



DIOCESAN PLANNING PRIORITY NO. 2: YOUTH FORMATION

CHAPTER 12 SECTION 7



WHAT?

Our vision: What does a healthy teenage disciple look like?

From May through December of 2016 the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux went through a comprehensive planning process. There was a emphasis on forming disciples which was to serve as the golden thread woven throughout all of the planning. The Bishop was clear with his desire: the renewal of parish life. The Holy Father Pope Francis had been speaking about the call to **make disciples**.

If “making disciples” was to be the golden thread, we needed to ask the question: *How* do you make a disciple? Specifically: How do we make one in a parish? In our diocese? With our resources? Yet, before we could answer how do you make a disciple we first needed to answer the question: **What is a disciple?**

The word disciple appears 22 times in the Gospel. The word disciple is not limited to Jesus, for many of the great teachers at the time of Jesus had disciples. John the Baptist had disciples, as we read in John 1:35-37: “The next day John was there again with two of his **disciples** and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God.’ The two **disciples** heard what he said and followed Jesus.”

The word disciple in the Bible, especially in the Gospels, reveals three things. A disciple: (1) learned what the master taught, (2) taught what the master taught, and (3) tried to live like the master.

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to commit to the same three things. Disciples **learn** what Jesus taught. Disciples **teach** others what Jesus taught. Disciples long to **live** like Jesus. The first two are understandable and expected. The third is the most difficult. Disciples strive to live like Jesus. Whew, no pressure.

What does it look like to concretely **live** as a disciple? What are the thresholds one should strive for? What is the visible fruit we should expect to see in one’s life?

Our strategic planning team analyzed the following documents:

- *Lumen Gentium (The Church in the Modern World)* Second Vatican Council, 1964
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization in the Modern World)* Pope Paul VI, 1975
- *Redemptoris Missio (Mission of the Redeemer)* Pope John Paul II, 1990
- *Go and Make Disciples* USCCB, 1992
- *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us* USCCB, 1999
- *Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)* Pope John Paul II, 1999
- *Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel)* Pope Francis, 2013

After summarizing the core themes from each of these major documents on evangelization, we illustrated what we believe to be nine dimensions of a mature missionary disciple. Of course, we are always on the journey. We will never be complete in our growth. Yet, this is the visible fruit we would hope to see in one's life as they mature as a disciple.

Characteristics of a Mature MISSIONARY DISCIPLE



RELATIONSHIP

I have a **personal relationship with Jesus Christ** that gives my life meaning and direction.



CONVERSION

I say **YES** to that which brings me closer to God.
I say **NO** to that which pulls me away from God.
I have **aligned my lifestyle with the Gospel**.



DISCERNMENT

I **want what God wants**.
I begin to discern the little things.
I can recognize His voice, and I follow as He leads me.



SACRAMENTS

The Sacraments are a **regular part of my life**.
Sunday Mass and frequent Confession.
Additional Masses, especially during Lent and Easter.



HOLINESS

I pray daily. I am growing in virtue, particularly
Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance,
Humility, Faith, Hope, & Charity.
I **want to be a witness of holiness**.



GROUNDING

My relationship with God is **no longer dependent upon whether I "feel" His presence**.
I study the Bible and Church teaching.
On-going study of my faith is a lifestyle.



COMMUNITY

I have people who **hold me accountable**.
I have regular conversation about
where I am with my commitment to Christ.



OTHERS

I **no longer live in a "me-centered" world**.
My Faith is no longer just "me and Jesus."
I see and respond to others as Christ does.

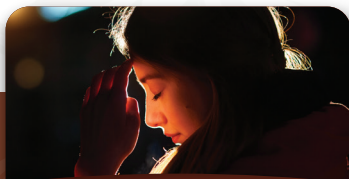


EVANGELIZATION

I **know my testimony** - the story of what
God has done in my life.
I can share and do share that testimony with others.

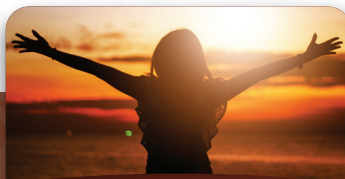
What does “the nine” look like healthy youth formation? Our team consulted with experts across the country to translate the benchmarks of adult formation to age appropriate expectations for our youth. If we look at youth formation through the lens of 6-12th grade, we ask ourselves: “If we have seven years, from 6th thru 12th grade, to work with our youth, what would we want to see in their lives by the time they graduate from high school? Imagine, for a moment, if all of our graduating high school seniors looked like this.

Characteristics of a Teenage MISSIONARY DISCIPLE



RELATIONSHIP

Have a relationship with Jesus Christ
Pray more days than they don't for 20 minutes in a contemplative manner with Scripture



CONVERSION

Have learned how engage their will
Seek out monthly confession and a weekly examination of conscience



DISCERNMENT

Ask God to show them the way
Are able to pray and hear God speak. Do what God and the Church asks of them.



SACRAMENTS

Committed to the sacraments
Go to Mass weekly, open to daily Mass. Confession once a month.



HOLINESS

Growing in virtue
Growing in the virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude



GROUNDING

Relationship with God not governed by feeling
They feel comfortable reading the Bible and understand the Church on tough topics



COMMUNITY

They have others who hold them accountable
See small group accountability as a need and know how to build it



OTHERS

It's not about “me and Jesus”
Have a general sense of being other-focused and willing to serve on their own



EVANGELIZATION

Not afraid to share their story
Are familiar with their own faith testimony and want to share it