



A Start Up Guide

This basic guide is designed as a supplement to *Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Youth*. This document outlines a process that church leadership could use to begin covenant discipleship groups with youth.

Live in the Future

- Introduce the concept of covenant discipleship to:
 - Church leadership in charge of discipleship or faith development
 - Potential guides
 - Key youth and parents
- Find Out Who is Interested
 - Invite potential participants together for informal conversations
 - Host informational nights
 - Share information about youth covenant discipleship in church publications, worship services, etc.
 - Make it easy to get information about Covenant Discipleship
- Identify at least one guide
 - *Disciples Making Disciples* outlines the role and supports the development of guides through exploring and equipping class leaders.
 - Identify and recruit at least one guide for each youth Covenant Disciple group that will form

Prototype

- Use the DLC evaluation from *Everyday Disciples* to discover what youth in your congregation are currently doing to develop their faith.
- Use the Bento Box activity to help youth organize their faith activities into clear categories.
- Use the Idea Table to help youth brainstorm how to better balance their approach to faith development.
- Bring interested youth (and adult leaders) together to practice writing covenants together. Discover the interests and realistic time commitments of your potential participants.

Pilot

- Run a pilot Covenant Discipleship group for a set timeframe (2-6 months)
- Create and participate in a group of 4-8 people
- Note what works well in terms of connection and support for both participants and guides
- Collect feedback from participants
- Try different ways to stay in regular, weekly connection with participants
- Experiment with timeframes (a semester, a school-year, a calendar year, indefinite)
- Decide whether to let the pilot group continue as is, and start a second group or...
- Split the pilot group and have them recruit additional participants to form two groups that equal the size of the original pilot

Iterate

- After receiving feedback from pilot group, make changes to help the covenant discipleship model fit your context.
- Try another short-term pilot or launch a group

Co-Founders

- Create a plan to administrate the covenant discipleship groups
- Assume that you will eventually watch over multiple groups, so create a system to help you administrate without needing to fully participate in any future groups
- Identify, train, and get commitments from at least one guide

Launch

- Publicize the start of Covenant Discipleship with Youth in the appropriate channels for your congregation
- Host a “First Gathering” where the group (or groups) form
 - Have participants within a group introduce themselves
 - Have participants in groups begin to create covenants

Follow Up

- Discuss with guides on the development of their group
- Reorganize or rearrange groups as needed
- If participants or guides drop out, make changes, and launch again from scratch
- If participants remain steady, encourage them to think about dividing into multiple groups, and recruiting other participants so that each group builds back up to between 4-8 participants.
- Measure change in attitudes or spiritual activities of participants in Covenant Discipleship groups.
 - Invite individual participants to repeat any of the assessments in *Everyday Disciples* at various times during their participation. This will give you an excellent idea of their development.
 - Encourage growth toward balanced discipleship by introducing and challenging groups on any under-represented acts of justice, compassion, worship, or devotion.