

KEN ADAMS



Doing Ministry

TOGETHER

DOING
MINISTRY
TOGETHER

Doing Ministry Together
impactdisciples.com



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INTRODUCTION

DOING MINISTRY TOGETHER

Jesus made disciples using four key ingredients. He used content, contact, context, and correction. “Doing Ministry Together” is a practical little booklet to give you simple ideas for creating context for your disciple making efforts.

Creating “context” for your disciples is a way of helping them apply what they are learning. Making disciples is not just about knowing more, it is also about doing more.

The ideas provided in this booklet are all easy ways to help your disciples be “doers of the word and not hearers only”.

I believe that context and application is one of the most important missing ingredients in disciple making today. Most of us are educated way above our level of obedience, so information is not our problem, applying what we know is our problem.

I write “Doing Ministry Together” to provide discipleship groups and small groups with a quick and easy guide to getting your group out of the church building and into the world. In twenty-four easy to do activities these ideas will help any discipleship leader find creative ways to give your disciple hands on ministry experiences.

Always remember, Jesus saw discipleship as ministry training. Jesus never saw discipleship as simply taking people deeper or mastering spiritual disciplines. Jesus saw discipleship as the means to accomplish the mission or making disciples of all nations.

When Jesus left the twelve he did not leave behind scholars he left behind “ministers”. Jesus trained his disciples to be world changers by giving them practical experiences, not just more knowledge. Jesus made disciples in the lecture hall and in the laboratory.

I hope this booklet helps you make disciples that have the character and conduct of Christ. If you use it, it can help you make fully trained disciples of Jesus.

TAKE A PRAYER WALK TOGETHER

Making disciples is so much more than sitting in a classroom soaking up information. Becoming a disciple involves having hands on experiences. Think of it this way, disciple making is both lecture and laboratory.

Jesus spent time teaching his disciples but he also gave them hands on training. Jesus took his disciples into ministry settings and gave them application for the information they were receiving. Christ's and his disciples did ministry together and that should also be our model for disciple making today. Praying together helps produce spiritual maturity.

One of the first ways you can give your disciple hands on ministry experience is to take a prayer walk together. Taking a prayer walk with your disciples is a very non-threatening and easy way to get them out of the classroom. You might be surprised how much this experience will help produce spiritual formation in your disciples.

Taking a prayer walk is really very simple. Determine a location to walk and then walk and pray in a conversational manner. Here are some suggestions for where you might want to take a prayer walk.

- A neighborhood: walking through a neighborhood praying for lost people and families can be a great experience and easy to do.

- A town square: small towns with courthouses make great places to take prayer walks as you pray over the community in which you live.

- A school track, stadium, or parking lot: a school is a great location to walk and pray for the next generation, teachers, and administrators.

- A church building or parking lot: praying for church leaders and members is a great thing to do in a church building or campus.

MAKE A HOSPITAL VISIT TOGETHER

You can talk about caring for people all day long or you can actually do it. Nothing teaches the priority of caring for and serving others like visiting someone who is in need. Your disciples will learn more than you can imagine when you actually take them with you to care for someone who is sick or hurting.

A quick read of the Gospels and you will quickly see that Jesus cared for the sick. Jesus cared for the sick because he was a minister. His goal was to train his disciples to be ministers as well. Jesus wanted and still wants a whole church full of people ministering to others.

Making a hospital visit is an easy and, depending on the situation, a very non-threatening activity to do together. You might know the person you are visiting or you might simply visit someone that is recommended from your Pastor or church. A real stretch is to visit a nursing home or a hospital waiting room to care and pray for people you don't know. Always get permission if you are visiting people you don't know or have not requested a visit.

If you decide to make a hospital visit with your disciples here are a few tips for your visit.

- Call ahead if possible: it is usually best to let people know you are planning to visit if at all possible. It might also make the most of your time to make sure the person can be seen and they feel like having a visit.

- Don't stay too long: a good hospital visit for non family members is usually best if it is not too long. A quick visit lets a person know you care but respects a person's privacy.

- Watch what you say: be very discerning with your words when making a visit to a hospital room. Speak words that encourage and give hope and not words that discourage people or cause concern.

T H R E E

EAT AN EVANGELISTIC MEAL TOGETHER

Picture this. You and one of your disciples having lunch with a friend of his or a friend of yours that is not a Christian. During lunch the conversation turns to faith and you get the opportunity to share your testimony and ask the unbeliever a few questions while you eat. That is exactly what it means to have an evangelistic meal together with your disciple and a non-Christian.

