture, and more.

For a follower of Jesus, it is very important to develop a biblical worldview. We should be wearing our "Bible glasses" all the time. Most of our worldview influence should come from the Word of God, especially if we are going to talk about living missionally.

LIVING MISSIONALLY

The most basic definition of living missionally is living as Jesus lived. He lived connected to the Father, engaged with others and his culture, and in service to his community. Jesus is the best example to follow. He lived with purpose and to leave a mark. That is our challenge.

Main Point: God is our good provider.

1. It was all perfect.

Genesis 1 and 2 shows that God's provision was the ultimate human dream. All our needs were supplied by our Maker:

- Perfect environment in a perfect world—God had declared as GOOD all of his creation. Human beings, animals, plants, and the world itself were all in perfect balance.
- Perfect companionship with the perfect couple—God created Adam and Eve for each other and their family. They had the capacity to have a good relationship with one another and with their God.
- Perfect job with no efficiency or production hindrances—The Lord placed Adam and Eve in a special place he prepared for them: The Garden of Eden. There they had all their needs covered through taking care of the Garden. The Garden's production was perfect and sufficient for them.
- Perfect relationship with the perfect God—Every day the Lord came to meet with Adam and Eve. It was a continuous and meaningful relationship between the Creator and Adam and Eve.

It was all perfect: perfect world, companionship, work, and relationship with God. The Lord provided all that human beings needed. It could not get better than that!

2. The fall and sin made all imperfect.

Genesis 3:1–14 narrates how human beings did not obey God's only rule established in Genesis 2:17: you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.

As a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience, the perfect became imperfect. The easy became difficult. Relationship with God was broken and interrupted. The eternal became temporary. Sin started tarnishing every aspect of our lives. Since then, our lives and behavior have become a copy of Adam and Eve's: We are full of fear and shame, we hide from God (even when our inner being is attracted toward him), and we blame others for our wrongdoing.

When you read the first chapters of Genesis and you get to Genesis 3:1–14, you want to stop the narrative. It is like if you do not want the fall to happen. But it happened, and sin cursed God’s perfect creation. However, God shows up with a restoration plan: Jesus.

3. God declares his mission.

Our amazing and loving God feels for his creation, especially for the crown of his creation—human beings. Genesis 3:1–14 happened and suddenly we get to Genesis 3:15 which is called the proto-evangelion or first Gospel. In that amazing verse God declared that he is on a mission: the restoration of all things.

Genesis 3:15 basically says that, in due time, a woman is going to have a son that is going to crush Satan and his purposes. But that crushing was not going to happen without pain from the woman’s offspring—a clear description of Jesus going to the cross to pay the price for the restoration of our relationship with God and eventual restoration of all things.

God had a long-term strategy and plan:

- God created a nation to be a reflection of his heart and will. God chose Abram (Genesis 12) and told him that he was going to be a blessing to all nations. God renamed him Abraham (meaning “father of many”) to reflect his meaning and purpose. Eventually God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15) to act upon his desire to create his nation: Israel.
- God gave Israel his law—civil, criminal, sanitary, and religious laws to govern over them. These laws were designed to place in godly order all aspects of life. These laws were designed to point out sin and, at the same time, restrain the sin and the sinful nature of the people in covenant with God.
- As a nation, Israel was called to be a witness to all nations of the world of God’s holy nature (Genesis 22:15–18; Leviticus 20:23–26).
- As a nation, God told Israel to treat each other justly, with kindness and with love. Specifically, God told them to treat the foreigner and the poor among them with dignity (Leviticus 19:9–18).
- Israel was supposed to be an example representing God himself to the nations of the world. God was going to supply all their needs to the point that no one would be poor in his nation (Deuteronomy 15:1–6).
- Israel developed, and Jesus was born into it. Jesus fulfilled the Genesis 3:15 prophecy, starting the new kingdom of God era—the era we live in now.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

MINISTRY PROMPT

GROUP PROJECT

4. Jesus positioned us into God's mission.

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–18; Luke 24:47–48; John 20:21) is Jesus' way of telling us that we are now in mission with him and for him. As Jesus' followers, we are called to be disciples making disciples—the recipients of God's love and mercy giving away God's love and mercy.

