RHYTHM THREE · THE CHAIN CONTINUED

Multiplying *Playbook.*

Five buckets and twelve practices for how a maturing disciple **raises up the next disciple-maker**.



Multiplying is the destination of the whole pathway. The disciple who was formed is now forming another. The chain that Paul named to Timothy continues.

Every discipling relationship must reproduce, or the chain breaks. **This playbook names the practices that carry a Timothy across a year and out the other side as a Paul**, *ready to invest in the next faithful one who will teach others also.*

"What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

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HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

A playbook, not a script.
Reach for what the moment calls for.

Every coach carries a playbook, not because he calls every play every game, but because when the moment on the field calls for a specific move, he has one ready to reach for. He reads the situation, considers his players, and picks the play the game needs. **This is that kind of book.** It doesn't ask you to run all twelve practices in sequence. It names the practices a discipler reaches for across the twelve to eighteen months of walking with a Timothy toward becoming a Paul.

The playbook is organized into five buckets. **Bucket One · The Who** is discernment before commitment: pray for one name, then assess where the person actually is spiritually. **Bucket Two · The Structure** is the container: three shapes the relationship can take. **Bucket Three · Core Content** is what fills the container across the year: a Bible-engagement method, spiritual practices, doctrinal foundations, and a survey of the whole pathway. **Bucket Four · Replicable Systems** is the check that confirms the rhythm will survive being passed on. **Bucket Five · Tools for the Discipler** is the discipler's working kit: the checklist for when the year has succeeded, and the coaching methodology that shapes how the year actually unfolds.

One principle holds over everything: **the Spirit multiplies. We set the table.** You are not the multiplier. The Holy Spirit is. Multiplication doesn't happen because we picked the right framework; it happens because God draws people to Himself, sanctifies them, and entrusts them with the work of drawing others. Our part is to set the table faithfully: the right person, a copyable structure, the substance that forms them, the design that reproduces.

One more distinction, because it matters. What separates a multiplying relationship from a maturing one isn't the structure; it's the **intent.** A maturing-stage group exists to grow you in Christlikeness. A multiplying-stage group exists to grow you *and equip you to lead one of these yourself within a year.* Same C.O.M.A., same Foundations, same rhythm. Different destination.

The *Who.*

Before any structure, find the person and know where they are. Multiplication begins with discernment, not enthusiasm.

Most multiplying failures start here. The wrong person, picked because they were convenient, ends a season of investment with nothing to show. **Multiplication begins with discernment, not enthusiasm.**

The biblical pattern is consistent: Jesus selected the twelve after a night of prayer (Luke 6:12–13); Paul saw something in Timothy others didn't (Acts 16:1–3). Pray for one name before you build any structure, then assess where they actually are spiritually before you commit.

CHOOSE A PRACTICE

Two practices for the discernment work. **Both matter and neither can be skipped.** *Practice A names the person; Practice B calibrates the investment.*

A **Person of Peace** *+ F.A.T.*

PRAYER + DISCERNMENT

Pray for one name. Look for spiritual hunger, openness to relationship, willingness to share. Test against F.A.T.: faithful, available, teachable.

B **The Five** *Stages*

DIAGNOSTIC · PUTMAN

Dead → Infant → Child → Young Adult → Parent. Where they are shapes what you offer. Use the label privately; never speak it to the disciple.

The *Who*

PRACTICE PRAYER + DISCERNMENT

A

Person of Peace + *F.A.T.*

DAVID WATSON · LUKE 10:5–7 · BOBBY CLINTON · HOWARD HENDRICKS

> *Pray for one name. Look for spiritual hunger, openness to relationship, and willingness to share with others.*

David and Paul Watson popularized the Person of Peace framework through their Disciple Making Movements (DMM) work in unreached people groups across Asia and Africa over three decades. The biblical foundation is Luke 10:5–7, Jesus's instructions to the 72 when He sent them out two by two. The older **F.A.T.** principle (Faithful, Available, Teachable) goes back to Bobby Clinton, Howard Hendricks, and the Navigators' classical mentoring literature.

THREE MARKS OF A PERSON OF PEACE

- **Open to relationship:** they welcome you in, share meals, give you access to their life.
- **Spiritual hunger:** they ask real questions, sense something is missing, want more than they have.
- **Willingness to share:** they bring others into the conversation. They don't keep it private.

THREE INTERNAL QUALITIES (F.A.T.)

- **Faithful:** they show up. They follow through on small commitments before they're given big ones.
- **Available:** they have actual margin. A brilliant person who can never meet is not the right pick.
- **Teachable:** they receive correction. They're more interested in being right with God than in being right.

Note the principle: you're **not** looking for the most impressive person. You're looking for the most *ready.* Begin with prayer. Ask the Lord for one name (not three, not five) for this season. Then

look around your real life: work, neighborhood, Life Group, family. When a name surfaces, test it against the marks. If yes to most of them, invest. If no, keep praying.

WHAT DISCERNMENT SOUNDS LIKE

PRAY	*"Lord, give me one name. Show me who You're already drawing."*
LOOK	Who in my world is asking real questions? Who texts me follow-up questions after church? Who actually shows up?
TEST	Mike comes to mind. Open to relationship, yes. Hungry, yes (asked me last week what I thought happens after death). Willing to share, yes. Faithful, available, teachable, yes.
ASK	*"Mike, I've been thinking about you. I'd love to be more intentional about meeting and reading Scripture together for a season. Would you be open to that?"*

SCRIPTURE

"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you." LUKE 10:5-6

"Paul went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy … Paul wanted Timothy to go with him." ACTS 16:1-3

The pattern in both Testaments is selection, not random outreach. Jesus prayed before choosing the twelve; Paul saw something in Timothy worth investing in.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't import the full Disciple Making Movements (DMM) template into an established-church context. 9Marks reviewed the Watsons' work and recommends it *"with significant reservations"* for established-church pastors. The full DMM template was built for pioneer church-planting where there is no church yet. Use the Person of Peace as a discernment *tool;* don't adopt the rigid template-or-fail posture.

