

Getting Specific: Discipleship Training Objectives

by Leroy Eims



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Issues: Training objectives help you focus your follow-up and evaluate its effectiveness for the person you are helping.

Helping a new Christian advance toward discipleship—growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ—cannot be accomplished haphazardly. It has to begin somewhere and then go somewhere, like the educational process from kindergarten to high school graduation.

In school, the student has to master many lessons, assimilate many facts, and learn to do many things, so the way must be planned and organized. He doesn't learn calculus while playing in the sandbox.

In helping a young Christian grow, you need a step-by-step building program in mind. You can develop certain objectives you want him to attain before he undertakes others. You want to see him go from taking in spiritual milk to partaking of spiritual meat.

That's where *training objectives* come in. These training objectives should be designed to stimulate progress on the path of discipleship. They are the steps in the process of a convert becoming a disciple.

Training objectives should be written in specific terms, describing what the person will be doing along the way and how you will know he is doing it. In other words, these objectives should be measurable. They will help you measure progress in specific aspects of discipleship.

Here is a list of subject areas your training objectives could cover:

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

DAILY QUIET TIMES

VICTORY OVER SIN

SEPARATION FROM SIN

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING GOD'S WORD

BIBLE STUDY

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

PRAYER

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

FAITH

LOVE

THE TONGUE

USE OF TIME

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

OBEDIENCE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

SATAN—KNOWING OUR ENEMY

DEALING WITH SIN

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

WITNESSING

FOLLOW-UP

GIVING

WORLD VISION

This list is a general guide, and the order of the topics is not necessarily sequential. Every person is unique, and the way you help a young Christian in these areas should reflect his or her individual needs.

You may want to eliminate some of the items on the list and add others. You may want to double the list or cut it in half. But there should be some ideas here that you can adapt to your own ministry and lifestyle.

When these concepts have been shared with pastors, they found the specific training objectives to be quite helpful. These objectives are biblical, have been tested in various situations, and are practical. They reflect qualities and knowledge that should be in the heart of a person becoming a disciple.

Their real purpose is to help us live a Christ-honoring life.

On this page and the next, for example, are training objectives written out and elaborated on for a few of the items in the list above. Each item could be further expanded.

VICTORY OVER SIN

Objective:

He (or she) knows how to experience victory over temptation by relying on the Holy Spirit and trusting promises from God's word. This is evidenced by his recent triumph over a specific temptation.

Activities:

1. Talk about victory over sin which God has allowed you to experience.
2. Study together 1 Corinthians 10:13.
3. Memorize together Psalm 119:9–11.

Helpful resources:

1. Chapter 3 in *Growing in Christ* (NavPress).
2. Chapter 1, "New Life," in *Beginning a New Life* (Book 2 of *Studies in Christian Living*, NavPress).
3. *Steps to Spiritual Victory* by Theodore Epp (Back to the Bible).

Scripture:

Isaiah 41:13-God's strength and help

1 Corinthians 10:13-the promise of escape

1 Corinthians 15:57-victory through Jesus

MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

Objective:

He can explain what it means to meditate on Scripture, and can relate what truths have impressed him recently in the Scripture meditation he has done.

Activities:

1. Talk with him about the biblical truths you have been impressed with recently in Scripture meditation.
2. Look together at a short passage, carefully considering what it means and asking questions about it.
3. Explain to him what Scripture meditation means to you.
4. Make a list of meditation methods.

Helpful resources:

Meditation—The Bible Tells You How by Jim Downing (NavPress).

Scripture:

Joshua 1:8-God's command to Joshua

Psalms 1-benefits of meditation

Jeremiah 15:16-the joy of taking in God's word

John 15:7-Having Christ and his words brings answered prayer.

Philippians 4:8-mental discipline for meditation

FAITH

Objective:

When specific needs arise in his life, he trusts God to meet them.

Activities:

1. Read together through Hebrews 11.
2. Talk with him about what God has supplied for you as you have trusted him.

Helpful resources:

God Can Make It Happen by Russ Johnston (Victor Books).