Jesus is the perfect model of connecting with lost people for gospel conversations. In Mark 2:15 Jesus is hanging out at Matthew's house with his friends and Jesus' disciples. You can bet that the disciples were not there by accident. Jesus intentionally brought his disciples so they could see firsthand how Jesus led a gospel conversation with pre-Christians.

Christ's disciples learned how to share their faith by watching Jesus share the message of salvation with others. They became messengers by being with the greatest messenger of all time.

If you are willing to have an evangelistic meal with someone and a disciple here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Let the Holy Spirit lead the conversation. Do not force the conversation. Look for a natural opportunity to lead the conversation to spiritual things.

- Don't argue theology over a meal. Tough questions might come up but keep the meal conversation on the main thing. Share your personal experience. No one can argue with what Christ has done in your life.

- Seek to have a follow up conversation. Some times evangelistic meals lead to an immediate conversion. Most of the time they are the beginning of a discussion that takes some time to develop. You might want to follow up your meal by providing a book, video, or another meeting.

F O U R

PICK UP TRASH TOGETHER

Imagine taking a disciple or two with you to a public park to pick up trash. You could even take an entire group of four to six people that split up by two's with trash bags and start picking up pieces of trash lying around the park or field.

There are very few ministry projects that you can do with your disciples that are easier than picking up trash together. There are also very few that are so humbling. Picking up trash together is a great way to teach a disciple both the conduct and character of Christ.

In Mark 10:45 Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Being a fully trained disciple means being a servant and there are very few ways to learn what it means to be a servant like picking up someone else's nasty garbage.

The good thing about picking up trash is that everyone can do it. Simply put a bag in one hand and bend over a grasp that nasty old bottle in the other hand and place it in the bag. Presto! Servanthood has begun.

Let me share a few quick thoughts about picking up trash with your disciple.

- You probably won't need to get permission. Most public parks or ball fields will not prevent you from picking up trash. Just saying!

- Don't be in the way of any park activities. Pick a time to do trash pick up when you will not distract from any park or field activities. You do not want to be a distraction to the purpose of the park or field.

- Look for an opportunity to start a Christ conversation. There is a good chance someone might ask you why you are picking up garbage. That question is your open door and a great way to share the message of Jesus.

If you choose to pick up trash together always remember- it's okay to wear gloves!

F I V E

GIVE AWAY DRINKS TOGETHER

One day a woman rolled down her window as I approached her car at an intersection. I asked her a simple question. As I held both a Coke and Diet Coke can in my hand I asked her which one she would like. Her response was, "I think I'll take a Diet". She then said, "How much do I owe you?" I responded, "Oh, you don't owe me anything, this drink is free and God's love is free and you can have both of them if you want". I'll never forget her words. "God bless you son, God bless you."

My intersection encounter with this sweet elderly lady was part of a drink give away I did with my discipleship group on a Saturday morning. Me and four other guys loaded up coolers with soft drinks and water bottles and headed to a busy intersection near a local shopping center. The line of cars at the traffic light made it an easy place to ask people if they wanted a drink on a hot summer day. Very few people rejected us. The majority of people accepted our free gift and asked why we were doing this. A lot of people wanted to make a donation but we refused to accept one.

You would be amazed at how powerful a simple act of kindness like giving away a drink can be. It reminds me of what Paul said in Romans 2:4b, "...God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" One small act of kindness by a Christ follower can change a person's life. Never underestimate the power of kindness.

Here are a few tips for giving away drinks together.

- No strings attached! Make your act of kindness gimmick free. Just be kind, don't be a commercial for your church or group.

- Do not accept money under any circumstances. Many people think the church is out to get their money. Make this give away completely free. No exceptions.

- Yes, you can place a card on the can with the name of your church and you can enter a conversation about Christ or your church if the Spirit opens the door.

One more thing, have fun!

ATTEND A FUNERAL OR VISITATION TOGETHER

A certain amount of life is filled with grief. We all go through times when friends or loved ones pass away. These times of grief are important times for believers to care for one another. Your presence in a time of grief can speak volumes to the person that is grieving. Don't miss the opportunity to be there for those who grieve or to show someone else the importance of being there.

If you and someone you are discipling have a mutual friend that is grieving it can be a great opportunity for you to do ministry together. You may choose to attend a funeral together or maybe just attend the visitation before the funeral service. In either case, this gives you a chance to do ministry for someone that you care about with someone that you are discipling.

Instead of going to the funeral or visitation by yourself, invite your disciple to go with you. The time you spend together will be a valuable experience, draw you closer to each other, and mean a great deal to the person that is in mourning.