The *Who*

PRACTICE DIAGNOSTIC · PUTMAN

B

The Five *Stages.*

JIM PUTMAN · 1 JOHN 2:12–14 · HEBREWS 5:12–14

> *Dead → Infant → Child → Young Adult → Parent. Where are they actually? The answer shapes everything you offer them.*

Jim Putman is the founding pastor of Real Life Ministries (Post Falls, Idaho) and author of *Real-Life Discipleship* (2010) and *DiscipleShift* (with Bobby Harrington and Robert Coleman, 2013). The Five Stages grid is grounded in two key passages: **1 John 2:12–14** (John's three categories: little children, young men, fathers) and **Hebrews 5:12–14** (the contrast between infants on milk and the mature on solid food). Putman expanded John's three-stage grid into five for diagnostic precision.

FIVE STAGES, EACH WITH CHARACTERISTIC MARKS AND DISCIPLER-NEEDS

- **1 · Dead:** outside Christ. The need: the gospel.
- **2 · Infant:** newly born again, completely dependent. The need: feeding, protection, basics. *"Why doesn't God just answer my prayers?"*
- **3 · Child:** knows the truth but still self-centered. The need: belonging, identity, learning to value others. *"What's in this church for me?"*
- **4 · Young Adult:** serving, growing in others-centeredness, learning to lead. The need: opportunities to serve, friendship with mature believers, training. *"Where can I help?"*
- **5 · Parent:** reproducing mature disciples. The need: ongoing partnership, accountability, fresh challenges. *"Who am I investing in?"*

The critical insight: a **Parent** is not defined by personal maturity alone. A Parent is someone who has the *ability to assess where others are and personally invest in them.* Putman deliberately chose "Parent" over "Adult" because adults *can* reproduce; parents actually *do.* Use this **before** you

commit to discipling someone. Where they are determines what kind of investment they need and whether this is the right season to start. Then revisit quarterly. The goal of the 12-month cycle is to move them from where they were to *Parent*, the stage where they can now disciple another.

MATCHING INVESTMENT TO STAGE

INFANT	Mike just trusted Christ. Asking why his prayers don't get answered. My move: basic biblical truths on God, prayer, expectations. Don't push him to disciple anyone yet.
CHILD	Sarah has been a Christian three years but keeps shopping for the church that "feeds her." My move: help her see the church exists to glorify God and serve, not to consume.
YOUNG ADULT	Tom is serving in three ministries and asking where else he can help. My move: introduce him to a mature believer. Begin equipping him to disciple, not just serve.
PARENT	Linda is discipling two women and asking how to invest better. My move: come alongside her as a peer. Help her see the next two she could reach.

SCRIPTURE

"I am writing to you, little children ... I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know the one who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one." 1 JOHN 2:12-13

John already named the stages. Putman simply expanded John's three categories into five for diagnostic precision.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't use stage labels in conversation with your disciple. "You're a spiritual child" is condescending and rarely accurate to how someone experiences themselves. The Five Stages is a *diagnostic tool for the discipler*, not a label for the disciple. Use it privately to know what to invest. Let them grow without ever hearing the framework name.

The *Structure.*

Three shapes the multiplying relationship can take. Pick the one that fits your person and your season.

You may already be in one of these relationships. AAC offers three structures, and any of them can be repurposed for multiplication. **The multiplying shift isn't the structure: it's the intent.** You are not just spiritually mentoring, leading a peer group, or raising your kids. You are intentionally raising up a *disciple-maker*, someone who will, in time, do this for someone else. Same relationship, repurposed.

The engine in all three is the same: *reproduce.*

CHOOSE A STRUCTURE

Three structures. **The Triad is AAC's default and gold standard** *for peer-based multiplication. The other two adapt when the season calls for one-on-one depth or household-based formation.*

A — Repurposed *Discipling Relationship*

1-ON-1 OR SMALL MENTOR GROUP

Paul-Timothy. One-on-one or up to four disciples with one mentor. Most intimate, flexible. Best for one emerging leader.

B — The *Triad*

3 PEOPLE · 12-18 MONTHS · OGDEN

One discipler + two disciples. Weekly. Designed to commission and start two more triads. AAC's default.

C — Family *Discipleship*

HOUSEHOLD · LIFE-STAGE PACED

The home as the Bible's original venue. Parent as discipler. Same C.O.M.A. and Foundations, applied to children in the family.

The *Structure*

PRACTICE 1-ON-1 OR SMALL GROUP

A

Repurposed Discipling *Relationship.*

PAUL & TIMOTHY · 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

> *Take a discipling relationship that already exists and orient it for the express purpose of raising another disciple-maker.*

The Paul-Timothy pattern is the historic shape of one-on-one and small mentor-led discipling. Paul named Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2 as the one through whom the rhythm of *"what you have heard from me … commit to faithful men"* would continue. AAC already offers this pattern in two forms as part of its discipleship pathway: **the Paul-Timothy one-on-one** and **the small discipler-led group** (up to four people). Both can be repurposed for multiplication: the structure stays the same; the *intent* shifts.

TWO SHAPES WITHIN THIS PRACTICE

- **Option A · The Paul-Timothy one-on-one.** A mentor and a single disciple. Most intimate, most flexible. Best when you're investing deeply in one emerging leader.
- **Option B · The discipling group.** A discipler-led group of up to four (one mentor, three disciples). Still hierarchical, not peer-to-peer like a triad, but the mentor shapes multiple disciples at once.

