

Discipleship Pathway

Growing dynamic disciples of Jesus

Workbook



The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version® . NIV® . Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Written by Alastair Kendrew, 2010

Table of Contents

Overview	4
Background.....	4
Purpose.....	4
Approach.....	4
The Need for a Discipleship Pathway.....	6
What is a Discipleship Pathway?	6
Why a Discipleship Pathway?	6
The Basis for a Discipleship Pathway	9
Clarify the Win – What is a Dynamic Disciple?	9
Think Steps, Not Programmes.....	10
Developing Your Discipleship Pathway	14
Step 1: Understand your disciple groups.....	14
Step 2: Identify their needs.....	14
Step 3: Decide how to meet their needs?	16
Step 4: Develop your plan.....	19
Step 5: Do it.....	20
Step 6: Review and adapt.....	21

Overview

Background

In 2010, The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga launched an extension to the Territorial Strategic Mission Plan (TSMP) referred to as TSMP: The Next Chapter, containing four updated goals.

Jesus' last instruction to his disciples was to:

'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising [immersing] 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.' (Matthew 28:19-20)

This is the basis for the first goal – 'make dynamic disciples of Jesus'.

At the highest level, there are two main parts to making dynamic disciples of Jesus – helping people decide to become disciples of Jesus and growing disciples to be all Jesus wants them to be.

This document is intentionally only the second part – helping people who have already decided to follow Jesus grow as dynamic disciples. A separate *Evangelism Pathway* document is available that considers bringing people to faith.

Purpose

This document is designed to help Corps Leadership Teams ensure they have a robust plan for growing dynamic disciples. It can be used to develop a plan from scratch, or to check an existing plan for completeness.

Our main question is not '*how* do you grow disciples?' although we do need to understand this to some extent. Instead, we're interested in helping you be intentional about '*how* do *you* grow disciples?'

Approach

The document is designed as a combination of content, questions and exercises to help a group develop a plan. With some preparation, it is anticipated that a leadership team could work through the document in a single leadership team meeting. Alternatively, combining this with the separate *evangelism pathway* would provide excellent content for a weekend leadership team retreat.

Your discussion will be more productive if everyone has pre-read this booklet and considered answers to the various questions.

The document is split into three parts:

1. What is a discipleship pathway and why would you want one?
2. What do we know about how disciples grow?
3. Your turn – developing your pathway for helping your disciples grow.

Notes

1. The document is designed to help you develop a plan for your unique situation. The more you discuss and grapple with the questions, the more your plan will be *owned* locally and so the more likely it will succeed. Alternatively, just taking what is provided will give you an answer that will be forgotten as quickly as it was developed.
2. For the purpose of this document, we are using the phrase ‘our disciples’ to denote people within our care. Obviously, they are not *our* disciples – they are disciples of Jesus. However, a term like *all* disciples implies disciples across all denominations when the document is intended for Salvation Army use. ‘All Salvationists’ is a little misleading as many of our staff and volunteers identify themselves as Salvationists but not disciples of Jesus. Using a phrase like *all disciples within the Salvation Army* seems unnecessarily wordy!

SECTION 1

The Need for a Discipleship Pathway

What is a Discipleship Pathway?

According to the Collins English Dictionary, a pathway is a route to or way of achieving something. In our context, we are referring to our process of helping people grow as dynamic disciples of Jesus. In effect, how we train them.

What a discipleship pathway is not:

1. **A sausage factory:** we're not interested in making everyone the same – just making sure that everyone has access to all they may need
2. **A straight-line:** spiritual growth is not linear or predictable, but there are common trends
3. **Putting people in boxes:** we recognise that everyone's spiritual journey is different and who are we to decide where people are at and what they need. However, having a pathway means that you've at least considered what disciples are likely to need so that you can ensure this is available
4. **A programme to complete:** true discipleship involves life long commitment to growth. You can never claim to have made it

It's also important to note that we are not talking about the environment within which disciples grow. Elements like prayer, pastoral care, a loving community, etc. are all very important but are not within the scope of this document.