In John chapter eleven Jesus is informed that Lazarus has died. A couple of days later, Jesus goes to the tomb of Lazarus and he is accompanied by his disciples. In this case, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, which will not likely happen at the funeral visitation you attend. However, like Jesus, your presence at the death of a friend or loved one will matter. The person who is grieving will be thankful that you cared enough to be there.

Consider the following if you attend a funeral or visitation together.

- Being there is more important than knowing what to say. A good hug will go much further than a bunch of words.

- If possible, pray for the person who is grieving with your disciple. If nothing else pray with your disciple in the car before or after the visit.

Remember the person that is grieving will continue to grieve a few weeks and months down the road. Your presence will be needed when everyone else has gone home.

Don't forget, people never forget who shows up in their time of grief.

S E V E N

GO ON A MISSION TRIP TOGETHER

Several years ago a major hurricane did some serious damage along the gulf coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Our church, located in Georgia, saw it as a great opportunity to help people in need. We organized several teams to do clean up in the aftermath of the storm through churches located near the areas affected.

On one of those trips to the hard hit region I invited my discipleship group to go and help with the clean up work. Just about everyone in the group decided to go and we had a blast working together over the course of a few days.

A few of the guys in the group were skilled workers while the rest of us were good at grunt work. It really didn't matter what our skill level was. What mattered is that we were serving and helping together. Yes, we did make a dent in some of the damage but equally as important was the time we spent together, rubbing shoulders while working.

The travel time, the eating time, the social time, the devotional time, the work time all came together to let us accomplish in a few days in a ministry setting what would have taken us weeks to do in a group setting. You cannot underestimate the power of doing a mission trip together.

Here are a few thoughts to consider if you take a mission trip together.

- Consider having two leaders. A trip leader and a project leader. Someone experienced in construction make the work go smoother and someone gifted in organization will make the trip go better.

- Bring the resources or materials you need to get the job done. Nothing is worse than going on a mission trip and not having the tools or materials you need to do ministry when you get there.

- The time together will outweigh the task. You are on the mission trip to accomplish a task, but your time being together will accomplish even more results. The bonding and growth that takes place on a mission trip is tremendous. Doing missions can be the mission!

DO YARD WORK TOGETHER

I remember hearing the roar of a lawn mower and a weed eater outside my house early one morning. I had been super busy in ministry for a season and not able to get some much needed yard work done. One of the guys in my church heard about my heavy load and he decided to mobilize his discipleship group for a project day at the pastor's house.

There is always someone that needs help getting their yard work done. Many times an elderly person or someone that is sick is in need of a few guys or gals to come cut grass, clean gutters, or trim the hedges. A few hours or a half day of yard maintenance is a great way to practice the idea of serving.

There are two great benefits to helping someone with their yard work. First, the person you are serving will be extremely grateful. Yard work is a simple act that yields great results. The second benefit is that it will bless your group and grow you closer together. Nothing draws people closer than serving side by side. You will be surprised how something as simple as cleaning someone's yard can make such a big difference in a discipleship group.

As you gas up your mower and weed eater think about the following.

- Call ahead before you show up and start working in someone's yard. You don't want to surprise someone or be surprised. It also help to make sure you are at the right house before you start cutting stuff up.

- Look for an opportunity to share Christ with the person you did the yard work for. The yard work could possibly open the door for someone's heart to be open to the message of Jesus.

- Like a mission trip, be sure you know what you are doing when working on someone's yard. There is nothing worse than trying to help someone and making things worse.

Cleaning someone's yard or doing a simple construction project can be a great team builder and a big blessing to someone in need.

BRING A MEAL TOGETHER

Several years ago my wife and a woman in her discipleship group cooked and delivered a meal to a woman whose husband was battling cancer. The meal was important but not nearly as important as the conversation my wife and her disciple had with the man who was fighting for his life.

It is hard to put a price tag on a hot meal for someone that is going through a difficult time. Taking a meal to someone is a very easy thing to do but it speaks volumes to the person in need. You don't even have to cook the meal yourself in order to make a difference for a person in need. The thought and act is the thing that matters most, not the meal.

Honestly a hot meal even makes a difference for people that are not facing difficulty. A busy season of life or a hectic couple of days can be all the reason you need to provide a meal for someone. People rarely turn down a meal fixed by a friend and it always encourages those who receive it.

If you feel compelled to cook or purchase a meal and deliver it, consider these thoughts.

