Guides in Covenant Discipleship with Youth

This online resource is designed as a supplement to *Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Youth*. This piece outlines the ideal qualities and role of the Guide for youth involved in Covenant Discipleship, and is meant for a church volunteer or staff person interested in starting and organizing covenant discipleship groups with youth.

**Why Guides?**

- Covenant discipleship with youth encourages youth to be accountable to each other by discussing their faith lives on a regular basis.
- Guides send reminders of meeting times
- Guides keep in-person discussions on point
- Guides relay back any information of note to the youth minister (or other staff person)
- Youth Ministers (or other staff) relate with the guides in order to effectively administrate Covenant Discipleship Groups
- The growth of early Methodism was tied to John Wesley’s willingness to “make every member a minister” and utilize lay people in church leadership

**The Role of the Guide**

- Simply put, Guides are disciples who disciple others.
- Guides are a spiritually mature youth or adult who volunteers to intentionally coach and guide a covenant discipleship group of youth to live into the covenant they create for themselves.
- A youth covenant discipleship group should be between 4-8 members, so the guide participates alongside those 4-8 youth in their regular meetings.
- The guide reminds the group of their regular meeting times, helps each in-person meeting start and end on time, and encourages continuous growth and effort from others.
- Guides remind Covenant Disciples of their group covenant, formed by the General Rule of Discipleship. Encourages group members to live out their covenant daily.
- Guides interact with the youth minister, or other church staff, to keep their Covenant Discipleship Group running smoothly.
Consider Experience & Giftedness

While any spiritually mature youth or adult can serve as a guide, consider first those gifted in ways that will encourage spiritual growth in others.

Spiritual Gifts: servanthood, teaching, exhortation (encouragement), leadership, administration, helping, and shepherding.

Experience, skills: A guide will act as a participant in a covenant discipleship group with youth, willing to:

- Be held accountable for personal discipleship
- Show leadership potential in ministry
- Gain an understanding of the General Rule of Discipleship
- Listen and communicate with people of all ages, especially youth
- Work with other ministry leaders toward goals of the congregation
- Delegate responsibility, when appropriate, to their group
- Serve as the primary point of contact for a youth minister, or other appropriate church staff, regarding the spiritual development of their group.

What does a Guide do?

- Meet regularly (weekly if possible) in their covenant discipleship group
- Develops a plan for regular connection and support in their covenant discipleship group (get creative using text, social networks, phone calls, letters, etc)
- Contacts group members on a regular basis in order to help them grow in discipleship through the living out of their group covenant.
- Actively encourages group members to live into their shared covenant every day
- Practice acts of justice, compassion, worship, and devotion as a witness to Christ in the world
- Meet every 1-2 months with church leaders, youth staff or volunteers, lay leader, or other guides to develop the congregations mission.

Where can I get help?

- Read Job Descriptions and Leadership Training in the United Methodist Church, 2013-2016, Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2013-16: Small Group Ministries and the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2012 to understand the depth and breadth of the role of a Guide from Everyday Disciples
- Become familiar with the Works of Piety and Mercy and participate in them (acts of worship, devotion, justice, and mercy)
- Meet with youth minister(s), church staff, or a youth leadership team to evaluate the discipleship systems and process affecting youth. Create a discipleship plan that includes covenant discipleship with youth, revisit that plan on an annual basis
- Work with other leaders of the congregation to align covenant discipleship with the vision and ministry of the congregation
- Learn about discipleship formation for children, youth, and adults and provide appropriate materials and training guides.
Agencies & People Helps

- Your pastor, class leaders in your congregation and other congregations in your conference that have a covenant discipleship ministry
- InfoServ answers questions and provides current information about United Methodist resources, programs, and staff services.
- Discipleship Ministries: Covenant Discipleship

Web & Print Helps

- *Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Youth* by Chris Wilterdink
- *Growing Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Children* by Melanie C. Gordon, Susan Groseclose, and Gayle Quay
- *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household* by Steven W. Manskar
- *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*
- *Job Descriptions and Leadership Training for the United Methodist Church 2013-2016* by Betsey Heavner
- *Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition* by David Lowes Watson
- Covenant Discipleship website has a monthly e-letter, information about organizing Covenant Discipleship and training.
- *Covenant Discipleship* by David Lowes Watson
- *Forming Christian Disciples* by David Lowes Watson
- *Guidelines for Leading your Congregation 2013-2016: Small Group Ministries*
- *Interpreter magazine* for church leaders – Available in Spanish
- *Opening Ourselves to Grace* (DVD) four sessions with leaders guide, introduces Wesleyan concept of grace.
- *Praying in the Wesleyan Spirit: 52 Prayers for Today* by Paul Chilcote
- *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (see especially “an Order for Commissioning Class Leaders”)
- *The Class Meeting* by Kevin Watson
- *Small Group Bands* by Kevin Watson
- *How to Pray: The Best of John Wesley*
- *A Life-Shaping Prayer* by Paul Chilcote