Why a Discipleship Pathway?

The process of becoming a dynamic disciple of Jesus does not happen over night (and sorry, Rachel Hunter – it may not happen).

Very few people just decide out of the blue to follow Jesus. More likely, they will have had all sorts of experiences and interactions that slowly drew them towards God. Similarly, when you first decide to follow Jesus, you may have a real love for Him, but you are unlikely to know much about being a dynamic disciple. You are what Paul refers to as a baby Christian (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). Why?

- **It takes a long time to learn:** to get to know and understand the Bible and what is expected of you.

- **It takes a long time to develop:** our attitudes and behaviours are being transformed continually. We make mistakes and need to learn from these. We need to learn how best to serve. The issues you face as a new Christian should be quite different to what you face having been on the journey for many years.

When training people, we tend to identify where people are at, what they need to learn and how best to teach them. For example:

- ❑ **Education:** primary school children learn the basics in a direct, supportive manner. As they progress through secondary and on to tertiary, the content becomes more difficult and they take increasing responsibility for their learning
- ❑ **Trades:** apprentices receive very direct hands-on training in the basics; trades people are practising and refining their skills; master craftsmen are the leaders taking the trade forward while passing on their skills to others.

Do disciples have enough in common for us to identify different training needs and emphasis? Yes! For example:

Group	Examples of specific emphasis needed
New believers	The basics: the Bible message, the need for fellowship, facing temptation, personal spiritual practices, etc. Overview of the corps and The Salvation Army.
Transfers from other churches	Overview of the corps and The Salvation Army – what we believe, our history, structure, etc.
[Not so new] believers	A deeper understanding of Jesus, how to share your faith, social justice, etc.
Mature believers	Accountability, service and leadership opportunities, mentoring others
Stalled	Re-engaging personal spiritual practices

The implications are obvious:

- ❑ provide the right support at the right level and you'll encourage growth
- ❑ miss out important support and don't be surprised with little growth
- ❑ provide support at the wrong level and you'll end up with frustration.

George Barna in his book *Growing True Disciples* provides some excellent hard data based on his research of congregations across America. Barna lists the following reasons why churches are doing poorly in developing their people:

1. Few churches or Christians have a clear, measurable definition of 'Spiritual Success'
2. We've defined 'discipleship' as head knowledge, rather than complete transformation
3. We've chosen to teach people in random rather than systematic ways
4. There's virtually no accountability for what we say, think, do or believe
5. When it comes to discipleship, we promote programmes rather than people
6. The primary method that churches rely on for spiritual development (small groups) typically fails to provide comprehensive spiritual nurture
7. Church leaders aren't zealous about the spiritual development of people
8. We invest our resources in adults rather than in children
9. We divert our best leaders to ministries other than discipleship.

It is very clear from this list that corps are well advised to be intentional about discipleship.

Questions to consider:

1. What do you do to grow your new believers?
2. How do you help people transferring in understand and belong?
3. Do your disciples have the skills to share their faith? How would they have learned these?
4. How do you challenge your mature believers?

If you had solid answers to each of these questions, congratulations – you probably already have a working discipleship pathway.

SECTION 2

The Basis for a Discipleship Pathway

The first two practices described in the book *7 Practices of Effective Ministry* provide a great basis for developing our discipleship pathway:

1. **Clarify the win** – make sure everyone understands what we’re aiming for (i.e. what is a dynamic disciple?)
2. **Think steps not programmes** – think of it as a process. What are the steps we want *most* people to take? What part in the overall process does each programme and event provide? Are there any gaps?

Clarify the Win – What is a Dynamic Disciple?

