



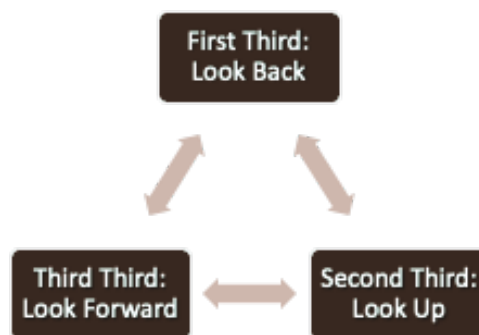
Three-Thirds Model for Discipling Communities

Medium Sized Co-Ed Gatherings and Cafe Worship

Note: Stephen Covey says, “Always begin with the end in mind.” But, in disciple-making we say, “Always begin with multiplication in mind.” Multiplication is the ultimate goal, but it never ends.

Three Thirds simply means to divide your time into 1/3rds and ALWAYS treat each leg of the three-legged stool equally – **Knowledge, Obedience, and Sharing**. If you are meeting for 1 ½ hours, each segment represents 30 minutes. If you are meeting for an hour, each segment lasts 20 minutes. This allows the group to give equal attention to each leg of the stool.

Think of the Three-Thirds process **as a cycle** repeating from meeting to meeting, not as a linear process that ends at the end of the meeting. Each “Look Back” section of the next meeting always points back to the previous “Look Forward” from the last meeting.



In this diagram each segment of the meeting is dependent and relevant to the preceding and following segment. When we focus on looking back since the last meeting, we are looking at it through the eyes of how God is working in us, therefore we are looking up. When we look up in the second section, we are also asking God how he wants us to respond to Him as he teaches us. When we look back in the first third, we are reviewing how obedient we were to God's leading in our previous meeting. And so forth. The meeting works like a cycle and each segment should relate to the other two segments.

What is the outcome then, brothers and sisters? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. All things are to be done for edification. – 1 Corinthians 14:26

The Our Best Story Three-Thirds process is not a model, but a principle-based tool, so there is no set-in-stone way to lead the group. However, here are some good tools that might be helpful in accomplishing the goal of each segment.

Segment 1 - Look Back

Goal: The primary purpose of the “Look Back” Segment is to discuss how each person has progressed in their discipleship process since the group last met. It serves the purposes of accountability, encouragement, and edification. It never misses an opportunity to share spiritual conversations had since the last meeting!

Care

Before the group gets into the meat of the night, it is important to set the stage well. Depending on the group size and culture, it can be helpful to take a couple rounds around the room and do some group pastoral care. Sometimes I'll take one lap around and let each person share their highlight since we last met. Then we'll take a second lap and ask what their greatest struggle has been since we last met. I'll often ask each person to pray for the person to their left or right after each struggle is shared. This creates unity and care, but can take time. Be conscious of giving each segment equal time.

For larger groups, you can put them in groups of 2 or 3 to share their victory and battle since we last met and let them do the same process together in small groups. This is much more time efficient and allows everyone to share more than they could in a large group.

You might also have an ice-breaker question that each person could answer in the larger group or in a small group. Be flexible and creative with this section. If you do the same exact thing meeting after meeting, it will get stale and lose momentum.

Check-Up

The checkup segment is the most important part of the Look Back time! It is an opportunity for accountability and encouragement. Here are some questions that can drive the check-up time.

- **How have you obeyed what the Holy Spirit spoke to you the last time we met?**
- Who were you able to train in what you've learned since we last met?
- With whom were you able to share your story or God's story with since we last met?

Again, keep this segment fresh and relevant so it doesn't become a duty for people to share. If someone is uncomfortable sharing, just move on and give them grace.

Coaching Conversations (NEVER SKIP)

The most critical activity we do at OBS is to share spiritual conversations with the people in the places where we live, work, and play. There is a leadership principle called the Pareto principle, named after the guy who authored it that says that 80% of any results come from 20% of the causes. In other words, 20% of the activity in any process produces 80% of the progress.

Spiritual conversations is definitely a 20%er in any disciple-making effort. If you have to skip anything, **do not skip this section!** These are some questions you can use to coach spiritual conversations.

Have you had any spiritual conversations since we last met? (don't skip this one!)

What was the result?

What questions did you ask?

What stories did you tell?

What is your follow-up plan?

Segment 2 – Look Up

This segment of the three-third group is designed to explore scripture together. It is not designed to facilitate a teacher/pupil culture, but a group discovery process. Again, the three-thirds group is a principle-based tool, so don't feel pressured to get every step in or to ask every single question. Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The facilitator of the group should have a passage or story selected to engage with the group. The absolute best story would surface from a question or tension expressed in a previous meeting. "Just-in-Case" information is when we share a story just in case there's someone who needs to hear it. 90% of the time, this is an ineffective method of discovering scripture. "Just-in-Time" discovery speaks to a relevant need in the lives of the disciples, and they will absorb the information and apply it to their tension.

A Three-Thirds Passage should be:

- · Relatively Short
- · Story-based in most cases
- Relevant to questions being asked by the group
- Can be chosen in a series of meetings such as the “7 I-Am’s of Jesus” or the “7 Miracles in the Book of John”

Some examples of great three-thirds passages can be found at the end of this document.