Scripture:

Romans 4:20–21-Abraham's faith glorified God.

Ephesians 6:16-Faith protects us from Satan.

Hebrews 11:6-Faith is essential.

1 John 5:4-Faith overcomes the world.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Objective:

He will be able to confidently express to someone else his own assurance of salvation, based on his personal faith in Jesus Christ and on promises he knows from the Scriptures.

Activities:

1. Go over the gospel message with him again.
2. Ask him to tell you how he knows he is a Christian.
3. Observe how he explains his salvation to another person.
4. Do a Bible study with him on assurance of salvation.

Helpful resources:

1. Chapter 1 in *Growing in Christ* (NavPress).
2. Chapter 3, "Eternal Life in Christ," in *Knowing Jesus Christ* (Book 1 of *Studies in Christian Living*, NavPress).
3. *The Know-so Christian* by Paul Hutchens (Back to the Bible).
4. *Christian Assurance* by M. C. Griffiths (InterVarsity Press).

Scripture:

John 1:12–13-assurance based on Christ's work

Romans 8:16-the witness of the Holy Spirit

1 John 5:11–13-We can know we have eternal life.

DAILY QUIET TIMES

Objective:

Every day he will have a quiet time, which includes reading in the Scriptures and praying.

Activities:

1. Have a quiet time with him.
2. Talk with him about recent blessings you've received in your own quiet time.
3. him why you have a quiet time, and explain how you do it.
4. Pray together through a psalm.
5. Encourage him to talk with others about what he learns in his quiet times.

Helpful resources:

1. *Seven Minutes with God* by Robert Foster (NavPress).
2. Chapter 3, "The Devotional Life," in *Beginning a New Life* (Book 2 of *Studies in Christian Living*, NavPress).
3. *Beginning the Day with God* and *Secrets of Christian Growth* by Theodore Epp (Back to the Bible).
4. *This Morning with God* (InterVarsity Press).
5. *The Pursuit of God* by A. W. Tozer (several publishers).

Scripture:

Genesis 19:27-Abraham's example

Exodus 34:2–3-Moses' example

Psalms 5:3-David's example

Daniel 6:10-Daniel's example

Mark 1:35-Jesus' example

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Objective:

He attends church, and also meets regularly with a small group of believers for Bible study and prayer.

Activities:

1. Discuss his church background.
2. Take him to church with you.
3. Invite him to dinner to meet other Christians.
4. Help him find a small Bible study group to join.
5. Talk with him about reasons for attending church.

Helpful resources:

1. Chapter 1, "The Church," in *Talking with Christ* (Book 3 of *Studies in Christian Living*, NavPress).
2. Chapter 11, "The Church," in *Growing in Christ* (NavPress).
3. *Of God and Men* by A. W. Tozer (Christian Publications).

Scripture:

Psalm 122:1-going joyfully to God's house

Acts 2:42-fellowship in the early church

Hebrews 10:24–25-a command for fellowship

1 John 1:3-fellowship with others, with God, and with Christ

WORLD VISION

Objective:

He demonstrates true concern for the world by supporting overseas missionaries with regular prayer and financial giving.

Activities:

1. Pray together for the world, using missionary prayer letters.
2. Use a world map and pray for the Lord's work in various countries.
3. Help introduce him to visiting missionaries.
4. Tell him about the missionaries you support through prayer and financial giving.
5. Write together to missionaries and mission agencies to learn more about their ministries.

Helpful resources:

1. Missionary prayer letters.
2. A world map or globe.

3. Chapter 5, "World Vision," in *Serving Others* (Book 6 of *Studies in Christian Living*, NavPress).
4. *You and God's Work Overseas* by Michael Griffiths (InterVarsity Press).

Scripture:

Isaiah 6:8-willingness to go

Matthew 9:35–38-Pray for laborers in the fields of the world.

Matthew 28:19–20-Make disciples everywhere.

Mark 16:15-Preach the gospel to all.

Luke 24:46–47-Christ preached to all nations

Acts 1:8-to the ends of the earth