



A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED **CHURCH**

AN INSTRUCTORS'
MANUAL FOR
SCHOOLS OF
MINISTRY

A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH

**TEACHING SLIDES ARE AVAILABLE
FOR DOWNLOAD FROM
ACTS2JOURNEY.COM**

There is HOPE!

There is a unique **Spirit-empowered** dynamic for every congregation.

4 Critical Questions

1. Do we know we need to change?
2. Are we willing to change?
3. Do we know how to change?
4. Are we willing to do **that**?

The Challenge of Change

Two Responses

- **ACCEPT** Change
- **JUSTIFY** Resistance

A healthy local church in action...

Fellowship (CONNECT)
Discipleship (GROW)
Gift-oriented Ministry (SERVE)
Evangelism (GO)
WORSHIP

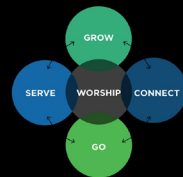


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Throughout this guide, you will find references to a videos for use in your teaching of the course.

*The video clips are drawn from the Acts 2 Journey Video Cohort and are accessible here:
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/9850291>*



INSTRUCTORS' NOTES

INSTRUCTORS' NOTE 1:

While the text of *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* by Alton Garrison is designed and its chapters are ordered for the individual experience, the classroom setting presents a different type of learning opportunity. As you might imagine, there is a great deal of content to cover and it is likely that your teaching time will be limited, so we have reordered the chapters into six session themes to help you maximize your efforts.

Each session guide is divided into 2-3 teaching segments, and the appropriate chapter in the text is identified to aid your preparation. We have also created slides for each session and placed a slide at the beginning of each segment that will help your students see which chapter in their text is being addressed at that time.

INSTRUCTORS' NOTE 2:

As with many curricular tools, we have likely provided you with more content than you will have time to teach. If this is the case, it will be important for you to be selective in the content you will choose to cover.

Our recommendation is that you divide your available teaching time into six equal parts and then align the six sessions accordingly. So, if you have six hours of teaching time, you'll be able to give about an hour to each session. If you only have three hours of teaching time, then your sessions will be limited to thirty minutes each. All of the sessions provide content that is needed to fully benefit from our text and from this learning experience so careful planning of your time will make a meaningful difference.

INSTRUCTORS' NOTE 3:

If in your teaching setting the students have been engaging the content prior to their time with you, then you can focus your efforts on enhancing their previous study rather than needing to cover each area in great detail.

Making use of stories from your own ministry journey to illustrate the most important topics can help solidify student learning of those key areas.

SESSION 1: NEED

IN THIS SESSION

As with any strategic journey, we always must start with “why?” Alton Garrison calls it the “burning platform”—the reason we simply can’t stay “here” any longer. But there’s really nothing easy about facing such a critical moment.

Our passion and strong motivations for a new destination must face the gale-force winds of change and the enormous challenge of bringing that needed change to the local church. So, in this session we will consider the most important motivations for such a journey and discuss the art of leading the change required to see it unfold.



HOPE

CHAPTER 4

PART 1

Of all the available motivations for leading change in the local church, hope may be the most powerful. In this section, you'll want to help students understand that many congregations in need of change are just as in need of hope. They have seen the great stories of other congregations, but have lost any real belief that their church can experience greater effectiveness.

KEY TOPICS:

A CULTURE OF CAN'T

Many churches feel they CAN'T succeed because they lack what is needed for the stories of successes they see others enjoying. When they say, "We lack the ...," sometimes they're right. The idea of a "Culture of Can't" says that if you feel inadequate long enough, you will decide there's nothing you CAN do and you'll lose all hope for a greater day.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

When we CAN'T, Christ CAN! Our hope is found in His capacity, not our own. This could be a great spot to tell the story of a church that has seen an unexpected turnaround or describe some other moment when God's provision was demonstrated in a remarkable way.

THERE IS HOPE!

It's important that your students understand how critical hope can be. As servant leaders, our role is to bring such hope to those we lead—to see the journey ahead as one we are engaging for them and for their futures.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

CHAPTER 2

PART 2

Much has been written on the challenging art of leading a local church in change. There's just nothing easy about it. But our focus here is not to provide yet another leading change seminar, but to connect the possibility of change to the need for hope. This session will help your students know how to cultivate an environment for change and then guide the critical steps of the process.

KEY TOPICS:

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

Focus here on the two most common responses to change in the local church—ACCEPT it or JUSTIFY resisting it. Ask your students what it takes for people to respond in each of these two ways and take a few moments to discuss their ideas. But don't stay long because there's much more to cover in this session.

FOUR CRITICAL QUESTIONS

How can we help people embrace change? These four questions provide a path for leading people toward change. As leaders, we must help them see the need and then be willing to take action. Until the need is clear and we've determined to address it, no change will ever occur. Of course, question 3 is the big one: Do we know how? And once we have a plan, the final question is one of commitment, essentially, "Will we do it?"

