

Lesson 11: WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

1) Review:

➤ Individually

- Write the **Top 3 Lessons** from last time.

➤ Small Groups (If you have more than 6-7 people split in small groups)

- Discuss and agree as a group on your group's **Top 3 Lessons** from last time.
- What did you learn from doing the Discovery Group?
- **Pray** for these potential Persons of Peace.
- **Review** memory verses.

➤ In the large group

- Review key lessons learned
- Write responses up on the whiteboard or a flipchart – after you have written all/most of the key lessons ask if there are any key lessons still not listed.

2) Group discussion:

- a. What do you think are the primary reasons DMMs don't happen more often? Is "hard soil" the only reason?
- b. When you think of "church" what comes to mind? What comes to mind for most Christians? How about for most non-Christians in your area? How does this picture compare with the NT concept of *ekklesia*?
- c. Why is it important to plant churches according to the cultural context?

In this lesson, we will start looking at what the Bible says about "church" and we will practice a Discovery Group format that a new church in a DMM would use.

3) Exercise: What is necessary for church?

Ask the group to list all the activities and resources they can think of that would make a great church. They will usually list items such as teaching, sermons, people, leaders, children's programs, outreach programs, choir, instruments, services, buildings, funding, etc. Encourage them to list as many items as they can. Now ask them which items are biblically NECESSARY for the church. Cross out the items that are not necessary until you end up with a very simple list that should only list the basics, such as God, people, Bible, etc. Now re-emphasize the point that our goal is to plant churches and only these necessary items are mandatory. If the new church chooses to add additional activities and resources that is fine. Our goal is to help plant the new church with only the necessities.

4) Recommended follow-up for new believers

Any method to get people grounded in the Word is good, however, we've found that ***continued use of the Discovery Method is the best way*** to plant reproducing churches which exhibit the desired characteristics above (note the phrase "one another" in Eph. 3:16). An expanded Discovery Method for believers is found on the following page.

It is imperative that follow-up with new believer groups be *intensive*—meetings should be at least 2-3 times weekly, if not daily. (In some areas where CPMs are happening, new believers are followed-up daily for 100 days). Intensive follow-up shows our love and commitment. At this stage we focus on “teaching them **to OBEY** all I have commanded you” (Mt. 18:20a).

But remember: if you are the outsider you should not be leading the group - you are only meeting with the inside leaders to coach them.

Though this can be done in many ways, we recommend looking at the life of Jesus in the *Gospel of Matthew*.

For the first meeting it’s good to look at what Jesus said was the Greatest Commandment (Mat. 22:37-40). Next discuss his last words, that is, the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20). Then tell them you want to go back to the beginning to discover “all that he’s commanded” so you can learn to obey it. But be sure to point out repeatedly: we do not obey in order to gain salvation but because we love him who has saved us (John 14:15). We are saved by faith in Christ (Mt. 26:28; John 3:16), not good works. Flip back to Matthew 1 and begin studying chapter-by-chapter (or passage-by-passage) looking for commands and examples.

4) Discovery Group for Believers: Acts 2:37-47 - The Early Church

(this is an example for believers using the same DNA of church – note new questions)

A. Sharing & Prayer

1. What's something you're thankful for? (Have them thank God directly in prayer.)
2. What's something you / your family / your neighbors are struggling with? Or, what needs do you / they have? (Have them pray about these things now.)
3. Is there something that this group can do to meet these needs?
4. Who did you share the story with from last time? How did they respond? (Remind them to look for Persons of Peace and not to do individual extraction evangelism). Listen to each one, then pray for the Person(s) of Peace who has heard. Pray also for boldness to share.

B. Bible Discussion

Review

1. Review last meeting’s lesson to be sure everyone understood and remembers it.
2. Ask: “How did you obey?” Or, “How did you apply?” (If they had trouble applying, the group needs to help each other. Be sure they understand and obeyed—if not, don’t start a new passage!)

Study a New Passage

1. What does this teach/reveal about God (Father, Jesus, Spirit)?
2. What does this reveal about people?
3. Are there any examples we need to follow?
4. Are there any clear commands we must obey?
5. Are there any sins to avoid?