For the TSMP, a disciple is defined as someone who follows a teacher and submits to their direction. A *Christian disciple* seeks to know Jesus and asks Him to direct their living. Adding the word ‘dynamic’ is not about extroversion. Instead, it implies that the discipleship journey is alive and vibrant.

When Jesus was asked which was the most important commandment, He replied:

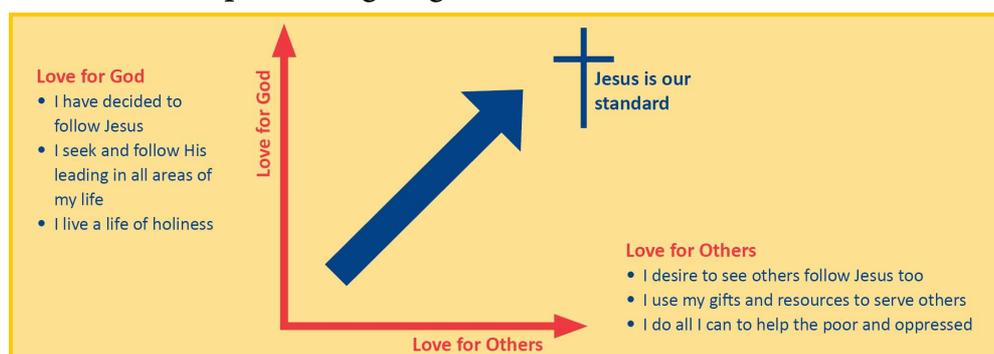
*‘... love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind ...’; and
‘... love others as much as you love yourself’ (Matthew 22:37-39, CEV)*

Or more simply – love God and love others, as much as you can.

Love for God is seen in a personal and ongoing commitment to God. You believe in Jesus, have decided to follow Him, are seeking to know and follow His leading and He is transforming you into His image.

Love for others is typically expressed in acts of practical help, service and compassion, as well as by sharing the Gospel with people.

As you can never get to a point where you love God enough, or you love others enough, there is an implied on-going movement.



So what is our win? When people decide to follow Jesus, and each step they make to love God and love others more, ideally to the point where they are completely sold out to Jesus.

Think Steps, Not Programmes

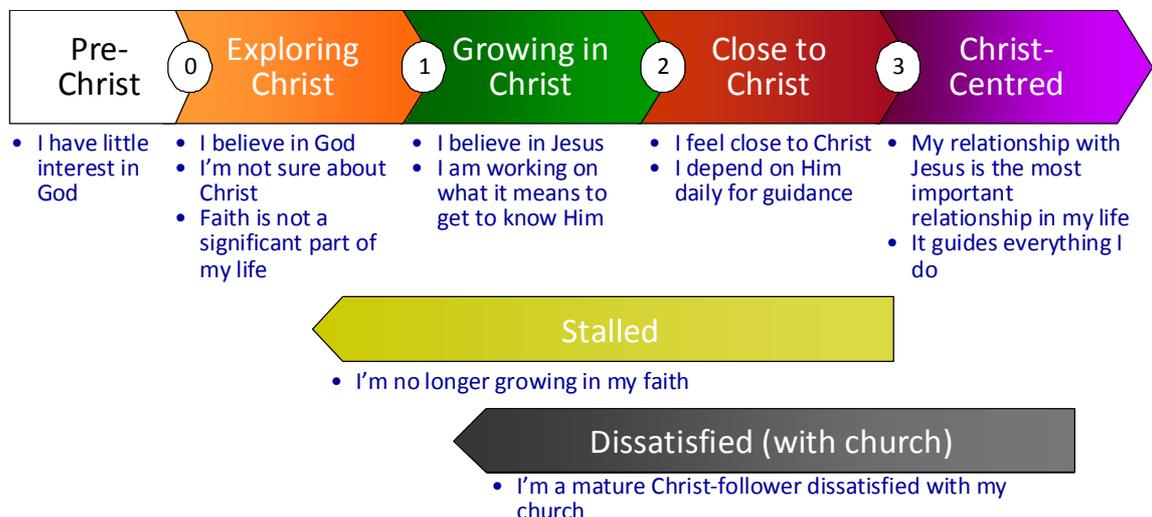
The Reveal© Spiritual Continuum

In 2007, the book *Reveal: Where are You* was published, describing a spiritual continuum identified by analysing 5000 survey responses from seven churches. This information has since been verified by a further 235,000 responses from 850 churches.