FIVE KEYS TO CHANGE

In the text, Alton Garrison provides a great summary of the most important steps in leading change. It all starts with what he calls the "burning platform"—the why that drives us. The remaining steps focus on pursuing change together by equipping and empowering those we lead rather than thinking we can drive the needed change on our own. Finally, outward focus—the primary catalyst for everything healthy in the local church—and the belief that God has a plan for our future help strengthen our resolve for the journey.

APRAYER

Before moving on, join with students to pray the prayer attributed to Sir Francis Drake. Ask them to identify phrases that stood out to them—there are many statements to choose from.

ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER 7

PART 3

Honest assessment is the key launching point for any journey of change. When we are ready and willing to face our current reality, we can then see the evidence that change is needed. In the Acts 2 Journey, we provide various assessments that can help people not only see the need for change, but also reveal where we're headed if we don't take corrective action.

KEY TOPICS:

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ASKING

While hope is a critical motivation for change, we also should ask whether or not we're getting the job done. Are we engaging the mission Jesus gave us? If we're not giving our best for the purpose that He gave us, then we've found yet another significant motivation for engaging change.

A HEALTHY LOCAL CHURCH

We have provided the official Assemblies of God definitions of a healthy church. These definitions were developed through the joint efforts of leaders from the Acts 2 Journey Team.

FIVE FUNCTIONS

It's important that you take this opportunity to introduce the "Five Functions" of the Church as described in Acts 2:42-47. These five functions have always shaped the activity of the local church and they are important to any strategic path we will walk. They're not multiple choice—each matter greatly and we need to give our best so that all five can be effective in helping people grow in Christ and so that our church can fulfill its true mission.

CONCLUSION

This session has focused on the best motivations for engaging a journey to a greater future for our local church. One way to conclude this session would be to have your students take a few moments to pray for the people of their own congregations that hope and a hunger for Christ's mission would fill their hearts.

SESSION 2: POTENTIAL

IN THIS SESSION

You're likely familiar with the idea of a "game-changer"—that key step or sudden effort that completely alters the trajectory of seemingly everything we do. Well, in ministry leadership, the "game-changer" proves evident when the pastor shifts from being a "doer" of ministry to a "developer" of people. The purpose of this session is to explore this true priority for the pastor, what it means, what it looks like, and how to make it happen.

Of course, many pastors struggle to believe that a shift in how they do ministry is actually possible, or they will see any leadership development efforts as "just one more thing to do," but every step a pastor takes in this direction promises to bring greater levels of effectiveness and capacity.

Be sure to convey your confidence that your students can, in fact, build their ministry efforts on this healthy foundation. If you believe in them, you increase the likelihood that they will believe it is possible too.

DiSC LEADERSHIP STYLES

Access a helpful chart that outlines the differences among pastoral DiSC profile leadership styles in 18 areas.



THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

CHAPTER 3

PART 1

What is the true assignment for the ministry leader—“doing” the work of ministry themselves or equipping others to do the work of ministry? As you’re well aware, many pastors are trapped in the unhealthy pattern of being their congregation’s hired hand to fulfill the ministry needs of the congregation. Something, clearly, must change!

KEY TOPICS:

THE EPHESIANS 4 PRIORITY

The real assignment for ministry leaders is to equip others for their God-given ministry assignments. When this becomes our priority, the capacity of the congregation for ministry impact grows exponentially and the pastor’s own assignment becomes far more manageable.

A NEW DAY

While we will explore this more fully at a later point, we must help students realize that the New Testament plan for the Church is the empowerment of every individual for the purpose of ministry. Any idea that a single leader is to be equipped to do ministry for us reflects perhaps more of an Old Testament idea of leadership and a complete misunderstanding of the plan of God when the Temple’s veil of separation was torn down.

THREE LEVELS OF CONNECTION

These slides focus on our current reality—that 30% of the people in most churches are serving while 70% maintain a consumer experience. We likely won’t or shouldn’t reach 100% participation in ministry since the more that serve, the more we will reach; nonetheless, for people to continue as consumers for the long-term is unacceptable. Everyone has a place to contribute.

A SAD TRUTH

Someone has wisely said that we tend “to get what we measure.” If we are simply desiring bigger crowds, we may well achieve such a goal, but the real assignment is to make disciples. It makes sense that our measures of success would begin to reflect the true mission Christ has given to us.

EMPOWERMENT

CHAPTER 5

PART 2

Both the prophets Ezekiel and Joel spoke of a promised day when God would dwell in the hearts of His people (Ezekiel) and would pour out His Spirit on every believer (Joel). With the work of Christ at Calvary and the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, those days have been clearly launched. The question is, “Are we living in their intended reality?” In this section, we explore the idea and definition of a healthy church and God’s provision to help us become one.

