

The Church of Saint Henry

Discipleship Groups

Apprenticeship in Christian Life

What is a Discipleship Group?

THE MISSION

Think about this questions: "If the Catholic Church had a mission statement, what would it be?" Jesus gives the Catholic the answer, our mission, in what is known as The Great Commissioning. He say, "Go therefor and make disciples of all nations" (*Matthew 28:19*). The mission of the Church is to make disciples, to evangelize. Pope Paul VI said evangelization is the Church's "deepest identity...she exists in order to evangelize" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi 14*)

What does it mean to be a disciple? In ancient Israel, a disciple was someone who followed a Jewish Rabbi, just as an apprentice follows a master. A disciple of Jesus, therefore, is someone who is a committed follower of Jesus. "The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to His person and the decision to walk in His footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, making of oneself a disciple of Jesus. This demands a permanent commitment to think like Him, to judge like Him and to live as He lived. In this way the believer unites himself to the community of disciples and appropriates the faith of the Church. (*General Directory of Catechists 53*). A disciple is not someone who just knows *about* Jesus, but follows Jesus and lives his/her life out of love for Him.

THE MODEL

"While Jesus could have reached the masses in His earthly ministry, He chose to devote the majority of His time to twelve men. He knew He needed to personally care for and form a small group of men who would be strong enough to do the same for others. In the end, this approach would multiply disciples [exponentially], and reach the masses." (*YDisciple Handbook, pg.2*). Using the model of Jesus, we base our parish's youth formation model off of this small group, mentorship model. We call these groups Discipleship Groups. But Discipleship Groups are not just a program, they are an apprenticeship in Christian life. Programs don't make disciples, disciples make disciples. What makes a Discipleship Group is the mutual commitment of members and mentors to grow in faith and life together.

THE MINISTRY

A Discipleship Group is an all-male or all-female small group of 5-8 youth led by 2 adult mentors, who commit to meeting regularly through high-school to grow holiness together through study, sharing and discussion, prayer, and service. It is a place to belong, be loved, and grow. The vision of the Church of Saint Henry youth formation is to intentionally form a parish community of disciples by forming small Discipleship Groups for all high-school youth. D-Groups are formed in partnership with parents and are eventually launched into homes for home meetings. These groups commit to meeting through all four years of high-school (two years before Confirmation and two years after).

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The Vision of Youth Formation