The researchers propose a similar concept to our love for God and love for others graph, preferring a straight four-stage continuum starting from people exploring who Jesus is, through to the aim of handing over your whole life to Christ. Their four stages are:

1. **Exploring Christ:** someone who believes in God, but is not sure about Jesus. Faith is not a significant part in their life
2. **Growing in Christ:** the new believer who is working on what it means to get to know Him
3. **Close to Christ:** they have moved from just believing in Jesus to depending on Him in their day to day life
4. **Christ-centred:** their relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in their life. It guides everything they do.

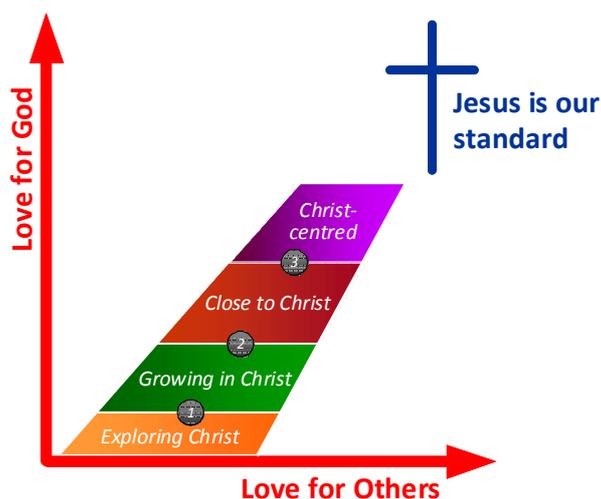
As most people in New Zealand are probably before the stage of exploring who Christ is, we have added an extra stage to recognise these people who as yet have little interest in God.



There are two other important sub-groups on the continuum:

- **Stalled:** those who are not currently growing more Christ-centred. They may have been growing in the past but this growth has stopped. If something doesn't address this, these people are likely to lose their faith.
- **Dissatisfied:** typically more mature believers who have become dissatisfied with their local church. If something doesn't address this, these people are likely to leave the church.

The Reveal© continuum is predominantly focused on growth in your love for God, but it is easily adapted to fit our love for God and others graph. Adapting it also shows that you cannot be Christ-centred with little love for others.

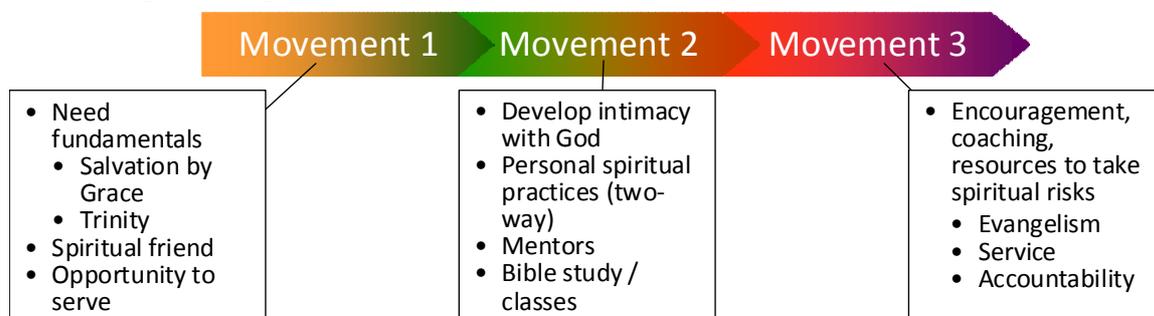


Movement between Stages

What is most interesting about their research is their understanding of how people move between the stages. These movements have been numbered from one to three.