KEY TOPICS:

A HEALTHY CHURCH

Here you will walk students through a definition of a healthy church. Note how the definition aligns with the healthy fulfillment of the five functions we’ve already learned about in Session 1.

THE TRUTH ABOUT TRANSFORMATION

Spend the majority of this segment walking students through these characteristics of transformation. God is in the business of transformation, and His primary target is US! Those who are willing to let Christ transform them will experience His full intent for their lives. Frankly, as leaders, we must model this hunger and let Christ change us so He can then also change everything around us.

EMPOWERED

How does God change us? By the power of the Holy Spirit! In this segment, you’ll look at the promise and the demonstration of transformation we can see in the life of Simon Peter. Focus this segment on enhancing your students’ hunger for Christ to demonstrate His power in their lives.

A FINAL LOOK

In the last two slides, we return to the definition of a healthy local church. Now we can see these through the lens of how Christ will help us fulfill such a definition. Take a few moments to pray for the empowering of His Spirit in the lives of your students.

CREATING SPIRIT-EMPOWERED DISCIPLES

CHAPTER 6

PART 3

In this final section, we discuss the desperate need for a truly transformative experience of God's Spirit in the lives of those we lead. The evidence suggests that today's church pews are filled with those whose daily choices demonstrate little evidence of such transformation. Real transformation is possible and available, but it must become our priority for those we lead.

KEY TOPICS:

RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES...

Numerous surveys have shown us that there isn't a lot of difference in the lifestyles of those who attend our churches when compared with those who don't. We also see that people are struggling to find real meaning in much of their church experience.

AN ASSIGNMENT THAT'S TOO BIG

While we will explore this more fully, the challenge of worldwide impact is clearly greater than even our collective capacity. We need the power of the Holy Spirit! Help your students understand clearly that we will never be sufficient for this work—we must have God's power. Our people need the power of the Spirit in order to live the lives they were meant to live.

FIVE OBSERVABLE LEVELS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Every congregation has individuals at the various levels described here. That should be expected. The question is, "Are we moving people effectively from one level to the next?" This is what creating Spirit-empowered believers is all about.

HUNGER

Garrison's chapter concludes with the observation that ours is a generation hungry for power. The fascination with superpowers, heroes, the supernatural, all point to the possibilities if we can begin to demonstrate Spirit-empowerment in our experience.

We also find it interesting that today's superheroes were all imagined decades ago. Why is it that nearly all of our superheroes were created more than fifty years ago? Why is it that there have been very few superheroes created in our time?

CREATING SPIRIT-EMPOWERED DISCIPLES

CHAPTER 6

Perhaps our hope has diminished. Perhaps our expectations have declined. But there is a life of power available today for those who commit themselves to Christ's mission.

CONCLUSION

This session has focused on the biblical priority of developing Spirit-empowered disciples. While you are teaching important content in this session, the greater goal is to help change the thinking of your students concerning their ministry focus. If you can nudge your student's more firmly toward developing people in their ministry efforts, you will have sown the seed of a very valuable harvest in their lives.

Close this session with a prayer of commitment to Christ's purposes.

40 INDICATORS OF A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED DISCIPLE

What does a Spirit-empowered disciple look like? How can church leaders measure spiritual, emotional, and relational growth of individuals? This self assessment clusters the 40 indicators around the five functions of a healthy church and provides a picture of strengths and areas in need of attention.

Available on acts2journey.com.

SESSION 3: DIRECTION

IN THIS SESSION

In any strategic journey, identifying the destination is a critical first step. Frankly, without clear direction no plan can be successful. As you will see, there is a lot of material available to you during this session. As we discuss the topic of mission, vision, and core values, there is much to say and you'll want to determine carefully the amount of time you can afford to invest in each section.

Also, your own experiences in leading through these components will be valuable, so leave room in your teaching plan to share a bit from your story. But keep in mind that the best goal for this session is helping your students know how to engage these leadership themes in their own leadership settings.

ACTS 2 JOURNEY VIDEO COHORT

The Acts 2 Journey cohort is being offered digitally for pastors and teams.

- assess the church's current reality (Session 1)
- discover a renewed sense of vision (Session 2)
- clarify the values that will drive you toward God's preferred future (Session 3)
- emerge with properly aligned systems (Session 4)
- communicate to the congregation (Session 5)

If you're feeling stuck and searching for ways to help your church grow younger, pass on the faith to next generations, look more like your neighborhood, and reach its full kingdom potential, this resource is for you!

Available on digital.myhealthychurch.com.

