

New Member Class Ideas

1. Could you have several new member class meetings (4-7 one-hour sessions?) that could potentially become one or two new small groups that meet weekly either at church or in a home? The leaders of the new groups would extend a personal invitation to be part of their group. Don't assign people to a group they didn't choose.

- Men's/women's; married/single; younger/older are common ways a group of 15 people in a new member class might divide into two new small groups.

2. Do you want a new member class to be part of the process of how people join the church? In other words, do they join the church and then attend the class, or do they attend the class and then join the church?

- They express interest in salvation, baptism, joining or transfer of letter.
- They go through the 6-week new member class. All classes required, but not in a particular order.
- They are baptized.
- They are presented to the church upon completion of the class as desiring membership.
- If there are 6 weeks and someone misses a class, they could meet with someone one-on-one to complete a session of the class they missed.

3. What are a few biblical practices that will help us to grow closer to God and others?

- Understand and respond to the gospel.
- Be able to tell our story and look for opportunities to do so.
- Explain the gospel to someone else.
- Learn to feed myself: Begin to have a personal worship time (personal devotion) with God.
- Doing Life Together: Experience belonging to a small group so we can learn together.
- Serve others at home, at church and in the community.
- Understand the privilege and responsibility of making disciples.

Ideas for Different Sessions of a New Member Class

Class 1 Read a gospel plan like Four Spiritual Laws, answer questions, group discussion, teaching.

Class members can indicate a decision they have made or want to make.

Class 2 Write down your story as it relates to before, how and after. Go around the room and tell the three parts of your story in 2 minutes. If there are fewer than 10 in the class, you might allow 3 or 4 minutes.

Class 3 Discuss common objections people raise about the gospel, religion and churches and possible suggestions of how to answer someone. Pair off and let everyone practice explaining the gospel using a written guide they can read to someone else.

Class 4 Give everyone a handout with a passage of scripture on it. Let them read it silently and underline 3 of their favorite verses. Have a time of silence and ask everyone to pray those verses. Go around the room and let people share one of the verses they underlined and why they liked it. Ask them to choose a strategy for reading every day and help them with a tool if needed.

Class 5 Discuss the benefits of being in a small group and doing life together. Could someone be ready to share a testimony about what being in a small group for several years has meant to them? Split up into two or more small groups and practice reading a chapter, have a discussion, praying, and getting to know one another. Use 4 or 5 standard discussion questions.

Class 6 Read scripture verses about serving others. Discuss ideas. Brainstorm 20 ideas how someone might help in the church and 20 ideas of how someone might help outside of the church. Have a testimony ready.

Class 7 Read scriptural examples and verses about making disciples. Have someone ready to share a testimony about being discipled and what it meant to them. Have a simple strategy and resource that anyone could use to help someone else grow spiritually.

4. If you have several people take turns leading one of the new member class sessions, you will train leaders who can take ownership of the process. You will also help new members get to know a variety of leaders.

Class One: The Gospel

1. God

God loves you and has a purpose for your life. God is holy and just and will punish sin.

Jeremiah 33:3 I have loved you with an everlasting love.

I John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son.

Romans 5:8 God demonstrated His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Exodus 34:7 He does not leave the guilty unpunished.

Discussion questions

2. Man

Man is separated from God by sin. Everyone is a sinner. The wages of sin. We cannot save ourselves. Being religious and doing religious traditions is not the same thing as knowing God in a personal relationship through Christ.

Romans 3:10 There is no one righteous, not even one.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Mt 15:8 These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain...

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephes 2:8,9 For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy.

Discussion questions

3. Christ

The purpose of Christ's death and resurrection. Once for all time. Once for everyone. "It is paid for."

The Word became flesh. I will go and prepare a place for you.

Mt 1:21 You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

John 1:1,14 In the beginning was the Word ... The Word was God ... the Word became flesh

John 14:6 I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Romans 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do ... God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

Mt 28:20 I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Discussion questions

4. Faith

What is faith? What is not faith?

Faith is a private decision that results in a public proclamation.

Faith is a one-time decision to believe, that results in an ongoing desire to follow and be a learner the rest of your life. No one can, or does, do this perfectly, but we live in grace and the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him ... he gave the right to become children of God.

John 3:3 No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.

John 3:16 Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 5:24 Whoever hears my word and believes in Him who sent me has eternal life.

Rev 3:20 I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in ...

Discussion questions

Class Two: My Story

Learning

Read John 4:28-30, 39-42

The woman at the well told her story to others.

Read Acts 26:4-29

Before, how, and after Paul met Jesus.