The shift isn't the size or the structure. It is the goal: *not just to grow this person, but to raise them up to do this for someone else.* Begin with an honest conversation. Say it out loud: *"I'm not just walking with you so you grow. I'm walking with you so that one day you'll do this for someone else."* Set the same 12- to 18-month horizon as a triad would. Use the same content (C.O.M.A., the Foundations, the Doctrinal Statement, the Pathway Resources). The difference between this and a non-multiplying mentoring relationship is the *commission* at the end: at the end of the year, the disciple is commissioned to invest in someone else.

SCRIPTURE

"You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." 2 TIM 2:1-2

The Paul-Timothy line is biblical and lasting. Paul's instruction wasn't to *retain* Timothy as a permanent assistant. It was to charge him to *commit* what he had heard to others. The relationship existed to reproduce, not just to nurture.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't let it become a permanent mentor-mentee relationship. The temptation is depth without reproduction: a beautiful friendship that never commissions anyone. Name the multiplication intent on day one. Build the whole year around it. The relationship exists for what comes *after* it.

The *Structure* PRACTICE 3 PEOPLE · 12–18 MONTHS

B

The *Triad.*

GREG OGDEN · TRANSFORMING DISCIPLESHIP · AAC DEFAULT & GOLD STANDARD

> *One discipler. Two disciples. One year. Designed to commission … and start two more triads.*

Greg Ogden was Executive Pastor of Discipleship at Christ Church of Oak Brook (Illinois) when he developed and field-tested the triad model documented in *Transforming Discipleship* (IVP, 2003). His thesis: *"programs cannot make disciples: only relationships can."* Ogden's documented results: **80–100+ disciples produced over 5–7 year multiplying-triad cycles.** This is the strongest peer-based model in the established-church literature, and AAC's gold standard for multiplication.

THREE PEOPLE, ONE YEAR, ONE DESIGN

Three people total: one discipler and two disciples. They meet weekly for about a year. They use a shared rhythm of C.O.M.A. Bible study (Practice C.A), the Foundations conversations, and the doctrinal anchors. At the end of the year, the triad **commissions and re-launches:** each of the three becomes a discipler and invites two new people into a new triad. The geometric math is what makes it generational: one triad becomes three, three become nine, nine become twenty-seven.

THREE REASONS THE TRIAD IS THE GOLD STANDARD

- **Less hierarchical than a 1-on-1:** the two disciples journey together, not separately. They learn from each other, not just from you.
- **Three voices keep the conversation alive** if one is having a hard week.
- **Built-in commissioning:** the triad is designed to end and re-launch, so multiplication isn't an afterthought.

Find two disciples (Practice A) and assess where they are (Practice B). Commit together to a year. Use C.O.M.A. with a one-year Bible-reading plan as the weekly rhythm. Cover the Foundations early; walk through the Doctrinal Statement in the middle; survey the Pathway Resources toward the end. Meet weekly for 60 to 90 minutes. **State the re-launch up front:** *"At the end of this year, we each invite two new people and start a new triad."* The expectation is what produces the multiplication.

THE YEAR-BY-YEAR MATH

YEAR 1	One triad of 3. By end of year: each member commissions and invites 2 new people.
YEAR 2	3 triads of 3 = 9 people total. Each new triad runs the same year.
YEAR 3	9 triads = 27 people.
YEAR 5	81 triads = 243 people.
YEAR 7	2,187 disciples, if every triad multiplies every year. Real-world Ogden numbers run 80–100 because not every triad replicates, but the principle holds.

SCRIPTURE

"For you may have countless instructors in Christ, but you don't have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me."
1 COR 4:15-16

Paul's pattern was relational, not programmatic. The Corinthians had countless instructors; he was their father. Ogden is recovering Paul's pattern for the modern church.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't skip the commissioning. The handoff isn't optional. If you end the year without each member committing to start a new triad, you've made disciples, not *disciple-makers.* Name the commissioning from week one. Build the whole year around it. The whole point of the triad is that it ends: in a sending.

The *Structure* PRACTICE HOUSEHOLD · LIFE-STAGE PACED

C Family *Discipleship.*

DEUTERONOMY 6:6–9 · EPHESIANS 6:4

> *Your kids in the home are the first disciples you are called to multiply through.*

Family discipleship is the **Bible's original discipling venue.** Deuteronomy 6:6–9 names it as the constant rhythm of God's people: *"Repeat [these words] to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."* Paul names it again in Ephesians 6:4: *"Fathers … bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."* Before there was a triad, before there was a Paul-Timothy pair, there was a parent teaching a child, and the line of the faithful was preserved through generations of households.

THE FRAMEWORK

Family discipleship is not a different content set: it is the same C.O.M.A. rhythm, the same Foundations, the same character formation, applied to the household rather than a peer group. What's different is the *shape:*

- **The home is the venue.** The meals, the drive to school, the bedtime conversation, the family Bible reading.
- **The parent is the discipler.** Both parents in a healthy two-parent home; the single parent in a single-parent home; grandparents stepping in where parents have stepped away.
- **The child is the disciple.** They are not *future* disciples: they are disciples now, in formation. Treat them as such.
- **The timeline scales with the child's life-stage.** Early elementary years are *I do, you watch.* Pre-teens move to *I do, you help.* Teenagers do *you do, I help* and then *you do, I watch.* Young adults launch into *you do, someone else watches*, the same gradual release.

Begin with a rhythm at the table or before bed. Read a passage together using C.O.M.A. at the child's level. Pray together. Talk about real life: what is hard, where is God working, who at school needs Jesus. Cover the Foundations gradually over years, as questions arise. **Be intentional about the multiplication intent**: not just teaching your kids the faith but raising them to take it to the next generation. The faith leaves your house when they leave; the question is whether it stays in them.