- **Movement 1 (Exploring Christ → Growing in Christ):** covered within the *Evangelism Pathway* but included here for completeness. People need to understand the significance of Jesus; that we can't earn salvation – it is only available by grace. Things that really help are:
 - someone to support them and answer questions (a spiritual friend)
 - a sense of belonging (e.g. give them a role)
- **Movement 2 (Growing in Christ → Close to Christ):** close to Christ means that they have got to know Him and are depending on Him for guidance, so they must have put in place good spiritual disciplines. Things that really help are:
 - mentors/coaches: that help them establish good practices and grow in their knowledge of God
 - Bible studies and classes: that teach the skills and knowledge every believer needs.

- **Movement 3 (Close to Christ → Christ-centred):** a person's faith moves from a daily awareness of Christ's presence to a redefinition of a person's identity based on their relationship with Christ. The greatest learning from the research is that Christ-centred people offer the greatest high-impact opportunity for the church and the kingdom. Put effort into them and the rest will take care of itself. According to the research, these spiritually-fired people need very little from the church to help them grow. What they need is:
 - spiritual risk-taking: encouragement, challenge and support to take spiritual risks (e.g. sharing their faith, service, self-denial, justice, mentoring others, etc.)
 - accountability: someone to whom they make themselves accountable (a spiritual partner, coach or similar)



What about our Stalled and Dissatisfieds?

- **Stalled (people not currently growing in their faith):** from the 80,000 people who completed the second round of Reveal surveys, almost all of them spoke of a time when they had stalled in their faith (with one in five stalled currently)! When asked what got them moving again, 70% suggested that the main thing was re-starting their personal spiritual practices (reading Bible, praying, etc.). This was over double the next highest factor of experiencing a personal crisis.
- **Dissatisfied (people not happy with the church):** one in six people in the survey were dissatisfied currently. Dissatisfied people were present in each of the four stages but were most represented in the highest stage (Christ-centred). The research suggests that dissatisfied people are the people leaders need to listen to most. While the term may generate an image of a 'moaner', the research found that they were more likely to be fired-up Christians who were frustrated with unmet expectations. Their concerns are typically shared by everyone, just not to the same depth, so addressing concerns raised by dissatisfieds will benefit everyone.

So what are dissatisfieds most dissatisfied with?

- Sunday services: in particular better Bible teaching and more challenge (i.e. ramp up, don't soften services)
- Opportunities to have a go: to use a sporting analogy, when someone is playing well, you look to give them the ball. Dissatisfieds want you to partner with them and release them to have a go.



Questions to consider:

1. What do you find most insightful about this research?
2. Is there anything you disagree with; that doesn't fit your understanding of how disciples grow?
3. As key leaders, do you model spiritual partnerships (e.g. Corps Officers meeting one on one with leaders, leaders meeting one on one with others to encourage and challenge each other)? Should you?
4. Do you have a culture of unleashing people to live out their faith? What can you do to promote this?
5. If dissatisfieds provide early identification of issues that end up felt by everyone, how can you encourage issues to be raised and considered? Can you follow up families that have left to help identify issues?
6. Spiritual growth is achieved by the power of the Holy Spirit, so prayer must underlie everything you do. Do your prayer ministries reflect this?

SECTION 3

Developing Your Discipleship Pathway

Initial research based on 5000 people, backed up by extending this to 235,000 is quite compelling. And what's more, it seems to make logical sense. So, if we believe the research, how might you apply this in your setting?

Developing a training programme usually involves six steps:

1. Understand your trainees (disciples)
2. Identify their training needs
3. Decide how best to meet these needs
4. Develop your plan
5. Do it
6. Review and adapt

Step 1: Understand your disciple groups

Based on the Reveal© research, we propose three disciple groups for consideration while developing your pathway:

1. Growing in Christ (new believers)
2. Close to Christ
3. Christ-Centred

We also need to consider the needs of the *Stalled*, *Dissatisfied* and *Transfer* sub-groups.