MISSION

CHAPTER 8

PART 1

While terms like “mission” and “vision” are used widely and in a variety of ways, for our purposes, we will use the term “mission” to describe the common assignment that every ministry shares, and “vision” as the unique expression of that mission within our own setting, passions, gifts, and abilities. The mission is that which Christ has given to us all while the vision will aim us in the unique manner that He has revealed for us.

KEY TOPICS:

THE GREAT COMMISSION

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus made clear the mission that He was placing before His disciples and before us. While we can expect that our students will be familiar with this charge, assume nothing and take a few moments to be certain that the priority and definition of making disciples is clear.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

Matthew 22:37-39 is our source for the unique manner in which Christ’s Kingdom is designed to spread—Love. No other religious ideal seeks worldwide spread through such a means as this.

ORGANISM OR ORGANIZATION

Focus much of your effort in this segment on the unique nature of the Church. Though we bear many traits of an organization, we are made to be something more. Our relationship to Christ as His body means there is an extraordinary potential in the Church, even if we don’t seem that impressive otherwise. Perhaps a story or two of a congregation that is impacting their community beyond anything we might expect will help you make the point. When the unimpressive do impressive things, we can see God at work in His Church.

VISION

CHAPTER 9

PART 2

As we have noted, vision is the unique expression or destination of the local church's effort to fulfill the mission. In a sense, it is our effort to define today the church we hope to be tomorrow. Be careful to turn students away from limiting vision to buildings, programs, attendance numbers, or other desired elements and take them deeper to focus on the heart we want to cultivate and the environment we want to offer for the good of those Christ gives us to disciple. Think of vision as "the place we want to be..."

KEY TOPICS:

WHAT IS VISION?

This segment will help you better define the idea of vision for your students. There are many points available here and you won't be able to give significant time to each, but focus on a few that you believe will best help the students understand the unique nature of vision as we define it.

A VISION THAT MOVES US FORWARD

This segment combines Leader Passion, Congregational Abilities, and Community Need in a way that can reveal how the right vision for a church draws from all three areas. Remember, there's nothing easy about creating a new lifecycle for a local church. Such an effort takes maximum commitment. A vision that can truly drive us forward needs our maximum strength so finding the "nexus" of these key components is critical.

LOST VISION

Before concluding this segment, help the students see what happens when vision is lost. Lost vision in the pew is the principal cause of plateau and launches us toward a likely inward focus (which is the leading cause of decline). Once we take our eyes off of the needs in our community and start focusing our thoughts on ourselves, we lose vision and end up losing all momentum toward the church Jesus has intended us to be.

CORE VALUES

CHAPTER 10

PART 3

While the pursuit of vision can be exciting, identifying and targeting core values is hard, but very necessary work. Often it is our values that hold us together, but it is also our values that can stir the greatest potential for conflict. Each of us have a belief in what truly matters and, over time, our alignment with a shared sense of values will become the greatest factor in being able to move forward.

KEY TOPICS:

WHAT IS CULTURE?

The accumulated attitudes and behavior of any organization over time consolidate in a “culture” that dominates all we think and do. Never underestimate the power of culture to either strengthen or destroy the impact of our ministry efforts. Many struggling churches have “culture” issues that continually keep them from moving forward effectively.

WHAT ARE CORE VALUES?

In this extended segment, you’ll help students discover the nature and the importance of core values in any local church. Keep in mind that we have core values that currently define our group, but there are likely other values that need to be instilled in us so that we can be the church of our vision. These we will call “aspirational” values.

DISCOVERING CORE VALUES

This segment provides an opportunity to reflect on our current values. Challenge students beyond those values we claim to hold, and look honestly at some values that are evident in our behaviors. Churches can be known for saying the right things without acting on those principles.

ASPIRATIONAL VALUES

When we seek to identify aspirational values, we are determining the values that will actually help lead us to achieve our vision. So, if our vision is to love people, aspirational values like friendliness, acceptance, or reaching out to others would seem to fit. If we need to grow in such areas, those values would be considered aspirational, in that we aspire to instill them in our culture.

CORE VALUES

CHAPTER 10

LEVELS OF CONVICTION

As we mentioned above, core values can stir conflict. In fact, likely most conflict within the local church comes from wrestling over values—some things are important to one person, but devalued by others. In this segment, you’ll see the four levels of conviction and how conflict is likely when we view certain issues at different levels. For example, if I try to make my Personal Preference a matter of Community Standard or even a Biblical Absolute, those who don’t see that issue the same way will not be able to engage me in an agreeable manner.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this session is all about knowing where we are going. Certainly, our ideas of direction need to demonstrate the path Christ has placed before us. Our vision and values need to reflect His mission. Only when we are committed to His mission and pursuing it with all our hearts can we anticipate His provision and empowerment. In fact, it was on the context of His mission that Jesus promised He would be “with us always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

SESSION 4: PLAN (1)

IN THIS SESSION

Once we are armed with a clear vision and have identified the core values that can help us get there, it's time to think of the specific steps we must take in that direction. In the Acts 2 Journey, these strategic steps are organized around the five functions of the church that we discovered in Acts 2:42-47.