SCRIPTURE

"These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." DEUT 6:6-7

The Bible's first picture of discipleship is the household, not the seminary, not the small group, not the Sunday gathering. Family discipleship was the original means of preserving the faith from generation to generation.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't drift into "we already go to church together" passivity. The temptation is to assume that Sunday gatherings and Christian schools and youth group will do the discipling for you. They won't. Family discipling needs the same *intent* as a triad: you are raising up the next generation of disciple-makers, not just attendees. Name it. Build it. Live it.

Core *Content.*

The baseline: what gets taught and practiced over the year. Not a curriculum; not a syllabus. A map.

Not a curriculum. A baseline. The five practices below are the methods, practices, frameworks, and resources the discipler covers across the year. The discipler picks the *pacing*, the *order*, and the *depth* based on what the disciple actually needs, not a script. Cover the lane; don't follow a syllabus.

The structure you chose is the container. **Inside that container is the content:** a Bible-engagement method, spiritual practices, doctrinal foundations, and a survey of the whole pathway. Skip any and you have a meeting; weave them together and you have discipling.

CHOOSE A PRACTICE

Five practices that form the baseline of what a disciple encounters across the year. **Cover the lane; don't follow a syllabus.** *The discipler adapts pacing and order to the person in front of them.*

A C.O.M.A. *Bible Study*

DAILY · 15–20 MIN · AAC DEFAULT

Context. Observation. Meaning. Application. A four-step rhythm anyone can repeat.

B Spiritual *Disciplines*

DAILY/WEEKLY/SEASONAL · WHITNEY

Eight means of grace: Bible intake, prayer, worship, silence, fasting, confession, service, stewardship.

C The *Foundations*

Q1 · 8 CONVERSATIONS

Eight conversations for grounding a new believer: God, Jesus, self, Spirit, Bible, prayer, church, disciple.

D AAC Doctrinal *Statement*

Q2 · 4 ANCHOR ARTICLES

Trinity, Christ, Holy Spirit, Salvation. Moving from receiving to articulating.

E Pathway *Resources*

Q3–Q4 · ONE PER STAGE

3 Circles, Membership Covenant, B.I.O. Rhythm, Sweet Spot, the Multiplying Field Guide. Survey of the whole journey.

Core *Content*

PRACTICE DAILY · 15–20 MIN

A

C.O.M.A. *Bible Study.*

INDUCTIVE METHOD · DAVID HELM · AAC DEFAULT

> *Context. Observation. Meaning. Application. A four-step rhythm anyone can repeat.*

C.O.M.A. is a simplified version of the classical inductive Bible study method developed in evangelical biblical scholarship through the twentieth century. The C-O-M-A formulation (adding *Context* as a distinct first step) is widely used in evangelical Bible-study training, including Matthias Media's *One-to-One Bible Reading* (David Helm, 2011) and broader Reformed and Anglican networks. It is the method AAC defaults to for daily devotion, one-to-one discipling, and group Bible study.

FOUR SIMPLE STEPS YOU APPLY TO ANY PASSAGE

- **C · Context.** What surrounds this passage? Who wrote it, to whom, when, why? What's happening in the verses before and after?
- **O · Observation.** What does the text actually say? What words repeat? What stands out? What surprises you?
- **M · Meaning.** What did the author intend? What was God communicating to the original audience, and through them, to us? (*Not: what does this mean to me?*)
- **A · Application.** How do I obey this week? How does this shape my heart, my words, my choices, my relationships?

Pair with a reading plan (F260, NT260, M'Cheyne, or a chapter a day). The method is the engine; the reading plan is the path. **Why Context comes first.** The single most common mistake in personal Bible study is starting with "what does this mean *to me?*" before asking what it meant to

the original audience. Context guards the integrity of Scripture by making us answer the historical question before the personal one.

IN GROUP DISCUSSION · SIMPLIFY TO FOUR QUESTIONS

- **What does this text say?** (observation)
- **What does it teach about God? About people?**
- **What does it mean?** (interpretation)
- **How do I obey this week?** (application)

SCRIPTURE

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." 2 TIM 3:16-17

C.O.M.A. is a structured way to actually *use* Scripture for the four things Paul names: teaching, rebuking, correcting, training.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't skip Meaning. The temptation is to jump from Observation straight to Application: "this verse says *X*, so I should do *Y*." That treats Scripture as a Rorschach test. The Meaning step forces you to wrestle with what the author actually intended before you apply it. Skip it and you'll find yourself building your life on what you wanted the verse to say.

Core *Content* PRACTICE DAILY/WEEKLY/SEASONAL

B Spiritual *Disciplines.*

DONALD WHITNEY · RICHARD FOSTER · 1 TIMOTHY 4:7-8

> *Doctrine tells them what to believe. Disciplines are the practices that form how they live.*

Donald Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (NavPress, 1991; revised 2014) is the standard Reformed evangelical text on the subject. Richard Foster's earlier *Celebration of Discipline* (1978) is the broader classic. Both rest on the same conviction: the disciplines are not *works* that earn God's favor; they are the **means of grace** the Spirit uses to form Christ in us. Foster called it *"the way of disciplined grace."*

EIGHT DISCIPLINES THAT SHAPE A MATURING DISCIPLE

- **Bible Intake** (daily): via C.O.M.A. and memorization.
- **Prayer** (daily): personal life of prayer plus leading the group.
- **Worship** (weekly): corporate Sunday gathering plus personal awe in daily life.
- **Silence & Solitude** (daily quiet + periodic extended): the discipline of stopping to listen.
- **Fasting** (purposeful, periodic): foregoing food for a season to seek God specifically.
- **Confession** (mutual, ongoing): James 5:16 in practice; sin named to specific people.
- **Service** (regular): gifts deployed in the body, not just for personal flourishing.
- **Stewardship** (ongoing): of time, money, body. What you do with what you've been given.