1. Take 5 minutes or so to write some of your thoughts about your personal story of faith.

Practicing

2. Go around the room and give everyone 2 minutes to tell their story using the outline and answering the questions below of Before, How and After. (You should use a timer!)

Before You Met Christ

When did you begin to learn about God and gain a new understanding about His love for you?

How Did You Meet Christ

What led you to come to a place of repentance, believing and inviting Christ into your life and making a decision to follow Jesus? Did a person help you? Was it a sermon or Bible study? Was it something you read?

After You Met Christ

What is something you have enjoyed learning as you grow in your relationship with Christ?

A Bible verse

What is a Bible verse that has special meaning to you?

Class Three: Explaining the gospel to someone else

Objections

What are some of the common reasons people have doubts about God and the church or have put off making a decision to believe and trust in Christ? Ask the class to help you make a list of 10 reasons.

REASONS PEOPLE DOUBT OR WAIT

BIBLICAL ANSWERS

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Different Ways to Help Someone Hear and Understand the Gospel

1. Option 1

Tell your faith story and include the gospel in your story.

“I began to learn about God’s mercy and love for me.”

“I started to understand that I was a sinner just like everyone else.”

“I read the verse that said Jesus didn’t just die on the cross, but his death was to pay for my sin.”

“I realized I knew about God, but I had never *sat in the chair* and trusted God to save me.”

2. Option 2

Carry a tract (Four Spiritual Laws, Steps to Peace With God, The Bridge, The 3 Circles, EE, etc.)

Ask if you can show them the tract and read it to them. Give them the tract to take home.

3. Option 3

As you build a friendship with someone, ask if they have ever heard the gospel explained and what the Bible says about knowing God in a personal way. Ask their permission to explain it to them.

- Ask The two questions and listen to their answers to understand where they are spiritually.
- Go through what the Bible says about God, Man, Christ, Faith and include 1 or 2 Bible verses about each one.

4. Option 4

Invite them to a worship service or a small group that will help them learn more about Jesus.

5. Option 5

Invite them and bring them to social and serving opportunities so they can be around salty Christians.

6. Option 6

Do a weekly Bible study with them for the two of you. Both of you can read one or more chapters from the Bible and discuss what you learned.

7. Option 7

Give someone a book to read (if they are a reader). Discuss the book with them. (Mere Christianity, etc.)

Practice

Pair off and let each person read the gospel to the other person. Give a handout to help with this.

Class Four: Learning to Feed Myself

Learning: Reading, Prayer, Passing it On

1. Choosing a plan for reading the Bible for myself.

- Is the version helpful? Pick a book and read it chapter by chapter. Some really like keeping a journal.
- Choose 10 key Bible verses to memorize and practice until you learn them.

Ps 119:37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your Word.

II Tim 2:15 a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of truth

Ps 119:9,11 I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You.

2. Underlining verses and talking to God about what I read.

3. Sharing what I am learning with others. It helps me and it helps others.

- Share with a family member, a friend, an accountability partner or a weekly small group.

Prov 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Application and Building a Habit

When will you try to read one chapter every day? (Circle one)

Morning

Noon

Evening

Bedtime

Where will you read and pray that is quiet and you won't easily be distracted? (Circle one)

Bedroom

Living Room

Dining Room

Outside Porch or Deck

Do you enjoy writing your thoughts or a prayer request in a journal? Yes No

Who could you share your "favorite verse of the day" with?

Family

Friend

Small Group

Practice In Class

- Read John 1 and underline 3 verses that stand out.
- Pray about one of those verses silently to yourself.
- Choose a verse that stood out and share it with the class.

John 1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. **8** He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11** He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— **13** children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") **16** Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and^[b] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

¹⁹ Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders^[c] in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"
He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."

²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"^[d]

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶ "I baptize with^[e] water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

³² Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."^[f]

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"
They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"
³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see."
So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.
Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter^[g]).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."
⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.
"Come and see," said Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."
⁴⁸ "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.
Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."
⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."
⁵⁰ Jesus said, "You believe^[h] because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." ⁵¹ He then added, "Very truly I tell you,^[i] you^[j] will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on'^[k] the Son of Man."

Class Five: Doing Life Together

Learning

Are there scripture verses about the benefits of doing life together with a group of friends?

Prov 11:25 he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed

Prov 13:20 He who walks with the wise grows wise,

Acts 2:42-46 They devoted themselves to ... teaching ... fellowship ... prayer ... in their homes.

Testimony

Someone can share a testimony about what being in a small group has meant to them and their growth.