As we build strategy, five questions will help us. These questions start with our efforts to connect with new people—the “new life” that is necessary requirement for a new lifecycle in our congregation. By focusing on this “new life,” we can follow these new friends through their entire discipleship experience and build strategies that not only help them, but will also help all of us better engage God’s purposes in our lives.

The **ACTS GROW TRACK** is a customizable resource designed to help you lead new believers and guests on three distinct spiritual tracks—Connect, Grow, and Serve—toward assimilation into your church. Available on digital.myhealthychurch.com.



GO

CHAPTER 15

PART 1

We have already noted that of the five functions, evangelism is almost always identified as our greatest struggle. The truth is, when we fellowship, disciple, serve, and worship, we typically do such things together, but somehow evangelism is the one step we often expect people to take on their own—and they often don't. So, while people insist that their pastor talks about evangelism more than any of the other functions, this is the one we seem to engage the least.

KEY TOPICS:

HARSH REALITIES

Inward focus destroys the effectiveness of a congregation. When we lose vision, we stop forward movement, and without vision, we tend to turn inward and focus our energies on ourselves—what we like, what the church does for our families, etc. Such inward focus then drives the decline that many churches are experiencing today. Only when we aim our eyes and our hearts outward can we find the new day we long for.

TEN STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

When we considered our reason for existence, and our mission, vision, and values, we addressed four issues that are critical for building a strategic plan. The next questions will help us build strategy and the first we need to consider is “How will we engage new people?” Until our efforts reach beyond our current crowd, we have no hope of that new day we seek. A new lifecycle demands new life!

GO

In this segment we consider three ideal starting places for engaging new people—our friends, our neighbors, and our strengths. As you teach these areas, take the time to be certain that your students understand the potential to be found in what is already within reach. Explore how resourcing our people in their efforts to connect with their current friends can help reshape those relationships in meaningful ways. When discussing strengths, encourage creative thinking in how to “aim our abilities outward” into our communities. The truth is, most churches spend their best capacities on themselves and within their walls. But if one has to come to your church to experience such things, those opportunities may never come.

GO

CHAPTER 15

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Our efforts to reach out to our community have two goals. First, we certainly want to connect with people so we can share the Gospel with them and see their lives changed. But our efforts also can help nurture outward focus in our people. Since our natural tendency is to focus on ourselves, we all need help maintaining a heart for others.

LIFT UP YOUR EYES

The closing moments of John 4 speak so powerfully to our need for outward focus. It's amazing to see that the disciples came into the closing moments of Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well, but none asked Him about her. Why? They were distracted by their own food. As Jesus states, we must lift up our eyes and see what He sees if we will ever be able to do those things he would have us do.

CONNECT

CHAPTER 12

PART 2

Our second strategic step speaks to how we plan to incorporate the people we connect with into our church community. Help your students grasp the importance of fellowship and community in our efforts to move forward. Healthy churches know that growing worship services won't endure if people don't feel connected. In truth, the number one reason people come to a church is to look for friends and we must be ready for that opportunity so we can engage it effectively.

KEY TOPICS:

THE PRIORITY OF LOVE

While we rightly focus on proclaiming our message into the world around us and we certainly have an obligation to represent the truth and righteousness of Christ's kingdom in our communities, our number one responsibility is to love. Love is the trait that sets us apart as participants in the Kingdom of God.

LARRY CRABB'S STATEMENTS

Take a few moments to consider the potential ministry impact of relationships in our community of faith. Perhaps you or a few of your students can describe the life-changing impact they've experienced among Christian friends.

THE QUESTION

When we think about those new friends we are engaging, we should ask, "How will we treat them when they walk through our doors?" Essentially, we are talking about when they come among us, whether on Sundays or in some other setting. How will we intentionally seek to bring them into relationship with us? Of course, there's more to "connect" and fellowship than our plan for making new friends feel welcome.

We want to be effective in every relationship that occurs in our church community, but when we build a plan for our new friends, the impact on all relationships seems to follow naturally. Ultimately, all of our efforts for fellowship need to be included in this part of our strategy, but having a strategic plan for new friends is absolutely essential.

CONNECT

CHAPTER 12

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

This segment provides an opportunity to discuss the emotional impact of a friendly, healthy congregation. Keep in mind that actual strategic steps that achieve these goals is what strategy requires, so we can't just commit to general goals—we need real plans!

A FRIENDLY CHURCH

It seems everyone thinks theirs is a friendly church, but often what we see is that we are friendly with our friends—we receive such friendliness. But often, those who are new to the room don't see us the same way. Help your students wrestle with this reality a bit before moving on.

