

THE TURNING

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@ The Gate

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How to use this course

Great, you want to help with discipling new Christians!

Since it began in 2016, The Turning has become one of the largest church-based ministries to pray for people on the streets of the UK and Europe. The heart of The Turning is to equip churches and church leaders across towns in Europe to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and train them to disciple those who respond.

The Turning discipleship course is unlike any other discipleship course you've used before. Why? Most discipleship courses, such as Alpha, are group-based, but this is different; it offers the respondent a one-to-one discipleship experience. This booklet is a tool to enable you to develop this one-to-one discipleship. It helps people who respond in prayer on the streets in two ways. Firstly, it helps them develop a meaningful relationship with a Christian while using the Bible as a follow-up tool. Secondly, it provides, through that discipleship relationship, an understanding of how church works and how they can engage with it.

The many excellent group-based courses, such as Alpha, are helpful primarily for the family and friends of Christians, and for people who have been witnessed to over a period of time. One-to-one discipleship is essential in The Turning, to change a tenuous link with a stranger into a relationship within which discipleship can occur – a discipleship relationship. The Turning discipleship course builds a link which could develop into a friendship or, at least, form an association within which the respondent can see and understand, through the biblical teachings of Christ, the benefit of personal growth. It shows them how, by following his teachings, they can become his disciple. Essentially this is a tool that helps them move from being a stranger to the Bible and a stranger to the church to being a disciple of Christ.

This tool also serves a secondary purpose – to train Christians who have never had the privilege of discipling people one-to-one before. The course will help you if you feel you lack confidence or the skills required. By following these simple steps you will gain greater confidence in the discipleship process. Anyone can do it!

There is a difference between seeing your friends respond and reaching out to strangers. Everyone engaged in the process of trying to bring the respondents into community life must bear this point in mind: if those who respond on the streets had wanted to attend church, they would have done so a long time ago. However, the fact that they're open to Christ and willing to engage with him is an indication that they are open to God; while many of them will not understand the full implications of their prayers, many others will. We have found that many respondents are happy to meet up later and talk through the decision they made on the streets.

Practical considerations

There are practical considerations that you have to ensure you pay attention to. The first is that the first few one-to-one follow-up meetings must be held in a safe public venue. We advocate that the initial setting for the one-to-one discipleship follow-up is a neutral venue over a cup of coffee (or cup of tea or any kind of soft drink!) – somewhere that enables the discipleship course to be used. We advocate a public venue because it provides a safe place for both the respondent and the Christian doing the follow-up, giving both parties an opportunity to get to know one another.

We advocate that before you go to meet a respondent for the first time, you let someone else know (perhaps someone in your church) who you are meeting, where and at what time. You should also arrange to call back to let them know you have finished the meeting and are safely on the way back home.

The meeting itself will take around an hour and a half – an hour at the venue, with 15 minutes getting to the appointment and 15 minutes to get back home. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the agreed time. It is essential that we are faithful, once a meeting has been set up, but don't be discouraged if you must rearrange the meeting several times at the request of the respondent.

On your way to the meeting, pray. It will do you a world of good! Very often we carry anxieties and fears, and prayer helps to calm our nerves and gives God a chance to minister into our heart even as we seek to minister to the respondent. We would also encourage you to share the follow-up journey with your fellow home group members, so that they can cover you in prayer.

(We, of course, respect the respondent's confidentiality, and we will not share personal or sensitive information.)

At the meeting it is important that you trust the Holy Spirit to give you the words to say; remember that most of us Christians have heard countless sermons and know a lot more than we give ourselves credit for. In any case, if the respondent asks a question for which we have no answer, all we have to say is, 'I'll find out and get back to you.'

At the end of each session, always set a date for the next meeting before you leave. This way, you ensure continuity for yourself and the respondent.

How this course is formatted

The format of the discipleship sessions is consistent throughout. Each session is organised into four clear sections with understandable goals, and is entirely question-based.

We always start with a section headed 'Aims and goals for this session', in which clear goals are set, so that everyone involved understands what is a successful outcome and can assess if the session has achieved its purpose. We strongly encourage you to give the respondent a copy of the material, so that they can follow, see what questions are coming up and so avoid any unnecessary embarrassment.

The second section, 'Caring for you: Let's make sense of your journey so far', asks key questions about the well-being and spiritual development of the respondent since the last meeting.

The third section includes one or more theological questions about 'Understanding your faith'. This is the biblical part of each session and is intended to bring the respondent into a relationship with the Bible. It is important to remember that many people nowadays have very little biblical understanding, so we encourage you to help them access the Bible they have been given. This is a critical part of the course, because if the respondent engages with the Bible they are likely to grow faster and mature much more quickly than otherwise.

We then proceed to the fourth and last section: 'Purposeful lifestyle – living a prophetic lifestyle'. This part of the course aims to explore with the respondent, in light of the Scriptures, how they should now seek to live out their lives.

You'll notice that the whole course is a series of questions. These questions are designed to elicit discussion and facilitate communication. The questions are intended and designed to provoke thought about the respondent's spiritual journey.

Key skills

There are eight key skills that you will need to develop if you're going to do a good job. These are:

1. Patience

Getting that initial meeting with the respondent requires patience. We must remember that, for many new converts, we are not on the top of their priority list. Therefore, we need to be patient if we have to call them several times before gaining the first appointment, or if they fail to turn up, having promised to do so.

2. Consistency

We must ensure that we are consistent. Having made an appointment to meet the respondent, we must never cancel it without extraordinary reasons.

3. Tenacity

The British disposition is to avoid being pushy and refrain from being insistent. We must be willing to keep on ringing the respondent until we finally meet up with them for the cup of tea or coffee (unless, of course, they specifically ask us to stop calling).