- Call ahead and find out what the person likes and find a convenient time to bring the meal. While most people will be thankful for the blessing, it is always better to verify their acceptance and the best timing.

- When preparing the meal, work on it with your disciple if possible. The time you spend with your disciple is important and can be just as beneficial as the food.

- Remember to look for the opportunity to encourage the person you are bringing the meal to. Pray for them or share Jesus with them if the opportunity presents itself.

Jesus encourages us to give a cup of water in his name and I bet he would feel the same about a hot, home cooked meal. I bet he would even endorse a good restaurant meal if delivered in his name!

PROVIDE CHRISTMAS GIFTS TOGETHER

Christmas is obviously a great time for small groups to come together and give. Our church, as I am sure most churches, make this a priority. Most often this includes the practice of giving gifts to families that are in need. As a church we help groups find families that are struggling financially or families where a parent is incarcerated to provide Christmas presents to.

There is something very special when a small group of people come together to purchase Christmas gifts and deliver them to a family that might not have gifts for Christmas if the group didn't do this. It is also really cool when the group gets to witness the expressions on the faces of the people when those gifts are delivered.

The benefits of working together to provide Christmas gifts for people are amazing. It blesses the giver of the gift. It blesses the one who receives the gift, but most importantly, it communicates what Christmas is all about. In the end, it strengthens the group as they work together to provide Christmas for others. The impact of this experience is powerful and unforgettable.

Remember the following when it comes to providing gifts for a family at Christmas.

- Try to give gifts that the family needs and wants. It means more when a person receives something they wanted and did not expect to get.

- Use the gift giving experience as an opportunity to talk about Jesus- the greatest gift of all.

- Look for the possibility of a continued connection with the family you provide gifts to. You might have an even greater impact if you continue doing things to help them beyond Christmas.

Christmas truly is the season for giving and when you give together it is also the season for growing. You will grow when you give like Jesus gave!

VISIT A NURSING HOME TOGETHER

Nursing homes can be filled with some very lonely people. Some residents in nursing homes hardly ever receive visits from family or friends. Some have no family or friends to visit them if they wanted them to. It can be a very powerful ministry experience when a discipleship group of a few men or women choose to visit the unvisited in a nursing home.

Think about what happens when a small discipleship group makes a visit to the lonely in a nursing home. First, that visit brightens someone's day and lets them know they matter to someone else. Second, it changes the heart of the one who is making the visit and demonstrates humility and sacrifice. This resembles Jesus! Third, it has a powerful impact on the group that is willing to make this visit together. Yes, a visit can be done individually but it can be an even more powerful experience when shared with others.

Nursing homes didn't exist in Jesus' day but something tells me he would have taken his disciples there from time to time. I can just picture Jesus stopping by a nursing home and asking the administrator which resident hasn't had a visit in awhile. Then I can imagine Jesus stopping by that person's room just to say hi and let that person know how special they are. What if we did the same thing today?

If you are willing to step out of your comfort zone and make a nursing home visit you might consider the following.

- If you don't know anyone in a nursing home you can stop by a home and ask the administrator if there is anyone in need of an occasional visit.

- The resident you are visiting might not respond very well to your visit if they are physically unable to do so, but remember your visit still matters.

- Don't overestimate the impact a nursing home visit will have on your group members, if only one or two of you can go.

Nursing homes are filled with people that Jesus would have made time for.

T W E L V E

PAY IT FORWARD TOGETHER

Imagine having lunch with someone in your discipleship group and after having a great time of fellowship you approach the cashier to pay for your meal. You notice that a police officer is eating a meal in the restaurant as well and you ask your discipleship friend if he or she would like to join you in paying for this officer's meal.

This simple act of paying it forward can be a great way for the two of you to do ministry together. It gives both of you a chance to give sacrificially. It gives both of you a way to encourage someone who lives sacrificially. It gives both of you a chance to honor God by giving. It gives both of you a chance to demonstrate humility by anonymously blessing someone who gives and serves regularly.

Paying it forward with someone you are discipling is a great way to model what it looks like to give like Jesus gave. It is a simple but powerful way to live out the principles that you are teaching in your group time. It is a way to show what it is you are trying to teach to the person you are discipling. It is an easy and simple way to demonstrate ministry.

You might be surprised how your attempt to do ministry with someone will actually affect the person you are serving or giving to. Your simple act of kindness can be a huge encouragement to the person you are helping.

Paying it forward for a person in public will also be a great witness to the employee that waits on you. If you pay for a policeman's meal the waiter will also see an act of kindness in action.