The disciple does not take them all up at once. **Start with the daily disciplines** (Bible intake, prayer, silence) in the first quarter. **Layer in the weekly disciplines** (worship, confession, service) in the second. **Introduce the seasonal disciplines** (fasting, extended solitude) as readiness grows.

The discipler *models* each discipline before asking the disciple to take it up. Don't assign disciplines. Demonstrate them. Talk about what your own prayer life looks like, where you've stumbled in stewardship, what you learned in your last fast.

SCRIPTURE

"... train yourself in godliness. For the training of the body has limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." 1 TIM 4:7-8

Paul's word for "train" is *gymnazo*, the same root as "gymnasium." The disciplines are spiritual training: deliberate, repeated, intentional practices that shape character.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't let the disciplines become a list of achievements. The disciplines are *means of grace,* not measures of righteousness. A disciple who fasts to earn favor from God has misunderstood the gospel. A discipler who shames their disciple for skipping a discipline has misunderstood the means. Keep grace in front of every practice; let the Spirit do the forming.

Core *Content*

PRACTICE Q1 · 8 CONVERSATIONS

The *Foundations.*

AAC 8 FOUNDATIONS SESSIONS · HEBREWS 6:1–2

> *Eight conversations every new believer should be grounded in by the end of Q1.*

The Foundations are AAC's structured eight-session track for grounding a new believer in the basics of the faith. They are not a curriculum to be marched through. They are eight conversations that should land in the disciple's mind and heart over the first three months. The shape comes from historic catechetical practice: every generation of the church has had a way of teaching new believers *who God is, who Jesus is, what happened to us, who the Spirit is, what the Bible is, what prayer is, what the church is, and what a disciple is.*

EIGHT SESSIONS, IN ORDER OF NATURAL PASTORAL PROGRESSION

- **Session 1 · Who Is God?** The Triune God: Father, Son, Spirit. Holy, sovereign, good. Creator and Judge and Redeemer.
- **Session 2 · Who Is Jesus?** Fully God and fully man. His sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, ongoing intercession, and personal visible return.
- **Session 3 · What Happened to Me?** Sin, the Fall, and what conversion actually is. The disciple's own story with Christ named.
- **Session 4 · Who Is the Holy Spirit?** The Person and work of the Spirit: conviction, regeneration, sanctification, empowerment.
- **Session 5 · What Is the Bible?** God's inspired Word; how it was given; how it functions as our authority; how to read it (introducing C.O.M.A.).
- **Session 6 · What Is Prayer?** Communion with God: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. Why we pray and how Jesus taught us to pray.

- **Session 7 · What Is the Church?** The body of Christ; the necessity of the local church; baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- **Session 8 · What Is a Disciple?** A follower of Jesus being formed for the mission of making other disciples. The pathway named.

Cover the Foundations **conversationally** over the early months, not as a class, not as a workbook walk-through. Weave them into the weekly meeting as the disciple's questions and life circumstances open the door. By the end of Q1, every disciple should be able to *articulate each foundation in their own words,* not just nod when the topic comes up.

SCRIPTURE

"Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."
HEB 6:1-2

The Hebrew writer named six foundations: the basics every disciple ought to be grounded in before they can grow on. The Foundations sessions are AAC's version of that same project for our day.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't treat the Foundations as a curriculum. They are conversations, not lessons. Cover them when the disciple's life opens the door. The goal is *landing,* not *covering.* If your disciple has been with you six months and can't articulate Who Is God, don't move on to doctrine. Come back and ground them properly.

Core *Content*

PRACTICE Q2 · 4 ANCHOR ARTICLES

D AAC Doctrinal *Statement.*

ASHEALLIANCE.ORG / WHAT-WE-BELIEVE · 1 PETER 3:15

> *Four doctrinal anchors for the disciple moving from receiving to articulating.*

AAC's Statement of Faith has ten articles, posted publicly at *ashealliance.org/what-we-believe*. The full statement reflects the historic Reformed evangelical tradition: Word of God, Trinity, God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Creation/Man/Fall, Salvation, the Church and her Ordinances, Healing, and the Last Things. Four of the ten articles (Trinity, Christ, Holy Spirit, and Salvation) are where the growing believer needs to be able to articulate doctrine in their own words.

FOUR ANCHOR ARTICLES FOR Q2 (STRENGTHENING)

- **Article II · The Trinity.** One God in three Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, equal in every divine attribute. Why the eternal community of God explains love as eternal, before creation existed.
- **Article IV · Jesus Christ.** Fully God and fully man, without confusion or mixture. Sinless life, substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ongoing intercession, personal visible return. Includes the kenosis safeguard: He emptied Himself by *taking* the form of a servant, not by laying aside divinity.
- **Article V · The Holy Spirit.** Equal to Father and Son in all divine attributes. His work to convict, regenerate, sanctify, and empower. The distinction between baptism (one-time, at conversion), indwelling (one-time, at salvation), and filling (recurring, by surrender).
- **Article VII · Salvation.** Justification by faith alone, apart from works. Sanctification by the Spirit, evidenced by persevering faith. Final salvation as the New Covenant promise, worked in us by God Himself.

Walk through the four articles in Q2 as the disciple's own confession, not as lecture material. Pick the article that connects to what is surfacing in their life this season. Read the actual text from *ashealliance.org/what-we-believe*. Discuss the Scripture references the church cites. Ask: *"Can you say this in your own words?"* When they can, they have moved from receiving to articulating.