4. Listening ear

The course is written with the respondent in mind. The course is full of questions and so it is important that you develop the skill of good listening.

5. Non-judgemental approach

There are many things that the Bible speaks of regarding lifestyles and behaviours that are not compatible with walking with Christ. Our job, when we go out onto the streets, is not to be condemning of people but to love

them and assure them that God loves them and is compassionate. You must avoid the temptation to correct or rebuke people; instead, trust the Holy Spirit to convict where he needs to. If a direct question is asked about sinful behaviour, offer the respondent your understanding of what the Bible says, by getting them to read the Scriptures. Do not just give an opinion.

6. Prayer

It is impossible to achieve the purposes of God by simply giving people information. There is a spiritual battle for the souls of the individuals you are sharing the gospel with. Therefore, prayer is an important foundation to all our follow-up endeavours.

7. The building of a discipleship relationship

The goal of this journey is not so much to build a friendship (although that may come) as to help the respondent develop a lifestyle in which they take responsibility for their own spiritual development. This course provides them with the means to explain that journey to those around them. At the end of each session, you should ensure that they know where you are up to in the course, so that they can go back and share what they've gone through with their family and friends.

8. End goal

You should always keep the end goal in mind. The end goal is to help the respondent become a disciple of Jesus. Regardless of whether they choose to come to our church or go to another church, we should keep this goal in mind. We are making converts to Christ and not converts of our church.

The benefits of this form of discipleship

This type of discipleship benefits everybody. It benefits you because you begin to live a lifestyle that is obedient to Christ's command that all disciples should be engaged in the job of making disciples. If you pursue this format you will essentially build the capacity to do it consistently for the rest of your life.

The church benefits because pursuing a discipleship program in which every member learns how to disciple others results in the mobilisation of the whole church. In truth, through such discipleship we take the church

outside its walls and set a trend for future generations. By bringing individual discipleship needs into our home group prayer time, we ensure that accountability for evangelism and discipleship is part of Christian development.

Finally, for the converts and respondents the benefits are clear. They get a guiding friend to help them navigate their personal journey and, when the time is right for them to come into church fellowship, they have somebody to help them explain how church works. Most importantly, they have someone to explain the Bible to them in a non-threatening environment.

We encourage inviting respondents to any social events that churches hold, but avoid inviting them to church services until a relationship of some kind has been formed. The more the respondent trusts us, the more likely they are to be able to cope with our church services.

1 Who is Jesus?

Aims and goals for this session

- Making sense of your journey so far.
- We need to be able to explain who Jesus is.
- We need to start learning from Christ's example.

Caring for you: let's make sense of your journey so far

Questions worth considering

How are you?

Have you been praying?

Have you told people what you have done yet?

How would you share your story with me?

Why we explore this

Pastoral care

Are you growing?

Are you sharing?

Are you growing in understanding?

Understanding your faith

Would you be able to explain who Jesus is?

- The name Jesus means 'saviour', while the title Christ means 'anointed'.
- He was born of a virgin (Matthew 1.18).
- Because he is God, Christ has unique attributes (John 1.1).
- His very nature is divine (Philippians 2.6).
- In Christ, the fullness of God dwells (Colossians 2.9–10).

An example from life:

- Our lives should reflect Christ’s teaching.
- If it was possible to place a mirror in front of God, the image reflected would be that of Jesus Christ. His life reflected God’s word (Hebrews 1.2–3).

How should I respond?

- I should acknowledge that Jesus is Lord of all situations (Matthew 14.26–33; see also Philippians 2.9–11).

What do I need to understand?

- Christ’s mission was to make salvation known to humankind (Mark 2.15–17).
- His authority extends to the forgiving of sins (Mark 2.5–7).
- The reason why he chose to die was to rescue sinners (Mark 10.45).

What can I do to make a difference?

- Tell someone how much you value what Christ has done for you.

What should I do now?

- Explain to someone you love and trust who Jesus is and why you have given your life to him.

2 The Bible

Aims and goals for this session

- To gain an understanding of how important the Bible is.
- To identify how God speaks to us personally through the Bible.
- To understand how to apply the Bible to our daily lives.

Caring for you: let's make sense of your journey so far

Questions worth considering

Is there anything I can help you with?

Are there any new challenges you are facing?

Do you find it easy sharing your faith with others?

What new things have you learned?

Why we explore this

Pastoral care

Are you growing?

Are you sharing?

Are you growing in understanding?

Understanding your faith

Do you understand why the Bible is so important?

- The Bible is described as God's word (2 Timothy 3.16–17).
- The Bible is your instruction book for a properly functioning life; just as electrical appliances need handbooks, so do we.
- The Bible shows us how to choose between those things that will bring joy and those things that can wreck life and make it dysfunctional.
- The Bible also teaches us how to fix things that have gone wrong in our life.
- The Bible is a personal book; it is a book given to you from God (2 Timothy 3.16–17).

An example from life:

- Relationships are about loving one another. One of the ways we express relationships is through communication; we talk to each other. The Bible is God's love letter to us, expressing how he feels about us and the world in which we live. The Bible is alive, sharp, and useful for many purposes (Hebrews 4.12).

How should I respond?

- Recognise that God is trying to plant his word in your heart like a seed (Matthew 13.1–9).

What do I need to understand?

- God watches over the seed, his word (Isaiah 55.10–11).
- The growth of the seed is directed by God (Mark 4.26–29).

What can I do to make a difference?

- Read the Bible as a discipline.

What next?

- You could begin to memorise scriptures as an additional step, and you can use a daily devotional in addition to this study. A daily devotional could be a Bible reading plan, a series of things to think about or a selection of Bible verses with an explanation. It's not intended just to give you more information, but to change your heart and bring you closer to God and his plans for your life.