- Always be on the look out for people you can show acts of kindness too. You never know when God will put someone in your path that you can serve and show kindness to.

- You probably will remain anonymous when you pay it forward but if the situation presents itself you can also invite the person to church or just thank them for what they do. Paying it forward is a great act of kindness.

T H I R T E E N

HAVE A FALL FESTIVAL TOGETHER

Our church decided a few years ago to start taking advantage of Halloween and redeem it for evangelism. Instead of inviting people to the church on Halloween or a date near it, we have created small fall festivals in neighborhoods all around our church. It is amazing how cool these mini fall festivals can reach people.

The neighborhood fall festivals we conduct are done by small groups or a couple of small groups together. They provide candy, sometimes cook hot dogs or have hot chocolate. Some groups have corn hole or a bounce house for the kids. I have even seen small groups do face painting and bobbing for apples. The possibilities are endless.

Whenever you conduct a fall festival always think “connections” and “invitations”. Try to connect with people as they stop by and use the festival as an opportunity to invite them to a church service or a church event. I know people in our church today that came as the result of a fall festival in their neighborhood. What a cool way to turn Halloween into an excuse to invite people to church.

Remember the following when you conduct a mini neighborhood fall festival.

- Always have literature about your church available. You don't want to miss the opportunity for someone to hear how they can visit your church.

- Make safety a big priority. Nothing is worse than someone getting hurt in a bounce house or playing a game when you are trying to give them a great experience.

- Remember the activity is not the goal, people are. Sometimes we can get so caught up in creating the experience that we fail to prioritize the people we are creating it for. Don't let that happen at your fall festival.

A mini neighborhood fall festival is a great way to maximize the spiritual gifts in your group. There are so many ways each person can do something they are gifted at.

F O U R T E E N

DO A GAS BUY-DOWN TOGETHER

A discipleship group leader in our church took his small group of disciples to a gas station and gave people \$5 gift cards toward their gas purchase. The reactions of the motorists were priceless. Most people were totally shocked that a group of people would come out and help people with their purchase of gasoline.

You can imagine the conversations that developed between group members and motorists as they pumped their gas while group members waited for other cars to pull up. Everyone wants to know why you are doing this and who you are with? Boom! Talk about an open door.

The gas buy down is an easy way to connect with people, invite them to church, and show God's love in a practical way. Here are some things to keep in mind.

Ask the members of your group to pitch in as much money as they can donate and then go into the gas station and purchase their gift cards to pass out to motorists. This is a win for the buyer and the station.

- Do not be annoying to anyone. Some people really don't want anyone to help them so don't push it. Give them their space.

- Let the gas station attendant know what you are doing before you start. Make sure you have their permission to make the gas buy down offer to their customers.

- Wear similar t-shirts. If you have a church t-shirt it might be good if everyone wears the same shirt. It shows people you are a group and they are less likely to be defensive.

You need to have a few extroverts on your team if you do the gas buy down. You need people that are comfortable approaching strangers and asking them if they want help buying their tank of gas.

F I F T E E N

GIVE DONUTS AWAY TOGETHER

Who doesn't love a good donut? Donuts are an easy way to show love and kindness in a simple way. Donuts are also an affordable way to meet a small need and make an expression of kindness.

Over the years I have seen donuts given away in lots of different ways. I've seen people give away donuts on Black Friday when shoppers are standing in long lines. I have seen donuts given away at rapid transit stations where commuters travel during busy times of the day. I've seen donuts given away at fire stations, police stations, and hospital emergency rooms. There really is no bad place to give someone a tasty donut.

With every donut should come a short word of encouragement or blessing. Maybe even an invite to a church can be made when a donut passes from one hand to another. Most people are more than willing to take an invite with their donut.

When you plan your donut outing here are a few things to think about.

- Distribute the donuts using gloves or put them in separate boxes or containers. Just be sure to use good hygiene when it comes to offering donuts to the general public.

- Think about having coffee or bottled water to go along with the donut distribution. It might good to have a drink to help wash down the sugary treat.

- Print invite cards to go along with your donut give away. When people ask why you are doing this, and they will, you can let them know you are doing this to show God's love in a practical way and invite them to your church. Both are big "wins".

You may be doing your donut give away in a location where you can set up a portable table and set the boxes up on the table. If not, you may need to carry the donuts in boxes of dozens and give them away as you walk or stand in a set location. Just remember, people love a good donut and a small act of kindness can make a big difference.