SCRIPTURE

"... in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do this with gentleness and reverence ..." 1 PET 3:15-16

Peter's apologetic standard is "ready at any time to give a defense." Articulating doctrine is what turns a disciple into someone who can defend the faith, teach it, and pass it on.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't make doctrine a lecture series. The temptation is to teach the articles like a class. Don't. The goal is for the disciple to *own* the doctrine, to be able to defend it to a skeptical coworker, explain it to a child, sing it on Sunday. Ask the disciple to articulate. Don't articulate for them.

Core *Content*

PRACTICE Q3–Q4 · ONE PER STAGE

E Pathway *Resources.*

THE AAC DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY · MATTHEW 28:19–20

> *One resource from each stage of the pathway: a survey of the whole journey ahead.*

AAC's discipleship pathway has **two milestones** (Believing, Belonging) and **three lifelong rhythms** (Maturing, Ministering, Multiplying). Each has its own anchor resource. By the end of the 12- to 18-month cycle, the disciple should know not just the stage they are currently in but *the whole journey ahead*, so they can disciple another person across the same journey.

FIVE RESOURCES, ONE FROM EACH STAGE

- **Believing · 3 Circles.** Jimmy Scroggins's gospel-conversation framework. The simplest, most memorable way to share the gospel with a non-Christian.
- **Belonging · Membership Covenant.** The two-way promise between AAC and the believer. Not a contract, a covenant of belonging.
- **Maturing · B.I.O. Rhythm.** Before God, In Community, On Mission. The weekly rhythm of being formed in Christlikeness.
- **Ministering · Sweet Spot.** The intersection of passion, pain, and proficiency. Where your gifts meet the church's need and the world's hunger.
- **Multiplying · This Playbook.** The kit of twelve practices and five buckets the disciple will use when they become a discipler themselves.

Survey the pathway resources in Q3 and Q4 (Leading and Sending) as the disciple becomes equipped to disciple another. Read each one together. Discuss how each stage fits the whole. **The disciple should be able to draw the pathway on a napkin** and explain why each stage matters before they launch their own triad.

SCRIPTURE

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them … teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you." MATT 28:19-20

Jesus's commission was comprehensive: not just convert, not just baptize, not just teach: all three together. The pathway resources help the disciple-maker see the whole commission, not just the stage they are in.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't survey the resources too early. If your disciple is still in Q1 receiving the Foundations, they aren't ready to see the whole pathway yet. Wait until they have the foundation and the doctrine grounded. Then the pathway makes sense as the whole arc, not as a confusing menu of disconnected resources.

Replicable *Systems.*

The check that confirms your work will survive being passed on. The principle and the test.

Buckets 1–3 are about discipling one person well. **Bucket 4 is the check that confirms it will survive being passed on.** Practice A is the *principle* (what makes a rhythm copyable: process, not content). Practice B is the *test* (how you verify you've done it: the four-generation question).

Together, they're how you tell the difference between something that *looks* like discipleship and something that *reproduces* like discipleship. **Don't build anything in Buckets 1–3 without running it past Bucket 4.**

CHOOSE A PRACTICE

Two practices that guard the reproduction. **Both must be applied to every structure, every content decision, every habit.** *Skip either and the rhythm dies in one generation.*

A **Process Over** *Content*

DESIGN PRINCIPLE · T4T

What gets passed on is the rhythm, not the workbook. Vision, equip, practice, accountability, send.

B **The Four-Generation** *Test*

RECURRING CHECK · COLEMAN

Will what I'm doing this week still be multiplying when I am gone? Four generations is the biblical baseline.

Replicable *Systems*

PRACTICE DESIGN PRINCIPLE

A

Process Over *Content.*

YING KAI · TRAINING FOR TRAINERS (T4T) · 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

> *What gets passed on is the rhythm, not the workbook.*

Ying Kai developed **Training for Trainers (T4T)** circa 2000–2001 in East Asia. The framework was popularized in the West by Steve Smith and David Garrison in *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* (2011). It has the **strongest documented multi-generational track record** in the disciple-making literature, with movements in Asia reportedly running to seven, ten, and more generations of disciples.

T4T's central insight, in Smith and Kai's own words: *"the secret to success in T4T is not the lesson content; the content can be flexible."* What multiplies is the **training pattern**, not the workbook.

THE FIXED PATTERN ACROSS EVERY GENERATION

- **Cast vision:** help them see they can disciple someone else.
- **Equip:** give them a simple, copyable rhythm (Triad, C.O.M.A., the Foundations conversations).
- **Practice:** let them do it with you watching.
- **Accountability:** check in on how it's actually going.
- **Send to train others:** explicit expectation that they will start the same pattern with someone new.

Notice what's fixed and what's flexible. The *pattern* is fixed: vision, equip, practice, accountability, send. The *content* (what specific Scripture, what specific questions, what specific framework) is locally adaptable. Whenever you're designing a discipling rhythm, ask: **could my disciple replicate this with someone else next year, without me, without buying anything?** If yes, you have a process. If no, you have a curriculum, and curriculum doesn't multiply.

PROCESS VS. CONTENT · THE DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

CURRICULUM	"I'm walking Mike through Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*." Q: Can Mike walk someone else through Grudem next year? Probably not.
PROCESS	"I'm walking Mike through the C.O.M.A. method using a one-year Bible reading plan." Q: Can Mike walk someone else through C.O.M.A. next year? Yes. Easily. The pattern is simple enough to copy.

SCRIPTURE

"What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." 2 TIM 2:2

Paul didn't tell Timothy to pass on a *curriculum.* He told him to commit a *teaching that would itself be committed to others.* What gets passed on is the rhythm of "committing," not the lesson plan.

WATCH OUT FOR

This principle is harder than it sounds. Most pastors instinctively reach for content (a book, a curriculum, a workbook) when they should reach for process. The discipline of "process over content" requires you to *trust* that a simple rhythm done well will outproduce a sophisticated curriculum done once. Resist the urge to "upgrade" the structure into something more impressive. The simpler you keep it, the more it multiplies.