1. How would you define our mission? What aspects or components make up our mission?
2. What comes to your mind when you hear the word poor? Why do you think people are poor?
3. Are there any social difficulties in your city/neighborhood that are creating or promoting poverty?
4. Imagine you have no constraints at all. What outreach project would you pursue and implement in your city/neighborhood? Why that specific one?
5. What three people who are part of your sphere of influence do you want to see come to Jesus' feet? What do you think you need to commit to do to see them come to Jesus?
6. Do you believe you are participating in God's mission? Why? Explain.

Break the group into twos (preferably of the same sex). Have them pray for wisdom and courage to pursue living missionally and pray as the Holy Spirit guides them according to their individual needs.

Do you have a specific outreach project in your city/neighborhood that you want to do as a group? Do you want to start praying for one?

PARTICIPATING IN SERVING THE POOR

YOUTH LEADER SOUL CARE

STARTER QUESTION

LESSON

When you read the verses below, do you notice a tendency in your heart to serve the poor? Do you notice resistance?

Galatians 2:9–10

James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

When you hear the word poor, what word, phrase, image, or thought comes to your mind?

Main Point: God wants us to be aware of and bless the poor.

1. Poverty is a disgrace for humanity.

The fact that there are people in the world in need while others have in excess speaks loudly of our sinful, greedy, and selfish nature. We love to accumulate things we do not need, and we even consider things we want but are not essential to be needs. The way we spend our money speaks about the desires and tendencies of our heart.

Matthew 6:19–21

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

2. The Church is called to bless the poor.

Since its foundation, the Church has been providing the basic needs of the poor and needy. In fact, the first institutional mission of the newly born Church was related to the poor and needy that the Church was helping.

Acts 6:1–6

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Notice the importance of these seven servants: They were treated with full recognition and responsibility as a ministry and as ministers of God's mercy. They were a vital part of the holistic ministry of the Church.

It is important to mention that the Church is not called to solve the poverty crisis of the world but to supply the basic needs of individuals in the Church's midst and surrounding communities.

It seems that as the Church grew worldwide, the ministry to the poor grew wider to other areas of service to the poor, specifically in matters related to the widows in need, which was a very common situation at that time.

3. The Church is called to disciple the family of the poor and needy.

The Great Commission calls believers to disciple the nations. One way of doing it is to show the people and families of a nation how to take care for the needy and poor in their own family. Sometimes people do not think that their own family is a resource for help but see the institution of the Church as a merciful resource.

1 Timothy 5:3–5

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.

Unfortunately, in our time, the government has taken upon the responsibility of the poor and the needy through social programs. But the main group responsible to provide for the needs of the needy is the family members of that person. The Church should be their second resource.

4. The follower of Jesus is called to minister to the poor and needy generously.

When we walk on the streets of our cities and towns, we can see a variety of needs, including people asking for money or food. What are we supposed to do when we get close to those people in need?

a) We are called to be merciful. We are not called to judge people in need. Sometimes before supplying a need, we want to understand why that person or family has that need. We want to know why they are in the difficult situation they are. But we are not called to become investigators or judges of the people coming to us for help.

Luke 6:36–38

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Notice the commands given by Jesus: be merciful, do not judge, do not condemn, forgive, and give. Mercy is the name of the game.

b) Jesus commanded us to help the needy—no questions asked, no strings attached.

Matthew 5:42

Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

c) When someone asks for help, a follower of Jesus can supply the real need of the person or family by listening to the Holy Spirit. The Lord can speak to us to reveal a need the person or family has that the Lord wants to meet.

Acts 3:1–7

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

MINISTRY PROMPT GROUP PROJECT

in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.

Maybe your faith does not go so far as to take the risk Peter and John took, but you can give the person something you have: a piece of candy, a snack, a word of encouragement, prayer, or something else the Holy Spirit tells you. Do not let the person in need with their hand extended. Supply the needy with something material or spiritual you have. Demonstrate God's love to that person with the resources and faith you have available.

