

KEY DEFINITIONS FOR A DISCIPLE-MAKING CULTURE

A Supplement to Chapter 3 of *Disciple-Making Culture* by Brandon Guindon

Creating and maintaining a disciple-making culture requires unity around language. Below you will see the list of terms and definitions that we use at Real Life Ministries Texas. These definitions reflect how *we* define them. The goal of this resource, though, is to help *you* define terms with *your* team for *your* context.

To help you work through your own list of key terms and definitions, I have provided here five questions to guide you. These questions will help you frame the discussion at your church. The end result is to help you establish culture. Feel free to use our list as much or as little as you see fit. Answer the questions below on a separate sheet of paper.

How to Create Your Team's Terms and Definitions

1. **List your current disciple-making terms.** What are the top ten most critical words that you use in your church or ministry that frame your discussions around disciple-making? Create that list. You may want to brainstorm this list with your team or staff. If you get input from others, distill your list down to the top ten most common and key terms your leaders use in your disciple-making conversations.
2. **Understand your team's current definitions.** You've got your list of terms, so ask your staff, elders, or ministry team leaders to write out how they would define each term you have listed. As you read over their definitions, pay attention to the differences in language. As a team, begin a discussion as you work toward unity on these terms. A word of caution: People are sometimes attached to their definition, and you will need to keep an open dialogue to help your team work toward unity. Encourage input, yes, but work toward singular definitions your church or ministry will be able to stand on when you finish this process.
3. **When finalizing terms and definitions, consider how these terms are used in the Bible.** For each word, list verses where the term or concept is used. Look at these biblical contexts to ensure your terms and definitions are consistent with the Bible.
4. **List the areas of ministry and life where you will use these terms in an intentional way.** For example, if you define the term "disciple," how would you illustrate the definition of a disciple in a sermon? How would you define it on the street? Or another possibility: How would you use your list of terms on your church or ministry's website?
5. **As a team, set goals for this list of terms.** These goals may include: Where will the terms be visible to the church or ministry? (For example, will they be used in any print publications, websites, ministry plans, membership classes, or staff job descriptions?) When will you begin using these terms as your consistent language to articulate disciple-making in your church? How will you pass these terms and definitions on to the other leaders of your church?

Our Definitions as an Example

Again, feel free to adapt these and make them your own, or start from scratch! These just offer you one example of critical terms and definitions.

Disciple: One who is following Christ, is being changed by Christ, and is committed to the mission of Christ. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19 (NIV)

The Gospel is this:

- The Kingdom of God has come through Jesus of Nazareth to restore relationship with mankind. He is the Christ, the King, God’s one and only Son.
- He died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and was resurrected on the third day according to the scriptures.
- In *his* great love and by *his* amazing grace, God our Father saves everyone who *repents* of their sin, *believes* in him, and *follows* Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- When King Jesus returns on the last day for *his* Church, all who have been restored and followed him will enter into the eternal Kingdom of God.

Discipleship: The process of growing spiritually as a disciple.

Disciple-Making: The process that you, the disciple maker, engage in when investing in the lives of those God calls you to disciple.

Small Group: A consistent gathering of three to eighteen people learning and applying the Word of God for the purpose of Christian spiritual growth. The group is led by a spiritually mature, intentional leader. Small Groups consist of Men’s Groups, Women’s Groups, and Everyone Groups.

- **Women’s Group:** A Small Group that is made up of women only, married or single.
- **Men’s Group:** A Small Group that is made up of men only, married or single.
- **Everyone Group:** A Small Group that is made up of both men and women, married or single.

Small Group Leader: A volunteer who is currently leading a Small Group. This person is a Spiritual Parent or Young Adult.

Apprentice: A volunteer who is being mentored by a Small Group leader in preparation to lead his own Small Group. This person often takes on some of the duties of the leader while learning to care for his own group.

Small Groups Pastor or Director: Paid pastoral staff who oversee a given segment of Small Groups within the church body.

Small Group Coach: A person or couple who shepherds, supports, and trains those Small Group leaders assigned to them by the Small Groups Pastor or Director.

Connected: A person who regularly attends a Small Group and regularly attends Weekend Services.

Unconnected: A person who does not attend a Small Group, yet regularly attends Weekend Services.

Disconnected: A person who formerly connected in a Small Group, but no longer attends.