

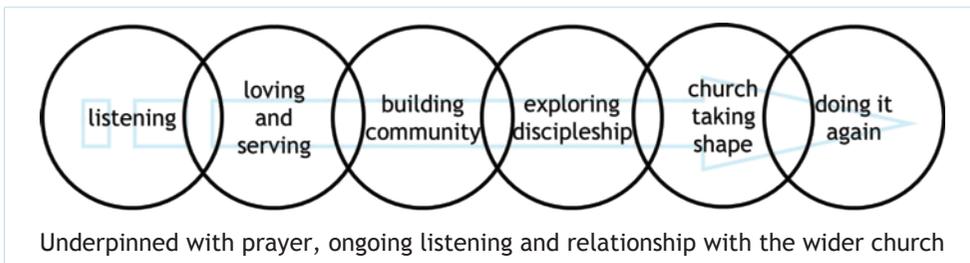
how to start making disciples



essential
fresh
expressions

Find a framework

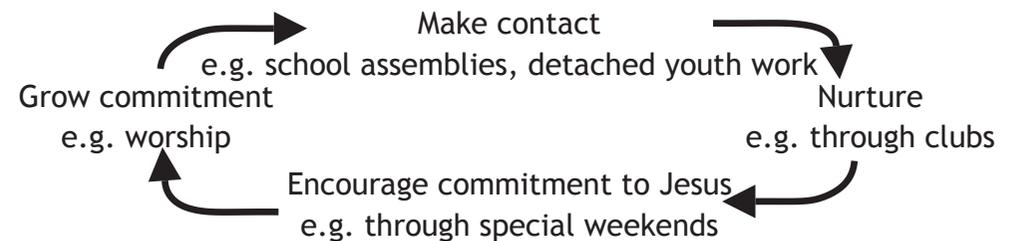
Jesus called his followers to make disciples (Matthew 28.19). A *fresh expressions journey* offers a framework for this:



The first three circles have intrinsic value for the kingdom, but also create opportunities for individuals to explore Jesus.

The leaders of St Laurence, Reading knew lots of young people with little church background, but few were coming to faith.

A senior church leader invited them to draw what they were trying to do. The diagram ended up rather similar to *A fresh expressions journey*:



The first two steps were working well, but the leaders realised they weren't creating opportunities to discover Jesus. So they started weekends away. From these sprang a worshipping community of nearly 50 young people.

Their framework enabled the leaders to see where they were going, filter out ideas that didn't fit and spot the gaps. For example, they saw it was quite a leap from 'clubs' to the weekend away. Could they put in some smaller steps?



Three-minute Guide

Put in stepping stones to ‘exploring discipleship’...

...by starting a distinct group for this purpose

Perhaps a ‘spirituality group’. You could explain, ‘we discuss stories told by Jesus, who is widely regarded as one of the world’s greatest spiritual teachers, and see if we agree with them’.

example Alongside Xpresso cafe are family activities and a discussion group, both on a Christian theme. They are followed by a short act of worship. Individuals can dip into what they want.

freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/xpressions

Prayer can spark conversations about Jesus. In a language café, women from ethnic minority communities met for tea and discussed topics to practice their English. They were invited to pin prayer requests to a board. Soon they were talking about their requests, so an enquirers’ group was formed.

...by inviting enquirers to the core team

In Gloucester, half-a-dozen Christians hosted a monthly Sunday breakfast for up to 60 people from the neighbourhood, and a variety of other activities such as a soccer team. If asked, they talked about their faith. Anyone showing interest was invited to the planning group, which met regularly over a meal to pray, plan and discuss the Bible. Visitors could come once or every time. Within three years, the team had grown to 18 and multiplied into two groups.

Personal evangelism can be easy. No need to fear questions like, ‘Why did God allow that disaster?’ Christians can reply, ‘It’s a question I struggle with, too. We sometimes talk about it in the team. Would you like to visit our next meeting? We eat together, do some planning, discuss stories about Jesus and pray in any way that makes us feel comfortable - no pressure! Join in as you like!’

By involving everyone. Eleven Alive has fluid and varied worship in the morning. Every two months the community enjoys a shared lunch and then breaks into 4 teams. Each team prepares the worship for two occasions over the next 8 weeks. Importantly, anyone in the community - from atheists to Christians - can join a team! This has been highly fruitful in making disciples.

Share stories about Jesus

When people attend one of your stepping stones, such as an enquirers’ group, you can introduce Jesus by discussing gospel stories about him, including stories he told. You might ask:

- if that story happened today, what would it look like?
- what does it mean to you?
- how could it make a difference to your life?

Above all, be a good friend!

Don’t force people to explore Jesus if they don’t wish to or more quickly than they want. Be patient, pray and trust the Holy Spirit.