1. Do you feel you are following God's heart, desires, and commands regarding the poor and needy? What areas do you think you can improve on?
2. Do you have a real desire to provide for the poor and needy? Explain.
3. Does your checkbook, agenda, energy, and spending support and reflect that you are taking care of the needy? Explain.
4. How can you pray for the poor and needy in your community? How can you serve the poor and needy in your community?
5. What is your attitude toward people in need who approach you? Are you accepting, neutral, or negative? Explain.
6. Do you see purity in your heart when you think about the poor and needy? Is your heart contaminated with selfishness and self-centeredness?
7. How do you plan to improve in matters related to the poor and needy?

Break the group into twos (preferably of the same sex). Have them discuss their fears about ministering to the poor and then pray for one another.

Continue praying and planning for this.

OUTREACH

YOUTH LEADER SOUL CARE

STARTER QUESTION LESSON

When you read the verses below, what do you hear the Holy Spirit telling you?

Matthew 20:25–28

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- 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."

When you hear the word outreach, what word, phrase, image, or thought comes to your mind?

DEFINING OUTREACH

Outreach is any active and intentional action we do to show God's love in practical ways. In outreach we serve other people's needs. It can be a spontaneous action done individually or it can be an action or activity planned and performed by a group of people.

Main Point: God wants us to live connected to and serving our community.

1. Outreach: A way of life

Some of us may relate the word outreach to church activities, and that could be part of it. But it is more than that. Outreach was Jesus' way of life. He lived connected to his world and to his community and that manifested itself in service and in relationships. John 4 recounts the story of Jesus asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water. That request led to Jesus staying in that town for several days, and many people believed in him.

John 4:7; 41

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"... and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.

You can see this pattern in Jesus' interaction with people all the time—starting conversations, seeing needs, approaching the needy, or responding to someone coming to him to receive prayer or healing. Jesus was present, available, and willing to connect to and serve others.

2. Outreach: A call to have impact

We are called to be salt and light to the world. Both need to be “out there” to do their work. The salt and the light need to have contact with whatever needs to be salted or lit. If there is no contact, there will be no impact.

Matthew 5:13–16

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

3. Outreach: A bridge to God's love and possible evangelism

Having the desire and availability to connect to people to demonstrate God's love in practical ways is foundational to seeing change in people's lives. We serve, love, and connect with the hope that we will leave a mark in peoples' lives and eventually will have the opportunity to share the Gospel with them. But if the opportunity to share the Gospel with them does not come along, we need to remember that our work in the Lord is never in vain; we can see ourselves as sowing seeds. We can trust the plant will grow in time.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 3:7–9

So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service...

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

But be careful not to treat people like projects or goals. We connect with people, we serve people, and we make ourselves available to them to show them God's love. If anything else happens after this, is by God's grace.

4. Outreach: A team effort

Outreach can be a fun, encouraging, and fulfilling group activity. It is also easier because the pressure and responsibilities are spread over the whole group. These activities could become training opportunities for new and less experienced believers.

Remember that the outreach goal is to show God's love in practical ways. People are going to be touched by God's love, and is likely that their perception of God is going to change because you showed a new perspective of his love to them.

5. Outreach: A few examples

This is a basic list of things you could do with others as outreach projects: servant evangelism, \$1 car wash, health fair, power evangelism, service in a nursing home, grocery giveaways, or cleaning a park, beach, or any public area.

More specialized outreach projects could be painting a school, having a tutoring program, or holding VBS type programs.

1. Are you a person who is present, available, and willing to connect with and serve others? Do you need to improve on any of these attitudes? Explain.
2. Are you hiding behind your personality or busyness to avoid being available to others? Explain.
3. Are you having enough contact with the people around you to impact them with God's love? Do you think you can improve in this way? Explain.
4. Have you been frustrated with someone because it seems that they do not respond to God's love? What is your attitude when that happens?
5. Do you feel called to serve in any specific way? Expand and explain.
6. Prepare your own list of possible outreach activities you could do with your church youth group.

MINISTRY PROMPT

GROUP PROJECT

Break the group in twos (preferably of the same sex). Have them talk about their fears to live missionally in outreach and pray for one another for opportunities to happen, for doors to open up to show God's love in practical ways, and for a new love anointing on each person in the group to live missionally in outreach.

Continue planning and praying for your city/neighborhood outreach project.