The *Exploring Christ* group is not included as this is covered within the *Evangelism Pathway*.

Step 2: Identify their needs

Clearly, every disciple is different so has unique needs. One person may have well developed personal spiritual practices but lack skills in sharing their faith, while the next person may be the complete opposite. Putting people in boxes and telling them 'this is what you need' is clearly flawed.

However, it seems there is a core set of knowledge and skills that every disciple should have, and an increasing need for them to be challenged in living out their faith.

Knowledge and Skill Building

Over time, all disciples need a core set of knowledge and skills, starting with the basics (e.g. the gospel message, what we believe, setting in place good personal spiritual practices, etc.), then supplementing this with topics like serving, sharing your faith and ultimately leading and mentoring others. The exact order is not important, but having all is important.

Action and Risk Taking

As well as learning, there are a number of things you need to put in place to help you grow, such as worshipping with others, fellowship with other disciples and personal spiritual practices. As you mature spiritually, you will grow in both your love for God and others, and so become more involved in serving, sharing your faith, fighting for injustice, etc. You will be enthusiastic about having in place trusted relationships to hold you accountable for your commitment to growth. Let's call these 'actions and risk taking'.

The following diagram proposes a summary of what disciples within The Salvation Army might need over time. It is not intended to be rigid – every disciple is different and will do different things in different order. The expectation is that over time, disciples should have a decreasing need for formal learning and an increasing need to step out in living out their faith.



Step 3: Decide how to meet their needs?

The table below suggests some approaches to train your disciples. Review the list and add anything else you do (or are considering) to train your disciples.

Approach	Possible uses
Courses	For tailored, intentional training (e.g. new believers, soldiership preparation, sharing your faith)
Sermons	To provide teaching for everyone.
Small groups	Tailored training. Could also ask all small groups to complete 'compulsory' curriculum
Smorgasbord discipleship training	(For example, one Sunday night a month). Offer a range of subjects at the same venue. Meet together for worship; split into individual training streams, then combine again for supper. It sets an expectation that we all need to learn, while providing options so that there is something for everyone.
Reminders	Adding notes to newsletters, making announcements, etc. that reinforce a message (e.g. how are we getting on with our personal spiritual practices; who are you praying for at the moment, etc.)
Coaching / spiritual partnerships	To promote accountability, reminders, one on one development. Particularly for leaders!
Resource library	To provide easy access to devotions guides and books/resources for individual study.
Service opportunities	What better way to grow than by using your gifts to serve in an area you find fulfilling and challenging?

Now you've identified the ways you might train your disciples, work through each of the identified topics recording what you do (or want to do) to train your disciples.

If a training need (topic) is not a priority – write 'not a priority'.

We have included reference to various TSMP resources available to help you (those marked (tbc) will be available early in 2011).

Training Needs	Potential Content	Target Group	TSMP Resources	How you provide
<i>Example – Discipleship pathway</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Definition</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Planning steps</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Corps leaders</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Discipleship pathway workbook</i>	<i>Leadership team meeting</i>
The Basics	<input type="checkbox"/> Gospel (what we believe)	<input type="checkbox"/> Growing in Christ	<input type="checkbox"/> Soldiership material	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Discipleship explained	<input type="checkbox"/> Growing in Christ	<input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic discipleship series	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Need for worship and fellowship	<input type="checkbox"/> Growing in Christ	-	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible overview	<input type="checkbox"/> Growing in Christ	-	
Personal spiritual practices	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading the Bible, prayer, listening to God	<input type="checkbox"/> Growing in Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Reminders (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowing God series <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual practices (tbc)	
Welcome to The Salvation Army	<input type="checkbox"/> Mission <input type="checkbox"/> Local leaders <input type="checkbox"/> TSA overview (structure, doctrines, distinctives) <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for service	<input type="checkbox"/> Growing in Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Transfers	<input type="checkbox"/> Soldiership material	
Soldiership	<input type="checkbox"/> What we believe <input type="checkbox"/> Soldiers Covenant	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruits	<input type="checkbox"/> Soldiership material	