A PLAN FOR GUEST ASSIMILATION

Given the importance of helping people connect to our church community in their early days among us, what specific steps can we take. Use the final moments of this session to brainstorm ways that we can convey friendship and help relationships begin to grow. We've provided a few slides to get the ideas started.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this session has helped us get started with two key strategic questions. Be sure to help students understand that there is more to accomplish than just pooling our creative ideas. help students understand that there is more to accomplish than just pooling our creative ideas. We want to engage people and build relationships in ways that are consistent with our vision and values. In other words, we want to be the Church we long to be as we engage people and as we connect with new friends. This alignment helps us pick up speed as we journey toward that desired future.

SESSION 5: PLAN (2)

IN THIS SESSION

Strategic planning continues to be in focus as we address a few more of the questions that our five functions present. Again, we trace the growth steps of our new friends to help us build effective strategies, but the full slate of our plans will actually help every individual progress in their discipleship journey. As we will see, healthy churches are intentional in how they achieve these five functions. They have evangelism and assimilation strategies like we saw in our last session, and they also have intentional efforts for engaging people in discipleship, serving, and both corporate and personal times of worship.

Honestly, this session provides so much to talk about that your time limitations will force you to pick and choose what you take time to cover. Focus your time on those items you believe will benefit your students most and encourage their diligence in studying the full content of the chapters in this section.

The **ACTS 2 CHURCH SURVEY** is a statistically validated survey instrument designed specifically for Spirit-empowered churches. The survey analyzes twelve health factors around Connect, Grow, Serve, Go, and Worship.

- Customize your church's survey link
- Distribute the link to your congregation
- Encourage participation in the 75-question survey
- Receive a detailed report when the survey closes

Purchase the survey for your congregation at
digital.myhealthychurch.com.

GROW

CHAPTER 13

PART 1

Someone has wisely observed that “discipleship is the hardest work the church does.” Sadly, some congregations have abandoned former efforts of discipleship, such as Sunday school, without effectively providing options to help people grow. The result is a settling for less growth in the individual so greater growth in the size of the congregation can be pursued.

But making disciples is still our mission, and we need a plan for how we will help every individual engage the teachings of Scripture in life-changing ways.

KEY TOPICS:

TEN STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

The next step in our strategic journey is to consider “How will we teach our new friends how to follow Jesus?” Yes, we need to teach everyone how to follow Jesus, but a good starting place is to build strategy for growing our new friends. Perhaps this will involve a “new believers” setting, or we will consider how we can incorporate new people into our existing plans for discipleship. However we answer the question, the point is that we cannot afford to neglect the question.

THE PURPOSES OF TRUTH

What does it really mean to live as a Christian? Some people think being a Christian is primarily a list of dos and don'ts they will begin adhering to, but such a path seldom brings the fulfilling life we're promised.

Take some time at this point to help students understand that Christianity is more than learning things and then doing them. A learning-doing approach to one's relationship with Christ proves to be limited and can actually open us up to pride or exhaustion. There is something more—something we call a Spirit-Empowered Life. Such a life is built on true relationship with Christ and the experience of His power to equip us for His purposes. When we see draw close to Him and see our need for His help in what He could have us do, we are then ready to receive, so we can give! Everything God wants to do through our lives will flow from what He is doing in our lives. Simply put, He pours in so we can pour out!

GROW

CHAPTER 13

THE FOUR MAIN SPIRITUAL OUTCOMES

This segment gives you the opportunity to speak honestly about what a Church should look like. Remember that spiritual fruit doesn't come from our efforts to produce good things, but instead flows from a life that is tightly connected to Christ. Like the branches of a Vine, our fruitfulness depends on our connection to the Vine (John 15). When we are connected to Christ, His life flows through us, and fruit is the result.

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

This segment identifies the key elements of true discipleship. Be sure to emphasize the importance of living life together. Discipleship can't be fully achieved in a classroom or any other setting where real life is not being engaged.

THE LIFE OF A DISCIPLE

This segment concludes with a final look at the outcomes of discipleship. If we will produce such things in the life of the people, we will need a plan.

SERVE

CHAPTER 14

PART 2

Frankly, one cannot be following a servant unless he or she is serving. To serve is the very nature of the life Christ has shown us. Most of us have discovered that the greatest growth we can experience in our Christian lives begins to occur through our efforts to serve others. So, as we continue to follow our new friends as they engage our church community, how will we help them find the opportunities to serve?

KEY TOPICS:

THE QUESTION

When we think about serving Christ, we can occasionally slip into limiting our thoughts to ways we can serve the local church. But the life of a servant is one we want our people to engage in the world around them. Serving in Sunday ministries is important and can help people develop both the heart and the skills that Christ wants to cultivate in their lives, but the real goal is to serve beyond our walls. Sunday should be considered “practice” for the real effort that needs to occur in the marketplace.