YOUTH LEADER SOUL CARE

STARTING QUESTION

LESSON

When you read the verses below, what do you hear the Holy Spirit telling you?

Mark 6:7, 12–13

Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

When you hear the word evangelism, what word, phrase, image, or thought comes to your mind?

DEFINING EVANGELISM

Evangelism is the action of an individual or group to reach others to explain the Gospel or good news of salvation of Jesus. The goal is for the receiver of the Gospel to restore his/her relationship with God, enter into a discipleship relationship within the church and to have eternal salvation.

Main Point: God wants to bring people into his kingdom and into relationship with him.

1. **Evangelism: A way of life**

Like outreach, evangelism needs to be part of our way of living. This is a spiritual habit that we can develop. We need to be aware of the spiritual need of salvation of the people we relate to. Usually people don't know that they need to know and receive the Gospel.

When we relate to family, friends, coworkers, customers, and neighbors (people in our sphere of influence) and they have seen us showing God's love in practical ways through outreach, they will probably be more open to having a spiritual conversation and sharing the Gospel. This is more difficult with people we do not know and only encounter casually on the streets. However, God is so merciful that he can give us a divine appointment with a stranger for us to share the Gospel.

2. Evangelism: The Information we need to share

Sooner or later we will find ourselves in a position to share the Gospel with an individual or a group. The most basic information needed to communicate the Gospel is this:

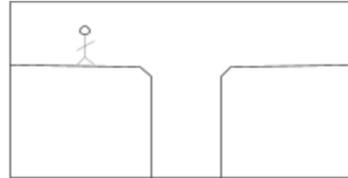
- Salvation is a gift. We are reconciled with God by his grace; it is a gift from God (Romans 6:23b). We do not buy our relationship with God by our own good deeds (Ephesians 2:8–9).
- Because we are sinners, we can't reconcile with God by ourselves or by good deeds; our sin doesn't allow us to (Romans 3:23). We are eternally condemned because of our sin (Romans 6:23a).
- But God is love and decided to become a person in Jesus to pay for our sins and enable us to have a relationship with him (1 John 4:8). God is also righteous and his own character does not allow him to declare us free from sin just because he loves us; someone needed to pay for our sin and that someone is Jesus (Nahum 1:3a).
- We receive salvation by faith. All we need to do to be reconciled with God and receive eternal life is to believe and confess that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is sufficient and available to us (Romans 10:9–10).

3. Evangelism: An illustration we can share

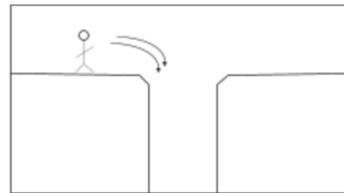
- **(THESE ILLUSTRATIONS WERE OMITTED FROM THE VIDEO, BUT ARE HERE IN THE NOTES FOR YOU TO USE AT YOUR DISCRETION WITH YOUR GROUP).**
- If possible and time and place allows it, you can illustrate the Gospel with the following drawing:
- In the beginning Adam and Eve could relate to God without any restriction.



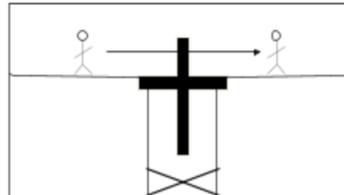
- They disobeyed God, and then sin separated all of us from God. There is a death sentence over us.



- We try to get to God with good deeds but our sin does not allow us to.



- Jesus came to pay the price of our sin so that we can relate freely with God. We have eternal life through Jesus. Death was defeated by Jesus when he resurrected.



4. Evangelism: A team effort

Like outreach, evangelism can be a fun, encouraging, and fulfilling group activity. This alleviates pressure because responsibilities are spread among the group. These activities could be training opportunities for new and less experienced believers.

5. Evangelism: A few examples

Outreach activities sometimes open the doors for people to ask about Jesus. That's when we can share the Gospel.

We can use holidays as opportunities to plan special activities to appeal to the community or to invite people to church.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

MINISTRY PROMPT

GROUP PROJECT

One tool that is becoming common in Vineyard churches is the Six Pack. This is a pouch with six side-by-side cards that include the basic information of the church. You don't even need to talk to invite someone to come to church. Pray for divine appointments whenever you are going out and be ready with your Six-Pack invitation cards. The Lord will do the rest.

