

Discovery Bible Study Method (DBS)

This method follows the example of Jesus in the way he mentored a group of people together. It has the power of accountability and multiplication.

Three letters A-B-C define the structure for your conversation.

A. Ask

Ask what has been good this week? It's important to be specific. Not "how are you?" "What has been good for you?" forces people to say the good things that have happened. This then is the basis of thanking God and teaches people to praise and thank him.

Then ask what has been difficult, bad or challenging this week. This forms the basis of prayer for needs. As you pray for needs, whatever they are, this allows the space for God to break through and do a something special.

Then pray; thanking God for what is good, and praying for the needs. Keep the prayers simple, easy and to the point. As early as possible, get others praying. Make your own prayers really simple, so it doesn't sound religious or 'professional'. This helps new disciples overcome the intimidation of learning how to pray. It's important to teach people how to pray, with others, out loud. It's an important part of making a disciple.

B. Bible

From the beginning the aim is to teach self-discovery. To not rely on a teacher, but to understand that the Bible, with the Holy Spirit as revealer is sufficient. Self-discovered truth that is applied by the person stays with the person. It sticks. It is their truth. It is personal and owned. Jesus did this a lot in his discipleship. He asked the disciples '*Who do men say that I am?*' ... and '*Who do you say that I am?*' and '*Well done, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father in heaven*'. Why didn't Jesus just tell them? Why didn't he just say from the beginning 'Hey guys, I am the Messiah, the Son of the living God!' Instead, he let the process of discovery happen over time, he let it come by revelation from his Father as he allowed people to go through a process of discovering who he was. This is the same goal and process of DBS discipleship.

1st choose a Scripture that is simple, to the point and not too long. A story or narrative is good. Study a scripture that is applicable to people's questions and context. If looking at long passages, select a smaller section within it.

E.g. from Genesis 1, focus on Gen 1:26–28.

- Invite someone to read the verses.
- Get someone else to reread it, especially if there is another translation available.
- Retell the story. This is important as it cements the story in our minds. Re-tell the story as you would tell it to a friend. The retelling of the story should be a group affair. One person can attempt to re-tell and others can chip in and add to the picture. In this way the story is painted by the group.
- Then ask 'so what?' The key is for the leader (you) not to jump in too quickly and teach! Let them think, and talk. What do they see in these verses? Don't be afraid of awkward silences. If they ask you to explain, turn it around by asking them what do they think? Sometimes it is good to simply be quiet, and let them come up with the answers. This is very hard to do, as we are so used to providing all the answers, but it's a key discipline for this process. Remember the key in

this process is self-discovery. The teacher's job is to give space for the person to learn. To put in their own words what they see. You have to trust the Holy Spirit!

- Two highly recommended questions are: 'What does this say about God?' & 'What does this say about us?'
- Some other questions: 'Are there areas you are bothered by?' 'What do you like?' 'What do other people think?' 'How do these verses make you feel?'
- If you are talking more than the group members, then you are talking too much. You know if you are being successful if the group is talking a lot more than you.
- Keep the discussion centered on scripture. If the person is veering off course, bring it back by saying 'Where do you see that in these verses?'

C. Commit to obey

The third part of this process is to ground the talk into clear obedience steps. Jesus described making disciples as 'teaching people to obey everything I have commanded you.' We often miss the words 'to obey'. Our discipleship processes are often knowledge based and not obedience/action based. There is a key difference.

The question is 'So what will you do about this?' This becomes the obedience step. Let the person come up with their own commitment. It might be something like 'I need to respect people' or 'I need to be more thankful'. Or it may be something very specific, like 'I need to stop shouting at my family!' Whatever it is, it needs to be listened to and respected. It is ok if it is a simple application. When someone commits to obey, truth that has come via scripture and revelation becomes lived, personal and owned.

Finally the last key is to 'tell someone this week what you are learning'. So sharing and multiplication is built into discipleship from day one. Even before they "get saved" they start spreading what they have been learning. It's all about making disciples from the beginning that multiply. Talk about who they are going to share with (insert name here).

And all this should be easily done in under 2 hours!

Summary

So it's as simple as ABC. It begins with worship and thanksgiving. Then Scripture is the centre, the teacher empowers the person, and doesn't have all the answers. The disciples discover the truth in God's word and learn to obey and share with others from day one.

Our focus is making disciples, allowing for salvation to come through that process, rather than the traditional way of trying to get someone 'saved' (usually to say the sinners prayer) and only then discipling them. It takes time, we are not in a hurry.

In this process, we are letting people discover God's story, the big picture. It is about reshaping people's world view around this new world view. A biblical world view. This is important. For Hindu's, Muslims, Buddhists and now average Australian-born Aussies, they need to rediscover God's story. This method is simple, but very powerful. Churches have been planted through this methodology. It is sometimes so simple that people walk by it and miss its power. It's worth trying a few times and not giving up too quickly on it. There will be great times and other times where it does not seem to work. Keep at it, the method has a great record of bearing fruit; God seems to like it.

Video outlining the method: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPCL9w6LjE>

Potential passages to use:

Remember to choose just a few verse from each section, don't try and do the whole thing.

- Genesis 6:1-9:17 " The Fall: The Flood
- Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6 - Redemption: God's Promise to Abram
- Genesis 22:1-19 " Redemption: Abraham offers Isaac as a Sacrifice
- Exodus 12:1-28 " Redemption: The Promise of Passover
- Exodus 20:1-21 " Redemption: The Ten Commandments
- Leviticus 4:1-35 " Redemption: The Sacrificial System
- Isaiah 53 " " Redemption: Isaiah Foreshadows the Coming Promise
- Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20 Redemption: The Birth of Jesus
- Matthew 3; John 1:29-34 Redemption: Jesus is Baptized
- Matthew 4:1-11 " Redemption: The Temptation of Christ
- John 3:1-21 " " Redemption: Jesus and Nicodemus
- John 4:1-26, 39-42" Redemption: Jesus and the Woman at the Well
- Luke 5:17-26"" Redemption: Jesus Forgives and Heals
- Mark 4:35-41"" Redemption: Jesus Calms the Storm
- Mark 5:1-20" " Redemption: Jesus Casts Out Evil Spirits
- John 11:1-44"" Redemption: Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead
- Matthew 26:26-30" Redemption: The First Lord's Supper
- John 18:1-19:16" Redemption: Jesus is Betrayed and Condemned
- Luke 23:32-56" Redemption: Jesus is Crucified
- Luke 24:1-35"" Redemption: Jesus Conquers Death
- Luke 24:36-53" Redemption: Jesus Appears and Ascends