First Read Through

At the beginning of segment two, the facilitator asks who would be willing to read the passage aloud to the group. I recommend that no one else actually read their Bibles, but just set them aside and listens to the story. After the story is read, the facilitator asks the following two questions.

- Is there anything in this passage that you don’t like or that creates conflict in you?
- What do you like most about this passage?

Tension

In OBS, we say, “there is no attention without tension.” That is the purpose of this first questions. If members of the group are honest and vulnerable, this question will surface the tension needed to find disciple-able conversations in the group setting. The group will do a good job discussing these tensions if trust and vulnerability are present in the group. It’s very important for the facilitator to set the culture.

Likes

This question will surface what the Holy Spirit is trying to communicate to the member or the group from the passage being read. Make sure to press into “WHY” they like the principle and “WHAT” they like about it. What deeper message does it speak to them?

Second Read Through

At this point in the segment, have another person read through the same passage a second time. Make sure they have a different version of the Bible. Oftentimes, I’ll lean into a more palatable version like the Message or New Living Translation. This always surfaces new thoughts and feelings. Then ask this set of questions.

- · What does this teach us about the nature or heart of God or Jesus?
- · What does this teach us about the nature or heart of people?
- Where are you in this story?
- Who are you going to share this story with before we meet again?

This third question is, by far, the most important one. This is the transition into segment three – the accountability leg of the stool, which of most often overlooked in group settings.

Segment 3 – Look Forward

In this segment, the goal is for each person to leave with 1-3 ACTION POINTS that they will accomplish before the group meets again. The facilitator literally takes notes so that in Segment One of the next meeting they can ask about these commitments.

The key to effective action points is that they don't come from the facilitator, guilt, other members, or a sharp mind. They must come from the Holy Spirit.

So how do we find out what the Holy Spirit is communicating with us?

WE ASK HIM!

This practice is the jet fuel for this segment of the group. If you miss this part, you'll miss the power of the Three Third Process!

The Prayer

Pull out a timer on your phone or assign someone else to time the prayer. Tell the group that you are going to take 3 minutes to pray and ask God how He would like you to respond to this discussion – What Does He Want You To Do About It?

This process began in the previous segment, but will be clarified here.

Sit in silence for three minutes to ask God what response He would like from YOU! Each person asks the question of themselves.

The Action Point Step

After the three minutes are up, let the group go around the room and share their accountability action point. Encourage everyone to share, but don't be forceful. Make sure to write down the commitments so you'll have them available in Segment One of the next group meeting. You will ask how things went with these action points next time!

Close the Group

After you have completed this step, you can have a prayer time to close the group. Make your prayers specific and powerful. God gives big answers to big asks. Believe together as a faith family. Don't overdo it, but don't take this act for granted or minimize it.

HOPE SERIES (FOR SEEKERS)

Use the following passages for the “LOOK UP” portion of your group. Your group may need more than one meeting for some of the passages.

1. Hope for the sinner: Luke 18:9-14
2. Hope for the poor: Luke 12:13-34
3. Hope for the runaway: Luke 15:11-32
4. Hope for the lost: Luke 19:1-10
5. Hope for the grieving: John 11:1-44
6. Hope for the seeker: John 3:1-21

SIGNS OF JOHN (FOR SEEKERS)

Use the following passages for the “LOOK UP” portion of your group. Your group may need more than one meeting for some of the passages.

1. Turning of water into wine: John 2:1-12
2. Healing of the royal official's son: John 4:46-54
3. Healing of the paralytic: John 5:1-17
4. Feeding of the five thousand: John 6:1-14
5. Walking on water: John 6:15-25
6. Healing of the man born blind: John 9:1-41
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead: John 11:1-46

DISCOVER SERIES

(FOR GROUPS THAT NEED BIBLE BACKGROUND & FAMILIARITY)

Use the following passages for the “LOOK UP” portion of your group. Your group may need more than one meeting for some of the passages.

Discover God- *who is God and what He is like*

1. Creation- Genesis 1
2. Creation of People- Genesis 2
3. Disobedience of People- Genesis 3
4. Noah and the Flood- Genesis 6:5-8:14
5. God's Promise with Noah- Genesis 8:15-9:17
6. God Speaks to Abraham- Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-6
7. David becomes King of Abraham's Descendants 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Samuel 7:1-28
8. King David and Bathsheba- 2 Samuel 11: 1-27
9. Nathan's Story- 2 Samuel 12:1-25
10. God Promises Savior will come- Isaiah 53

Discover Jesus- *who is Jesus and why He came*

1. Savior born- Matthew 1:18-25
2. Jesus' Baptism- Matthew 3:7-9, 13-15
3. Crazy Man Healed- Mark 5:1-20
4. Jesus never Loses Sheep- John 10:1-30
5. Jesus Heals the Blind- Luke 18:31-42
6. Jesus and Zaccheus- Luke 19:1-9
7. Jesus and Matthew- Matthew 9:9-13
8. Jesus is the Only Way- John 14:1-15
9. Holy Spirit Coming- John 16:5-15
10. Last Dinner- Luke 22:14-20
11. Arrest and Trial- Luke 22:47-53; 23:13-24
12. Execution- Luke 23:33-56
13. Jesus is Alive- Luke 24:1-7, 36-47; Acts 1:1-11
14. Believing and Doing- Philippians 3:3-9