6. The importance of personal relationships

Don't disregard the importance of personal relationships in evangelism. It is a lot easier to share the Gospel with those you know than with strangers. Statistics say that 85 percent of people sitting in our churches are part of that church because someone from the church evangelized and invited them to come.

1. Are you aware of where your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors are in their relationship with Jesus? What percentage of them know Jesus?
2. Do you know how to share the Gospel? Have you tried?
3. Is it difficult for you to have spiritual conversations with people you know? Is it difficult for you to share the Gospel?
4. When was the last time that you shared the Gospel with someone? How was your experience?
5. Are you developing personal relationships with nonbelievers on purpose? Do you spend most of your time with believers?

Break the group in twos or threes (preferably of the same sex). Try sharing a basic 2-3 minute version of the Gospel. See how it goes!

Continue planning and praying for your city/neighborhood outreach project.

DISCIPLESHIP

YOUTH LEADER SOUL CARE

When you read the verses below, what do you hear the Holy Spirit telling you?

Matthew 28:18–20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

John 20:21

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

STARTING QUESTION

When you hear the word discipleship, what word, phrase, image, or thought comes to your mind?

LESSON

DEFINING DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is the conscious action of helping another individual or group to become like Jesus and do what Jesus did. As followers of Jesus, we are called to be disciples and disciple others.

Main Point: God has commanded us to help other people to grow in him.

1. Discipleship: A way of life

Discipleship is sometimes explained as developing three important relationships: (1) With God (upward), (2) with other believers (inward), and (3) with the nonbeliever (outward). Keeping those three relationships in balance is important to develop a healthy soul and life. If you focus mostly in your relationship with God, you take the risk of becoming esoteric and mystic in your Christianity. If you mainly develop your relationship within the church, you run the risk of seeing the church as if it is a club. If you focus on your relationships with the nonbelievers

and keep pressing toward those relationships, you run the risk of becoming like a social worker with some Jesus flavor to it. Be aware of balance as you develop those three relationships.

2. Discipleship is intentional and happens in relationships.

Jesus had thousands of followers (or general disciples) but he invested his life on twelve men and a few families (e.g., he frequently visited Lazarus's family). Of those twelve men, he invested in three of them intimately—Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1; Mark 5:37; 14:32–34).

When the apostles were spreading the Gospel throughout the world, they decided to stay intentionally in some cities for prolonged periods of time to develop the disciples of those places (Acts 18:11; Acts 19:10). Paul stayed in Corinth and Ephesus more than a year to develop the disciples of those cities.

3. Discipleship could be a group or person-to-person endeavor.

Jesus had many followers (general or crowd disciples), twelve main disciples, and three intimate disciples. He taught to the crowds (Mark 2:13), his twelve men (Matthew 13:10–11), and his three intimate ones (Mark 14:33–42). He performed miracles with the crowd present (Matthew 9:23–33; 15:35–39), with the twelve (Mark 9:35–50), and with his three closer disciples (Matthew 17:1–9).

Jesus' was very intentional about discipleship. He knew that the future of his kingdom depended on his discipleship efforts with these twelve men and a few others he was close to.

The Apostle Paul did the same thing: He moved in the crowd and had a few disciples closer to him. He even told Timothy, one of his closest disciples, to follow the same process Jesus and he followed (2 Timothy 2:2).

4. Discipleship is a four-lane road.

- **Lane 1: Developing our relationship with God**—This usually happens through developing our spiritual disciplines: prayer, fasting, worship, silence before God's presence. and meditating on Scripture (Matthew 6:6; Matthew 6:17–18).

- **Lane 2: Increasing in knowledge**—Bible knowledge is necessary to understand and follow God’s will for us. The Bible provides principles that will help us develop a godly character and the habits that will help us to live appropriately and effectively in this world for the glory of God (John 5:39; Acts 17:11).
- **Lane 3: Developing life together**—Having a teacher-disciple relationship is important. Seeing the teacher’s lifestyle and decision-making process up close helps us to become a faithful follower of Jesus (1 Corinthians 4:16–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:7–9).
- **Lane 4: Practicing kingdom expansion**—This is the “let’s do this together” part of discipleship. Discipleship is neither esoteric nor theoretical. Discipleship is practical. Part of the learning and personal development process comes with “doing the stuff” together (Luke 9:1–2, 10:1–12).