SIXTEEN

PROVIDE SNOW CONES TOGETHER

I was recently invited to a cool event put on by a couple in the church where I attend. This couple paid for a snow cone truck to come to their home and provide snow cones to anyone and everyone that wanted one in their neighborhood. Now you understand why I said it was a “cool” event.

There were a few things that made this event such a good success. First, they got the word out in their neighborhood early. They passed out flyers and told as many neighbors as they could when the truck was coming. Second, they did the free snow cone give away on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of the summer. Timing is everything with this type of event. Third, they had a summer Santa at the event which created a buzz among the kids in the community. Many came to see Santa in his Hawaiian outfit that might not come for the snow cone alone.

The folks that held the snow cone give away followed a few simple guidelines.

- Obviously the hosts covered the costs. The snow cones were not free, they were paid for by the people hosting the event. A group of disciples can split the cost and easily cover 30 to 50 snow cones.

- They used the event to promote the church and the children’s ministry at their church. They wore t-shirts from the church and had had some literature available for people who wanted to know more.

- A neighborhood Facebook page and signage in the community are also great ways to spread the word to others in the neighborhood. Once the word gets out the people will show up. Keep the truck there for an hour or two.

- Be creative. Snow cones are not the only great give-aways in the summertime. Ice cream, watermelon, popsicles or any other “cool” food favorite will work.

Great conversations can happen in a driveway or on neighborhood street corner. A snow cone give away simply gives people a reason to gather and it also gives a group of disciples a great way to love on people together.

SEVENTEEN

TAKE TREATS TO A FIRE STATION TOGETHER

First Responders always need to feel more appreciated. The work they do is vitally important but so often overlooked and taken for granted. Sometimes a small gift pack can go a long way to letting EMT's and Firefighters know they are appreciated by the public they serve.

A Fire Station gift pack can consist of many different things. It can be sweet treats like candy and cookies. It can be drinks like Gatorade and soft drinks. It can be spices and cooking products. Firefighters spend a few days in the station and cook their own meals much of the time. Be creative on the gift packs and think of things that can be used to make life a little easier while a firefighter is on duty. Even a gift card bundle can be a good idea for a station of firefighters to use for their station. The thought will be much more important than the gift, so don't worry too much about what you bring.

I would like to suggest asking a firefighter that you know or one you go to church with what they might like or need. You will likely obtain some much needed feedback on the real needs and what really speaks to the men and women who serve you.

If you are interested in taking a gift to a fire station here are some things to think about.

- If possible plan your visit in advance. Firefighters have schedules and are not always available to receive people at the station. If you do simply drop in, realize the reception might not be ideal.

- Don't hesitate to ask the firefighters in the station you visit if you can say a prayer for them. Most people that stand in harm's way are willing to accept prayer. Just don't preach in your prayer!

- Don't forget to invite the men and women at the station to your church. Many of them will have a church home but for those who don't this could be a great way to connect with them.

WRAP CHRISTMAS GIFTS TOGETHER

For several years our church would put up a tent outside a Walmart and wrap Christmas gifts for free. It was an awesome way to do ministry together and connect with people together. One of our church plants has actually worked out a deal with a mall to set up a table in the mall and wrap gifts as a service to customers. You can imagine how much of a need this meets for folks and how powerful of a statement it makes in a community.

Wrapping gifts for people is a great way to do ministry together as a group but this is one activity that works best if it is a church wide effort. Wrapping gifts as a church allows you to have more people involved for longer periods of time and it makes collecting resources easier. When our church wraps gifts we provide the paper, the tape, and the hands to wrap it with. People love having someone wrap many of their gifts for free following a long day of shopping.

If you plan to do gift wrapping together there are a few things you might want to keep in mind.

- Do a good job! Nothing is worse when doing free gift wrapping than doing it poorly. When I have participated in gift wrapping, I don't do the actual wrapping. I greet people and help stock supplies. With my lack of wrapping skill, you don't want to send people out with a present I have attempted to wrap. Even a pretty bow won't make my wrapping job acceptable!

- Location, location, location! When you do a gift wrapping outreach be sure you find a good location where people can find you. One time we did gift wrapping in a store front where people had a hard time finding us. You want your wrapping tent or table to be very visible in the best place for shopping traffic.

Wrapping Christmas presents is a great way to do ministry together but also a great way to demonstrate the serving conduct of Christ which is, of course, the true meaning of Christmas!

DELIVER FIREWOOD TOGETHER

Obviously making a firewood delivery is not for everyone. There are, however, a few groups of disciples that will find this to be a great way to do ministry together. Despite the fact that more and more people use gas logs in their fireplaces, you will still discover there are lots of people that use real wood in their fireplace and are always in need of more. Seniors in particular are one group in society that still use firewood and need help getting it.

