

Discipleship Plans

Each Confirmation Candidate is asked to create a Discipleship Plan that he or she will follow as he or she prepares for Confirmation. The following article will give you a better understanding of what a Discipleship plan should look like.

HOW TO SET SPIRITUAL GOALS AND MAKE A PLAN TO ACHIEVE THEM by BY KATIE WARNER

Meal plans. Homework schedules. Chore charts. Work calendars. Google reminders. To run a marathon, to get a promotion at work, to lose 10 pounds, to spend more time with the family. Most of us are pretty good at making plans and setting goals in our personal, home, business, and social lives.

But do you set spiritual goals and make plans to achieve them? Sometimes I'm dismayed by the lack of spiritual growth I've made over a certain period of time or during a particular season of life. It can be easy to beat myself up about failing to make spiritual progress, especially when I know deep in my heart that my faith is the most important priority in my life.

But I also know that progress without a plan is nearly impossible, because I've seen that played out in other areas of life. It would be crazy for me to sign up for a marathon next season, never make a plan to train for it, and then feel shocked when I ran poorly. Yet this is often exactly what we do in our spiritual lives.

It is as if we want to look at our prayer lives or our growth in virtue a month or a year from now and think, "Wow, look how much more advanced I am in this area of my spiritual life!" without doing any intentional preparation or hard work to foster actual, real-life spiritual growth.

This is where setting a spiritual goal or "spiritually theming your month" can help. When you select a certain "theme" or goal you want to focus on for 28-31 days straight, and then create a basic, doable plan of execution (I'm talking super simple here, otherwise you risk abandoning the whole task, right?), you set yourself up for tangible growth and the opportunity to instill new, life-giving, faith-centered habits in your life.

Here's an example:

My Spiritual Theme for this Month: Gratitude

My Goal: I want to focus on growing in gratitude this month by complaining less, expressing thankfulness to God in prayer, and communicating appreciation to others.

My Plan:

- When I wake up each morning, I will start the day with a prayer of thanksgiving. (Something as simple as "Lord, I thank you for giving me this day, and I thank you for these other blessings that immediately come to mind..." is perfectly sufficient. I will put a sticky note on my bathroom mirror or nightstand to remind me to do this until it becomes a habit.)
- I will set a phone reminder to ding at me around breakfast, lunch and dinnertime everyday that says "No complaining today!" (I might replace complaints throughout the day by internally offering my complaint for a special intention, by thinking of something/someone for which I am grateful, or by simply remaining silent.)
- I will write one thank you note per week. (On Sundays, I will send an email or write a thank you note to someone expressing gratitude. I will write this on my calendar so I don't forget to complete this activity on Sundays. I can express gratitude for something kind they have done for me or even just for the relationship that we have.)

See how simple this can be? In fact, it's better to start small and add layers of challenge as needed, just as when lifting weights you might start with some light dumbbells and gradually work your way up when you notice your muscles have adapted and they aren't having to work too hard anymore to lift that weight.

Planning takes only a few minutes, and it's super easy with my free spiritual goal planning worksheet, but the minutes you spend just once before the month ahead can reap valuable rewards in the weeks to come. Make sure you pick only one theme; trying to accomplish too many goals in a short period of time means you're not likely to make growth in any of the areas.

So the next time you sit down to plan, try to make a spiritual plan. Set a reminder to do this at the end of the month for the upcoming month, and see how it helps you take one step closer to a more intentional spiritual life.

Some Suggested Topics for Discipleship Plan:

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom
Understanding
Counsel
Fortitude
Knowledge
Piety
Fear of God

Virtues

Gratitude
Honesty
Charity
Compassion
Empathy
Purity
Reverence

Prayer

Daily Examination of Conscience
Reading Scripture
Spiritual Reading
Fasting
Almsgiving
Intercessory
Adoration

Discipleship Plan



_____ Date

Spiritual Theme:

My Goal:

My Plan:

Action Item #1

Action Item #2

Action Item #3

Signature

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” – Matthew 4:19