SOMETHING NEEDS TO CHANGE

This segment mentions the high level of frustration that many pastors feel with their inability to get people involved in ministry opportunities. Much of the remaining segments under this topic seek to address how we can overcome this troubling reality.

AUTHORITY AND CALLING

Many churches struggle to make healthy decisions when involving people in ministry, often because they are desperate for any help they can get. A healthy, intentional plan can help the local church avoid these mistakes and the lingering impact they can have on the health of the congregation.

TEAM

This segment helps us understand the benefits of a “team” mindset when it comes to engaging ministry together. Compare this idea with the feeling some have that their ministry efforts are just helping the pastor do his or her work.

SERVE

CHAPTER 14

EFFECTIVE TEAM BUILDING

Here, Garrison provides the key elements of establishing a healthy, functioning team. Insert some of your own practical insights into each of these steps.

GIFT ASSESSMENT TOOLS

While they can be limited in their scope and may not always provide a complete picture of how an individual can engage meaningful ministry, gift assessment tools can be a helpful starting place for getting people involved in ministry opportunities. Of course, there's no replacement for knowing people and observing their abilities and passions firsthand, but sometimes these types of tools can help us learn what we may not have time to fully observe.

SOME PRACTICAL WISDOM

These insights are just a starting point. If time allows, consider sharing a story from your own experience that might demonstrate how you learned such wisdom “the hard way.” Of course, any insight that can allow a student to benefit from our hard-earned experience and avoid repeating our mistakes is time well spent.

WORSHIP

CHAPTER 16

PART 3

Here, worship is our focus and it's important that we broaden the discussion beyond the worship times we engage together on Sunday mornings. Worship is far more than this and is intended to be a way that we live every day. Be sure to encourage students in their own daily pursuit of God and His purposes. Every act of obedience is an act of worship, even the simplest and seemingly smallest things we might do in His name.

KEY TOPICS:

THE QUESTION

As we continue to follow our new friend's journey, we must ask "How will we teach him/her to pursue God?" While we provide direction in worship when we gather, a lifestyle of worship must be cultivated in those moments when we are not together.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

This segment leads us to consider together the true nature of worship and the various ways we attempt to worship God. Again, the more we can broaden our students' grasp of this view of worship, the stronger their relationship with God can become.

TODAY'S REALITIES

This segment raises some important questions that help us explore our struggle in this part of discipleship. When we settle for crowd goals, we can end up limiting the work of God in the life of the individual.

WHERE TO START

This segment identifies some key areas that need to be considered as we assemble our plan for helping people pursue God. We should also consider how we can use our times together on Sunday to help model such steps so people can engage them more successfully on Monday. Such examples are likely to produce more meaningful experiences each day and bring greater growth for those we lead.

WORSHIP

CHAPTER 16

CONCLUSION

While there is a great deal of potential content for this session and you may feel a bit frustrated that you didn't have time to cover all you would have preferred, focus your concluding comments on what you have been able to address. Be sure that your students have the key questions clearly in focus so they can build strategies that fit their settings. Help your students understand that each of these questions is essential and that we must give attention to each of the five functions if we are going to help people become healthy, Spirit-empowered believers. Remember, healthy, Spirit-empowered church communities emerge where there are healthy, Spirit-empowered believers.

SESSION 6: RESULT

IN THIS SESSION

We have now considered the various elements of a strategic plan, exploring mission, vision, values and each of the five functions that shape our steps forward. What remains is the communication and leadership needed to help this journey unfold.

In truth, some are uncomfortable with the idea of a plan when we are engaging spiritual things. They either prefer more of an event focus to their ministry efforts rather than seeing discipleship as a process, or they can equate the spontaneous with spirituality. But neither of these positions will produce a healthy approach to growing disciples or strengthening a local church. In this final session, we will consider our need for a plan, how to address the reluctance of some toward having a plan, and ultimately how to help our people get on board with the plans God has revealed to us.

CHURCH HEALTH METRICS CALCULATOR

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THE NEED FOR A PROCESS

CHAPTER 1

PART 1

In the text, Alton Garrison describes his father’s pastoral challenge and even his own growth in understanding the need for a ministry plan. For many Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and leaders, a long-standing event focus can prevent them from seeing the benefits of process and the opportunities that a plan can present. Most people would agree that God has a plan for their local church. The real question then becomes, “Do you think He will let us in on that plan?” The clear answer is “yes,” and this is the hope for the Spirit-Empowered Church.

KEY TOPICS:

EXPRESSION VS. DIRECTION

This segment discusses the pattern of many churches to rely on an “event mindset” when thinking about ministry. Seeking big moments of significant impact seems to dominate their thoughts, but this can leave our people uncertain as to how to live life in between the big moments. While major times of transformation are very important, the process that ties them and other moments to consistent growth is needed to produce healthy disciples.