If you lead a discipleship group with a couple of people who like chopping wood you will find this to be a great serving opportunity to do together. You can even enhance the opportunity if you work together to chop the wood before you deliver it. Another aspect of this project could be tree removal which would potentially kill two birds with one stone. You could help someone who needs the trees removed and use some of that to provide firewood for people. Most churches can give you names of people that might need firewood or tree removal so put the word out and see who might be in need.

Along the same lines as delivering firewood are jobs such as hauling away junk and helping someone move. The main idea is finding someone in need of some physical labor and working together to help meet that need.

Here are some suggestions if you decide to do a project such as delivering wood or hauling off someone's junk.

- Always plan this type of effort in advance. Clearly, you don't want to show up unannounced to haul off someone's junk only to find out it wasn't junk! Also, planning involves getting the tools together that you need for the project, so don't forget to come prepared!

- Combine the work time with some relational time. If you go work for someone, plan to have breakfast or lunch together as apart of the activity. Remember, discipleship is relationship!

- Use this serving opportunity to look for other needs that might need to be met. A load of firewood might lead to other open doors to serve someone and help them

on a regular basis. Some families have special needs that might present the need to be adopted as a family to serve regularly.

If ministry is “finding a need and filling it” then helping with firewood, tree removal, junk, or moving are all great ways to do ministry together.

PASS OUT GOSPEL TRACTS TOGETHER

I cannot tell you how many times I have taken a disciple or two out for a time of tract distribution. I have gone to shopping malls, amusement parks, street hang outs, and large crowd events such as Mardi Gras in the French Quarter of New Orleans. I have literally lost track of all the places and times I have given out tracts to people. It has been a great way to do ministry together with disciples.

If you decide to venture out into the unknown of tract distribution you need to realize that you will get rejected more than you are accepted. The majority of people you encounter will not take your tract. In fact, they will probably consider you a spiritual radical and extremist. So be it!

I've done lots of tract mission trips and I am actually a very normal guy. I realize these types of evangelistic efforts are not for everyone and they can be received with mixed results. I've been cursed at and had people say some very mean things. I have also had long heart felt conversations with people about Christ. I still recall a half hour conversation with a young college freshman in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. This pastor's daughter really opened up to me and I could relate to what she was going through.

Doing this kind of ministry is not for the faint of heart and here are a few things to think about before you go.

- Pray, pray, pray! Every time I have handed out tracts I have spent time in prayer before I went. You need God to ordain Christ centered encounters.

- Prepare to be rejected. I already mentioned this but just know that some people don't like Christians in public places and they are not afraid to tell you that.

- Stick to the main thing. When people do converse with you on the street they often try to argue with you. Don't go there. Keep your conversation of Christ and his message. You will waste time arguing with people that are not really interested in your message.

Sharing Christ is a great way to do ministry together.

WASH CARS TOGETHER

When I was a Youth Pastor I conducted quite a few car washes for our youth group. Most of them were fund raisers but once or twice we did them for free. That's a very different concept and a great way to teach young people the conduct of serving like Christ.

Free car washes are not just for youth groups. They can also be done by small groups and discipleship groups. They can also be done by including children and using the opportunity to model for your child the act of serving and doing ministry together. That is a win, win, win.

If you decide to try a car wash event for free you might choose to do it in a church parking lot, a business that is closed, or a convenience store. There are lots of people that will allow groups to have car washes so don't be afraid to ask. If a car wash seems too involved, try offering to just clean people's car windows at a gas station. You never know who you just might bless that day with this simple action.

Be aware of the following if you think a car wash is a ministry opportunity you want to attempt.

- Do a good job! You do not want to give a free car wash that is poorly done. Nothing is worse than someone having a bad experience with their vehicle, even if it is free.

- Leave the location better than you found it. Make sure the place where you do the washing is left in better condition once you finish the washing.

- Designate someone to be a talker to the person while their vehicle is being washed. Bring along someone water bottles and some information about your church and engage the person while the rest of your group is doing the washing.

You might be surprised how easy and how effective a free car wash is for reaching people and doing ministry together with a small group of people.

CLEAN UP A CHURCH TOGETHER

Often times churches can get neglected in their upkeep. Lots of churches need a new coat of paint, much needed yard work, or pressure washing and spring cleaning. These churches might be your church or someone else's church. Whose church it is doesn't really matter. The fact that your group is serving together is what matters.