Practice

Take five minutes to read this passage and underline three verses that stand out to you.

John 3

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.^[a]”

4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit^[b] gives birth to spirit. **7** You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You^[c] must be born again.’ **8** The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”^[d]

9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? **11** Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. **12** I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13** No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.^[e] **14** Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,^[f] **15** that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”^[g]

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. **19** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **20** Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. **21** But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. **23** Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. **24** (This was before John was put in prison.) **25** An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. **26** They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”

27 To this John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. **28** You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ **29** The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. **30** He must become greater; I must become less.”^[h]

31 The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. **32** He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. **33** Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. **34** For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God^[i] gives the Spirit without limit. **35** The Father^[j] loves the Son and has

placed everything in his hands. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

Discussion

Try to let everyone in the class answer each one of these questions! Be patient. Call on people if needed.

1. What are some things we can learn about God in this passage?

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2. What are some things we can learn about people in this passage?

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3. Who is someone in this passage you can identify with? Why?

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4. What is something you want God to do in your life, or help you get better at, as a result of reading these verses?

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Class Six: Serving Others

Learning

- Mark 10:45 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.
- Mt 7:12 Do to others what you would have them do to you.
- Mt 11:4-5 report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have Leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.
- I Peter 4:3 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Serve by yourself. Serve with a group. Serve with your spouse or family.

Take someone with you to serve. Always have an apprentice with you, if possible, to train future leaders.

Testimony

Have someone share a testimony about a way they serve in the church.

Have someone share a testimony about a way they serve in the community.

Brainstorming About Opportunities To Serve Others

Break up into groups of 3 or 4 people for 5 minutes and write as many ideas as you can think of.

Come back and together as a large group and complete the list of 20 ideas for each one.

In the Church

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- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

In the Community

- 1.
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- 20.

Class Seven: Making Disciples Who Make Disciples

Learning

Mt 4:19	“Come follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”
Mt 9:37	The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.
Mt 13:23	But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.
Mt 28:19	Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ...
Acts 9:27	But Barnabus took him (Saul) and brought him to the apostles ...
Acts 11:25	Then Barnabus went to Tarsus to look for Saul ... he brought him to Antioch.
2 Tim 2:2	And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

An Informal Survey

After asking several hundred pastors “What helped you the most to grow spiritually?,” these are the top two answers they gave.

1. A person stepped into my life and helped me to grow spiritually. They challenged me and encouraged me.
2. I grew when I got involved and engaged. I taught, I helped with VBS, I went on a mission trip, I memorized some verses, I learned to explain the gospel, I prayed, I read the Bible for myself.

Options! You do not have to be a paid staff person, a deacon or a SS teacher to help make disciples.

Anyone can help others to grow spiritually whether you have been a Christian for a month or 20 years.

- You can invite someone to help you as you teach, serve others or make a visit to the hospital.
- You can meet with someone once a week to pray with them and read one chapter of the Bible together and talk about what you each learned.
- You can be a scripture memory partner with a child or an adult. (We will both memorize a verse this week and say it to one another on Sunday when we see each other.)
- If you have the financial ability, you can help sponsor a child to attend summer camp or help with the cost for a teenager to attend a student retreat or mission trip.

Testimony

Have someone tell their story about how someone helped them grow spiritually by giving them special attention.

Discussion

1. The best kind of coaching gives someone both high expectations and high support. Can you think of a time when someone gave you **high expectations** and **high support** at the same time?
 - Example: a family member, a teacher, a sports coach, the military, or a boss at your job
2. We all learn from making mistakes and then correcting our mistakes to do it better and differently next time. Did the disciples who followed Jesus make mistakes? What are some examples? Did Jesus give his disciples high expectations and high support? What are some examples? How does Jesus give us high expectations and high support today in our life as His disciples?

A Simple Tool: 7 Ways You Can Help Someone Else To Grow

Look for someone you know who isn't a Christian but wants to learn, or who is a new Christian and wants to grow.

- 1) Meet with someone once a week for one hour. Each of you read one chapter of the Bible during the week and underline three verses you like. Talk about those verses when you meet together.
- 2) Ask “What can we learn about God?” and “What can we learn about people?” from the chapter we read.
- 3) When you meet, ask one another “What were you thankful for last week?”
- 4) When you meet, ask one another “What was stressful last week? What can I pray for you about?”
- 5) Choose 10 Bible verses you want to memorize and learn one a week until you can say them all perfectly.
- 6) Take them with you when you serve others and let them help you and begin to lead when appropriate.
- 7) Socialize when you can: sit together in church; eat a lunch after church; play a sport with a group of people.