Replicable *Systems* PRACTICE RECURRING CHECK

B

The Four-Generation *Test.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:2 · ROBERT COLEMAN · MASTER PLAN OF EVANGELISM

> *What you do today should still be doing work four generations from now.*

The four-generation logic is biblical, not modern. **2 Timothy 2:2** has four generations inside one verse: Paul → Timothy → faithful men → others also. Robert Coleman's *Master Plan of Evangelism* (1963) is the modern theological touchstone that named the principle for the contemporary church. Coleman wrote: *"Jesus intended for the disciples to produce His likeness … still be bearing fruit through them in an ever-widening cycle of reproduction to the ends of the earth."*

THE TEST IS A SINGLE QUESTION

"Will what I am doing this week still be multiplying when I am gone?"

Three generations is not enough. **Four generations is the biblical baseline** because four generations is where multiplication transcends a single human investment. If Paul invests in Timothy (Gen 1 to Gen 2), and Timothy invests in faithful men (Gen 2 to Gen 3), and the faithful men invest in others (Gen 3 to Gen 4), that fourth generation exists entirely apart from Paul. *The work outlives the worker.*

APPLY THE TEST TO

- **Your structure.** Is it copyable to a fourth-generation disciple I'll never meet?
- **Your content.** Could a fourth-generation believer recreate it without me?
- **Your habits.** Will my disciple's disciple's disciple still be doing this?

Before starting any new discipling season, ask the four-generation question out loud. Before ending any season, ask it again as evaluation. Make it the recurring planning lens you submit

every decision to. It will weed out structures that look impressive but won't reproduce, and it will protect simple structures that look unremarkable but actually multiply.

APPLYING THE TEST IN REAL DECISIONS

DECISION	Take my triad through Grudem's *Systematic Theology*?
TEST	Will Gen 4 still be working through Grudem? No. They won't have access to me or my training. *Fails.*
DECISION	Teach C.O.M.A. with a one-year Bible reading plan?
TEST	Will Gen 4 still be using C.O.M.A. and reading the Bible? Yes. Simple method, universally available Bible. *Passes.*

SCRIPTURE

"What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." 2 TIM 2:2

Read it slowly. Paul (Gen 1) committed what he had heard to Timothy (Gen 2), who would commit it to faithful men (Gen 3), who would teach others also (Gen 4). The single verse contains the whole logic of multiplication.

WATCH OUT FOR

Don't let the test become a perfectionism trap. The four-generation test is a planning lens, not a guarantee. Some seasons of discipling don't visibly reach four generations: the disciples we invest in may face seasons of struggle, the people they reach may not multiply, life happens. That's not failure. *Apply the test as a design principle, not as a judgment.* Build for four generations; trust God with how many actually come.

Tools for the *Discipler.*

The discipler's working kit: the checklist that confirms success, and the coaching methodology that shapes how the year unfolds.

Buckets 1–4 gave you the framework. **This bucket is what the discipler reaches for:** the checklist for when discipling has succeeded (the Marks), and the methodology of coaching that shapes how the year unfolds (A Year in Rhythm + the gradual release).

For the *core content* to cover throughout, return to Bucket 3. What follows is how you know you're on track.

REACH FOR THE TOOLS

Two tools for the discipler's working kit. **The Marks tell you what "done" looks like.**
A Year in Rhythm tells you how the year gets there, with the gradual release woven through.

M

Marks of a *Disciple-Maker*

CHECKLIST · 14 MARKS · MONTH 12

Character, Competence, Commission. A self-check for the discipler and disciple at launch and 6–12 months after.

Y

A Year in *Rhythm*

Q1–Q4 · GRADUAL RELEASE

Receiving, Strengthening, Leading, Sending. The horizon and the shift from "discipler leads" to "disciple leads."

THE CHECKLIST · HOW YOU KNOW IT SUCCEEDED

Marks of a *Disciple-Maker.*

Fourteen marks grouped in three tiers. **Process over content doesn't mean we don't care what our disciple knows: it means the rhythm must be copyable.** Read each mark in first person and be honest about whether it is true, observable to others, and present for at least 6 months. You know your discipling has succeeded when these marks are present in you, and when your disciple has begun to disciple another.

TIER 01 · CHARACTER — Who you are becoming · *the inward posture.*

Fruit of the Spirit is observable.
Spouse, kids, coworkers, triad partner name love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control as growing in me, not just stated values.

I confess and turn.
I have named specific sin to specific people this season and demonstrated repentance: not generalities, but specifics with consequences.

I have been tested under trial.
At least one hard thing has happened (loss, conflict, doubt, illness), and I pressed into God rather than away from Him.

I am teachable under correction.
My discipler has named hard things in me, and I have visibly adjusted rather than defended.

TIER 02 · COMPETENCE — What you can do · *the practiced life.*

I have shared the gospel out loud
with at least three specific people this year, using a memorable framework, and I can recount each conversation.

I can articulate the Trinity
(one God in three Persons) and the person and work of Christ, and why each matters for daily life.

I have sustained daily C.O.M.A.
for at least 6 months, observably to my triad partner or spouse.

I have sustained daily prayer
and have led the group in extended prayer at least three times this year.

I am a committed member
of a local church and can articulate why it is not optional for a disciple of Jesus.

I can teach the rhythm,
not just do it: I can explain C.O.M.A., Person of Peace, and the four-generation logic to someone new.

I have led a meeting from beginning to end
at least once, with my discipler absent, where things didn't fall apart. The test has to have happened, not just be theoretical.