WHAT NOW?

It seems evident that after Christ’s resurrection, the disciples were struggling to know what they should do. With Jesus now only occasionally in their midst, Peter decided to go back to what he knew—fishing—and many of the others tagged along. Even at the Ascension, they stood gazing into the skies long after Jesus had vanished from their sight, again perplexed and uncertain of what they should do now.

THE CHURCH’S MISSION

What did they know? Jesus had given them their assignment—a powerful worldwide mission designed to impact people from every tribe and tongue. But so much of this Commission represented things dramatically unknown to them at this point. They would surely need the help if the promised Comforter to even get started.

THE NEED FOR A PROCESS

CHAPTER 1

THE CHURCH'S PROMISE

Jesus knew their need and the limits of their capacities, but this was never to be a mission they would accomplish in their own strength. He instructed them to wait until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and when that promised moment occurred on the Day of Pentecost, now they were ready for their amazing futures.

THE CHURCH'S FUTURE

From confused to committed, that's what happened when the Holy Spirit came upon them. No one exemplifies this more than Simon Peter who went from fearfully denying Jesus to standing powerfully and proclaiming His message in Acts 2. In fact, before Acts 2 is finished, we see the Early Church already functioning in their newfound identity as His Church. In this segment, we will also look at what has been identified as the 4-fold mission of the Church, but the key point is that their uncertainty became certain with the help of the Holy Spirit and we continue to function in the same ways some two millennia later.

THE FIVE FUNCTIONS

So what do we do? They needed a process, and so do we. Acts 2:42-47 gives us that process in five functions that still define our efforts. Fellowship, Discipleship, Serving, Evangelism and Worship.

BALANCING THE SPIRITUAL AND STRATEGIC

CHAPTER 11

PART 2

As we have mentioned, there are those who insist that plans cannot be a part of spiritual direction from the Holy Spirit, that the spontaneous or unplanned are indicative of God at work. But while we always want to listen to the direction of the Spirit, even in the midst of the plans we believe He has given us, the fact is that He does have a plan and will reveal that plan if we ask Him.

KEY TOPICS:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

This brief segment underscores the major steps in our journey through Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategy. Use this moment to be certain that your students see how these all fit together.

RESISTANCE COMES IN TWO FORMS

Consider asking students how they have encountered the two forms of resistance discussed. Be ready to share from your own experiences, especially if your students have yet to encounter such challenges.

OUR PRAYER

These two Scriptural moments reveal our expectation of the Spirit's work in and through our lives. Consider using these to offer your own prayer for God's outpouring in your students' lives.

STRATEGY, SPONTANEITY, SPIRITUALITY

In this segment, we get to the core of the matter. Make sure your students know that God is the greatest Planner in the history of the world and has been working His plan since “before the foundation of the world.” God has a plan for our lives and for the journey of our local church.

ON A JOURNEY TOGETHER

Here, a fun analogy helps us understand the importance of each piece of our prayerful planning together.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

CHAPTER 17

PART 3

We wrap up our course by returning to the strategic questions we have set out to address in our journey. Be sure students capture this list of questions as they can then use this list anytime they are needing to determine direction in their leadership efforts. Each question matters and their order is important too as we will need the responses we give to each question as we engage the next one..

KEY TOPICS:

REMEMBER

Here, we return to our starting point to remind ourselves why we have engaged this journey in the first place. We are in search of hope—real hope that can only come from the purposes of God.

CRITICAL STRATEGY QUESTIONS

These are the ten questions we have addressed through Garrison's text and this course. Take a few brief moments to highlight some of what we have learned with each question.

THE IMPACT OF THE JOURNEY

Here, we can help students understand how such a journey has impacted many congregations. If you have a testimony concerning this type of journey's impact on your or know the story of a church who has walked this road, take a few moments to share.

FACTORS IN PLANNING A VISION PRESENTATION

This final segment offers some practical wisdom for sharing a vision or strategic plan with those you lead.

CONCLUSION

Every step of this journey has been important, but keeping the destination in focus is equally essential. We want to be a Spirit-Empowered Church. We're not interested in simply maximizing our abilities or build what we can, but we want to experience everything God has for us so that He will be glorified in and through us. As you conclude this final teaching session, reflect for a moment on major moments of learning through these lessons and pray that God will use what your students have learned in helping them pursue His purpose in their lives.



ACTS 2

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By teaching this course, you are increasing each student's understanding of God's plan and enhancing their leadership efforts in ways that may bring a remarkable future. We are grateful for your commitment and for the hours you will give to helping your ministry students gain maximum benefit from *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* by Alton Garrison. Our hope is that our partnership together and with your School of Ministry will produce effective Spirit-empowered leaders for Christ's Kingdom.

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