When we read the Gospels, we find Jesus moving constantly from lane to lane. Jesus’ discipleship process was never static. Jesus gave his disciples all possible experiences he could through teaching them Scripture, letting them see his prayer life, and having question-and-answer sessions with him. Jesus also provided experiential learning when he challenged them by sending them to the villages to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God. It was an all-encompassing experience.

5. Discipleship is a life process.

Discipleship is a never-ending process. We are always learning and should be available to others to disciple them. We are called to be disciples making disciples. It is one of the most important privileges the Lord gives us as his followers—to help others follow him also.

1. When you look at your life, who would you say have been your teachers/mentors? Who has discipled you?
2. Has your discipleship process been more as part of a group or one-on-one discipleship? Explain.
3. Do you feel responsible for helping other people grow in their faith? What about your family, friends, and neighbors? Explain.
4. Are you in a mentoring, coaching, or spiritual formation relationship right now? Have you been in the past? Have you ever been offered a mentoring, coaching, or spiritual formation relationship?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

MINISTRY PROMPT

GROUP PROJECT

5. Have you ever had a one-on-one discipleship relationship? Have you ever desired to have a one-on-one discipleship relationship? If you were offered a one-on-one discipleship relationship, would you commit to it? Explain.
6. Have you ever consistently helped someone in his/her discipleship process? Are you involved in anyone's discipleship process right now? Explain.
7. In terms of the four aspects of discipleship, which do you think is your most important need? How about second most important? Third? Fourth?

Break the group in twos (preferably of the same sex). Have them talk about their fears, victories, frustrations, and failures in living missionally in discipleship and pray for one another.

Continue planning and praying for your city/neighborhood outreach project.

WELCOME TO VINEYARD YOUTH CURRICULUM

Hello friends. What you hold in your hands is the product of lots of people, lots of prayer, and lots of purpose. The Vineyard movement is at a crucial place, and we believe that the work we do with students will have much influence on what the movement will look like over the next 10-20 years. We set out to design a curriculum that communicates and reinforces the biblical and kingdom values of the Vineyard while inviting students to embrace the reality that they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Understanding the diversity within the Vineyard movement, we purposefully designed curriculum that can be utilized by groups of differing sizes led by either paid or volunteer leaders in any geographical setting or location. Easy, right? We believe we accomplish this by offering a buffet of activities that allow you – the in-the-trenches leader – to choose what works for you and your group. We're pretty sure no one will use all of the material proposed, but we're confident some of it will be a good fit for your group.

Each lesson includes:

- Experiential, hands-on activities that reflect a variety of learning styles.
- Large group questions to frame a conversation (I.E., not a lecture).
- Application suggestions to reveal and experience the kingdom of God.
- Small group questions each week.
- A devotional for the leader to help them grow in this area.
- Planned activities to help students hear God for themselves.

Why This Topic?

Two long standing values of the Vineyard are caring for the poor and evangelism. In this series we invited Marvin Suarez, who with his wife Carmen, planted the first Vineyard church in Puerto Rico. Through their passion for the poor, and their evangelism efforts, they have since planted three more. Marvin shares his passion, both from a scriptural foundation and from experience, for living missionally. We think your teens will find this topic relevant and engaging, as you discuss how your group can catch the vision for mission oriented faith.

About the Author

Marvin Suarez is the founder and Senior Pastor of the first La Viña Church in Puerto Rico (West side of PR). The Church was founded in February 2000. Since then, he has invested his life in developing a vibrant, culturally and community relevant church. He has a passion for raising the new generation and serving their community while reaching the lost. Marvin graduated with a BS in Industrial Engineering and a Masters of Engineering in Systems Engineering. Both degrees from the Engineering School of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. A vocation he worked on for over ten years. He also completed a Master of Divinity from Denver Seminary, CO. He planted the church he pastors in Mayaguez and has planted other four churches in PR. He has devoted his past twenty one years to develop leaders and church planters for the local church in the Caribbean and the US.