TIER 03 · COMMISSION — Whom you're reaching · *the sending posture.*

I have prayed for and named
the specific person I am about to invest in. Not a category. A name.

I have begun the invitation.
The conversation has started; vision has been cast; we have a tentative start.

I know what I am inviting them to.
I can describe the rhythm, the duration, the expectation, and the destination in my own words. "Want to get coffee sometime?" is not an invitation to discipleship.

THE METHODOLOGY OF COACHING · A RHYTHM, NOT A SYLLABUS

A Year in *Rhythm.*

The quarters below are a **horizon, not a syllabus.** Some disciples move faster; some need 18 months. What changes each quarter is not the content: it is *who is doing the work.* The discipler steadily steps back; the disciple steadily steps forward. The shift from "discipler leads" to "disciple leads" is the formation itself.

HOW A TIMOTHY BECOMES A PAUL · THE GRADUAL RELEASE

1	2	3	4	5
I do you watch	I do you help	You do I help	You do I watch	You do someone else watches

Q1 · MONTHS 1–3

Receiving.

New believer → rooted believer.

Discipler: models the rhythm. Reads C.O.M.A. out loud. Shows how to pray. Brings them to Sunday gathering. Walks through membership. Asks "how are you, actually?" and is patient with the answers.

Disciple: receives. Learns the daily practices. Shows up consistently. Starts to confess small things. Builds the habits the rest of the year will rest on.

RELEASE STAGE 1 → 2 · *I do, you watch → I do, you help*

Q2 · MONTHS 4–6

Strengthening.

Rooted believer → growing believer.

Discipler: asks "what does this passage mean?" before answering. Invites the disciple to share their C.O.M.A. notes. Names where God is working in them. Walks with them through their first real hard thing.

Disciple: begins to articulate the gospel out loud, even clumsily. Wrestles with the Trinity, the person of Christ, fully God and fully man. Prays aloud for the first time.

RELEASE STAGE 2 → 3 · *I do, you help → You do, I help*

Q3 · MONTHS 7–9

Leading.

Growing believer → emerging disciple-maker.

Discipler: invites the disciple to lead portions of the meeting. Prays with them about their next person. Watches for fruit of the Spirit. Names hard things when needed. Introduces the multiplying frameworks.

Disciple: leads a C.O.M.A. discussion they prepared. Begins to pray for and name their next person. Receives correction without defensiveness. Sustains the rhythm whether they "feel like it" or not.

RELEASE STAGE 3 → 4 · *You do, I help → You do, I watch*

Q4 · MONTHS 10–12

Sending.

Emerging disciple-maker → launched disciple-maker.

Discipler: observes more than leads. Coaches from the side. Runs an honest Marks check. Pre-launches them: conversations about the next person, when they will start, what they will say.

Disciple: leads every meeting. Casts vision with their next person. Articulates the rhythm, duration, and destination in their own words. Prepares to take their first disciple into the same year-long arc.

RELEASE STAGE 4 → 5 · *You do, I watch → You do, someone else watches*

ONE LAST WORD

The Spirit multiplies. *We set the table.*

Every practice in this playbook rests on the same underlying truth: **you are not the multiplier.** The Holy Spirit is. Multiplication doesn't happen because we picked the right framework; it happens because God draws people to Himself, sanctifies them, and entrusts them with the work of drawing others.

Our part is to set the table. **Find the right person and discern where they are** (Bucket 1). **Choose a copyable structure** (Bucket 2). **Cover the core content** across the year (Bucket 3). **Design the whole thing to be passed on** (Bucket 4). **Reach for the discipler's tools** as the year unfolds (Bucket 5).

The frameworks above are tools for that table-setting. They aren't sacred. If a different combination serves the people in front of you better, use it. What is sacred is the principle underneath: **process over content, four generations, the rhythm that any ordinary believer can repeat without us.**

> **Pick one practice. Practice it until it's natural in you. Then bring it into one relationship.** *You don't have to plant a movement. You just have to commit the things you have heard to one faithful person who will be able to teach others also.*

SOURCES

Further *reading.*

- **Robert Coleman** · *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Revell, 1963; 50th anniversary edition Baker, 2010). The modern theological touchstone for four-generation multiplication.
- **Jim Putman** · *Real-Life Discipleship* (NavPress, 2010); *DiscipleShift* with Bobby Harrington and Robert Coleman (Zondervan, 2013). Source of the Five Stages diagnostic.
- **Greg Ogden** · *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (IVP, 2003); *Discipleship Essentials* (IVP, revised 2018). The triad model, AAC's gold standard.
- **Donald S. Whitney** · *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (NavPress, 1991; revised edition 2014). Standard Reformed evangelical text on the disciplines.
- **Richard Foster** · *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (Harper & Row, 1978). Broader classic on the disciplines.
- **David Helm & Matthias Media** · *One-to-One Bible Reading: A Simple Guide for Every Christian* (Matthias Media, 2011). Background and broader use of the C.O.M.A. inductive method.
- **Steve Smith & Ying Kai** · *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* (WIGTake Resources, 2011). T4T Online: *t4tonline.org*. The process-over-content principle.
- **Jimmy Scroggins & Steve Wright** · *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations (3 Circles)* (B&H, 2016). Source of the 3 Circles framework referenced in the Pathway Resources.
- **David & Paul Watson** · *Contagious Disciple Making* (Thomas Nelson, 2014). Person of Peace framework. See 9Marks review for established-church cautions.
- **Bill Hull** · *The Complete Book of Discipleship* (NavPress, 2006).
- **Ashe Alliance Church · Statement of Faith** · *ashealliance.org/what-we-believe*. Source of the doctrinal articulation in Practice 03-D.
- **Believing, Belonging, Maturing, Ministering Playbooks.** The four sibling playbooks referenced throughout Bucket 03, Practice E.