Training Needs	Potential Content	Target Group	TSMP Resources	How you provide
Serving – spiritual gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> The need for service <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> Close to Christ	<input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic discipleship #4 <input type="checkbox"/> Service studies (tbc)	
Serving – social justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Biblical mandate <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Close to Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Christ-centred	<input type="checkbox"/> Just Actions <input type="checkbox"/> Social justice studies (tbc)	
How to share your faith	<input type="checkbox"/> How to share your personal story <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Objections	<input type="checkbox"/> Close to Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Reminders (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharing faith (tbc)	
Mentoring / accountability partners	<input type="checkbox"/> How to establish <input type="checkbox"/> How to meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Close to Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Christ-centred	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring guide (tbc)	
Leadership development	<input type="checkbox"/> Vision <input type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Close to Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Christ-centred	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership development resources (tbc)	
Prayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate prayer for ministries	<input type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Tips for prayer ministries	
[other]				
[other]				

Step 4: Develop your plan

Nearly there. You've written down what you do, plus potentially some new things you need to do. The idea is to now put it together in a format to help you make it all happen.

What you're aiming for is a list of things to do, ideally grouped by how you will do each thing. This might consist of a bunch of sermon topics, reminders for meetings or newsletters, some courses, some content for your small groups to study, etc. Making them a single list grouped by type will make it easy for you to delegate and to review progress.

Go through each training need from your table in step three and add it into the list below. Once complete, decide roughly when it should be done and by who.

How (approach)	What (topic)	When	Who (responsibility)
<i>Example – Leadership team meeting</i>	<i>Discipleship pathway</i>	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Corps Officer</i>
Sermons			
Courses			
Small groups / mentors			
Reminders			
Other			

Step 5: Do it

No explanation required – you’ve got a plan so get started.

However, the plan is only understood by the leaders who developed it. Your disciples need to understand the plan and how they can make the most of it as after all it is for them. Perhaps you could use the Reveal© survey results as the basis for a sermon on growing disciples, highlighting different needs and how you are looking to meet them.

You may also want to consider how you will keep the plan in front of them, such as posters on the walls; regular articles in your newsletter; reminders when promoting events, etc.

Once started, make sure you keep looking at your plan. Perhaps include it as a standing item on your meeting agenda.

Questions to consider:

1. How will we communicate the plan to our disciples?

2. How will we ensure that our plan happens?

Step 6: Review and adapt

Once up and running, it's important to check that your plan is working, and take the time to consider possible improvements. But how will you know if it is working?

There's a saying *measure what you want more of*. This keeps the focus, and provides regular feedback on your plan.

Possible measures

Discipleship reflects a personal following of Christ, so the only real way to understand where someone might be on the continuum is to ask them.

Therefore, a very useful tool for understanding success might be an annual survey. A number of corps use Natural Church Development (NCD).

Alternatively, you could develop your own.

In between surveys, there are a number of regular statistics that are helpful for understanding progress, including:

1. Average Sunday meeting attendance and % growth
2. % attendance at prayer meetings
3. % attendance at small groups
4. % people tithing and average tithe
5. Average Sunday school attendance (or midweek equivalent) and % growth
6. People deciding to become soldiers or adherents

Note: SAMIS already provides a mechanism for recording and reporting these through your monthly and quarterly statistics forms.

Questions to consider:

1. Should we use an annual survey?
2. What measures of success do we want to include in our discussions as a leadership team?

Well done. You've finished with the workbook. May God bless your pathway!