I once heard a pastor tell the story of when his church youth group served a member of another church and the wrong group was recognized for doing the work. This mistake was a great lesson in humility and serving like Jesus. That's a bonus to doing ministry together! Serving and not being recognized correctly.

Fixer upper churches are all over the place so contact a pastor and see how quickly and easily he is willing to let your group come and do some work to make their campus or facility better. Consider looking for a church in an inner city area or area that ministers to a different demographic than the one your church reaches. What a great way to be involved in the process of making disciples of all nations in your own part of the world. In the process, you honor God, build the kingdom, and grow disciples. Not a bad combination. Keep a few things in mind if you decide to try church clean up project.

- Get permission first. The goal is to build unity among churches, not disrupt it. Don't show up at a church to clean and do work unless they have approved it first.

- Being willing to do the hard work. It can mean a lot to a church if your group is willing to get dirty and do what no one else wants to do. Cleaning gutters or cleaning up a neglected space may speak volumes to people.

- Don't worry about who gets the credit. If you clean up a church, do it without caring about the recognition. If it comes, then thank God and reflect the glory back to him.

Cleaning a church with your disciples or small group is another simple way to do ministry and serve together while making a difference for the kingdom at the same time!

DELIVER WELCOME BASKETS TOGETHER

A great way to welcome a new person to a community or neighborhood is with a welcome basket. A great way to deliver a welcome basket to new neighbor is with one or two people from a small group or a discipleship group.

Picture a couple of ladies that are in a discipleship group together taking the time to put together a gift basket for a new family that recently moved into the community. Working on the basket together builds relationships and taking it to a new family creates and opportunity for evangelism. What a great way to do ministry together.

Taking welcome baskets to new families can actually be a church wide outreach effort. Some business people in the church might want to donate items for the baskets and others might know of new move-ins to the community. Together this can be a great way to live in new people and give them a personal invite to the church in a very non-threatening way.

Gift baskets can also be a great blessing to people who are in need of encouragement and support. People who are going through a cancer battle or some other long-term health crisis can really use a basket full of items that can bring comfort and help. Items like gift cards, candles, books, magazines and other simple but thoughtful gifts can really go a long way in brightening someone's day!

If welcome baskets are an idea you want to pursue keep a few things in mind as you do.

- Be discerning about the basket items. Think about things a new person might want and need. Be sure not to put anything offensive in the basket as well. That's a huge mistake!

- Make sure to place information about your church in the basket. You want to let the welcome basket leave behind a reminder that your church will be there if they need you.

- Try to deliver the welcome basket soon after a person has moved into the community. The longer you wait the

less effectiveness a welcome basket can have on reaching people.

Taking a welcome basket to a new family in a neighborhood is a great way to do ministry together and a great way to reach new families for your church. It doesn't take a lot to make a big difference with a church welcome basket.

DO A BIBLE STUDY TOGETHER

Doing a Bible study together is not technically doing ministry together. I get that, but I also know how this can be a ministry to the person leading the study and the person learning how to study. You can never underestimate how much can be taken away from taking the time to teach your disciple how to do a personal Bible study.

If you don't know how to study your Bible find a book on Bible study methods and learn how to work through a passage of scripture. Once you get familiar with Bible study methods, set a study time with your disciple. Pick a place at the church, a home, or a coffee shop to do a quick study.

Simply open a passage, read it together and then start digging into it for all its worth. Look up words and make cross-references to other scriptures. Look up words and concepts in your computer and take notes on the things you discover. There is really no wrong way to dive deeper into God's Word.

When doing a Bible study always keep three questions in mind. What does the passage say? What does the passage mean? How do I apply the passage to my life?

If you want to take Bible study to an outreach level, consider doing a study in a neighborhood of one of your disciples with an outreach focus. Marriage, parenting or financial studies are always big hits and high interest for people even if they are not believers.

If you want to do a Bible study with your disciple you might want to remember the following.

- Study in a place with limited distractions. It is hard to think and reflect when there is a lot of noise and people around you.

- There are lots of Bible study resources just a click away. Your computer, iPad, or phone have lots of great tools for Bible study. There is really no good reason why you can't go deeper into God's Word these days.

- Doing a Bible study together is like working out together. You will get stronger with the help of another.



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Context and application is one of the most important missing ingredients in disciple making today. Most of us are educated way above our level of obedience. Our problem isn't lack of information - it's applying what we know!

We hope you enjoy this resource and that it will be a helpful guide to getting your small group out into the world doing hands-on ministry experiences together.



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