6. How are you going to obey this lesson personally?
7. How will we obey this lesson as a group?

C. Close

1. Ask them who they will tell.
2. Pray for God to help everyone to obey AND to boldly tell others.

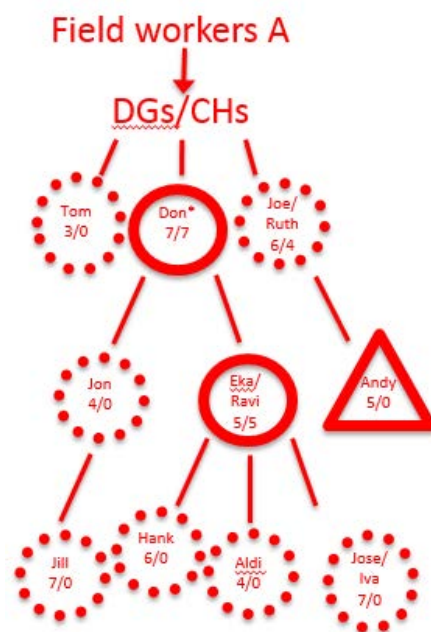
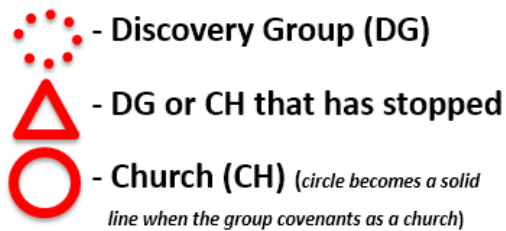
5) Large Group Discussion

- Make a list of the key elements of what the church was and did.
- What do you think hinders many churches today from functioning like this?
- How do you feel about planting churches that exhibit the characteristics discussed in this lesson?
- What might prevent you from going in this direction?
- Spend time praying for each other and the churches you are involved in.

6) Tool: Church Circles

A very helpful tracking and diagnostic tool is called church circles.

The following diagram shows how to track Discovery Groups and Churches. Draw this on a board or flipchart.



Use the same tree structure and have **each leader** do the “church circle” for two generations below them. So each church will be evaluated by themselves and also by the leaders one generation and two generations above. The overlap encourages accountability. Help the leaders identify key elements of a church from Acts 2:37-47 (with reference to other scriptures to more fully explain)

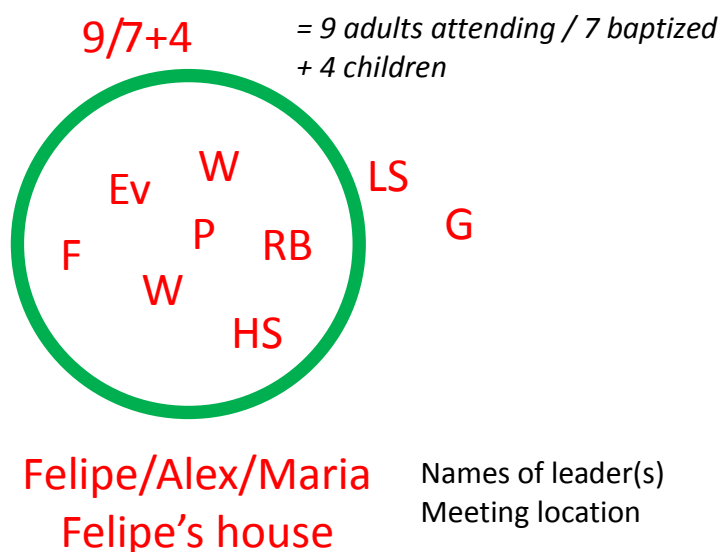
They will make a list from the verses and have a letter or symbol for each element. Such as:

- Evangelism – Ev or 👤
- Repentance & Baptism – RB or 🌊
- Holy Spirit – HS or 🔥
- Bible – B or 📖
- Prayer – P or 🙏
- Fellowship (“sharing together”) – F or ❤️
- Lord’s Supper – LS or 🍷
- Giving & Ministry – GM or 💰
- Worship (“praising God”) - W or 🎶
- Leaders – L or 😊 😊

If the group is doing the element put it **inside** the circle.

If they are not yet doing it put it **outside** the circle (in this example they are not yet doing the Lord’s Supper and Giving).

This will help groups understand what they need to do to be a healthy church.



Hand Gesture: Ask how could you summarize the main teaching of this lesson with a body movement or hand gesture? Have all participants stand up and do the gesture together. (Example for Lesson 11 – Steeple your hands and index fingers to show a “church building” then “release” it to show that is not the church. Then clasp your fingers and hands together to show that the people are the church. Now do all the gestures in order for all the lessons so far starting with lesson 1.

Some work until the next training session:

Fieldwork: Make sure you keep looking for PoPs through your Shema lifestyle. Make sure you go out at least once with your partner to pray and look for PoPs. If anyone shows interest invite them and their group to start a discovery group.

Memorize: 1 Peter 2:9

Prayerwork: Pray through Acts 2:37-47 this week with a partner. Pray that your church can become more like this. Pray that churches you help catalyze will be truly like this.