

What IS Discipleship?



Did you know that there are over 300 references to the term “disciple” in the New Testament? The core mission of Cru has always been rooted in the final command of Jesus – “to go and make disciples of all nations.” Matthew 28:18-20. If making disciples is the very essence of what we do.... then it would make sense for us to understand what this means!

A textbook definition is a helpful start: Check this out.

- A disciple is one who subscribes to the teaching of a master and assists in spreading them.
- A disciple is an active adherent, as in a movement or a philosophy.

Author, Chris Adsit defines discipleship as *“an intentional effort to assist people toward spiritual maturity relying on the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

The Greek word for disciple is *mathetes* and translates “learner.” So we are all learners in the process of teaching other learners.

Cru staff and student leaders nationwide are applying their time and energy to invest in others who will then invest in others. We are about making disciples who make disciples. This IS the *Master’s Plan of Evangelism* – to borrow a classic book title on the subject.

When Jesus called the first disciples, “He appointed 12, designating them apostles that they might be **with Him**, and that He might **send them out to preach.**” (Mark 3:14)

From the very beginning Jesus called his disciples to

- 1) a relationship with Him....
- 2) and to a mission ie: to preach – to carry and declare a message.

What a privilege! Imagine if it was only one or the other. But it’s both. We have been called into a dynamic loving relationship with Jesus, and called to be involved in His work – to spread His message, to invest in others, and to make disciples.

So, what does making disciples look like in the Cru student-ministry?
What does a discipler DO? It involves ALL of the following:



- Discipleship is a relationship. Disciplers seek to build relationships
- Takes relational initiative
- Keeps a consistent walk with God
- Is forever learning
- Encourages
- Urges students to take steps of faith
- Cares enough to ask difficult probing questions
- Commits to helping students grow spiritually
- Listens empathetically. (truly learns the art of listening well!)
- Prays for students
- Helps them find answers to their faith questions
- Teaches
- Lives as a model worth emulating "Follow my example as I follow the model of Christ." (I Cor 11:1)
- Mentors students
- Equips students to lead others spiritually
- Invites and equips students to be involved in the mission
- Seeks to multiply their life and faith
- And urges others to do likewise

Is the picture getting clearer?

The means of the original mission relies on multiplication. (and yes, the Holy Spirit! ☺)
And multiplication is powerful. Biblical discipleship has been defined as "concentration on a few, with the world in view." Sunlight will not set a forest on fire, but when the sun's light is focused through a magnifying glass on a few leaves, it can eventually grow into a blaze.

These ideas guide and motivate our team as we invest in disciples on campuses.

There are simply not enough Cru staff to live and work on every campus in America. But we can and we DO invest our time and energy to bring other leaders into the effort. We draw from our experience and our mistakes to equip others in leading campus ministries. Jesus knows what He's doing – so let's keep following and learning from Him!

- Thoughts?
- Feedback?
- Sarcastic pushback? ☺