

Introduction to Reaching Forward in Discipleship

[Slide 1] NSD Discipleship Introduction Presentation – How to Make Disciples

[Slide 2] Don't you just love stories? They warm our hearts and remain in our memory. We have been given a precious message. A divine calling based on four foundational Scripture truths: Sabbath, State of the Dead, Sanctuary, and the Second Coming.

[Slide 3] In the 2012 devotional book, "The Chosen," author Dwight Nelson recounts the story of identical twins born 12 weeks premature in Worcester, Massachusetts. "The tiny sisters, Kyrie and Brielle Jackson, barely weighed two pounds each. Kyrie quickly began gaining weight, but little Brielle had breathing and heart-rate problems, her blood oxygen level low, her weight gain very slow. Then four weeks into her journey, Brielle began gasping for air, her tiny face and stick arms turning bluish-gray, her heart rate shooting high, and dangerous hiccups putting her body under stress. Neonatal-intensive-care-unit nurse Gayle Kasparian desperately tried to stabilize her, but to no avail. Then the nurse recalled a 'double bedding multiple birth babies' procedure common in Europe but forbidden in this country for fear of passing infection. Kasparian scooped up Brielle and placed her in the incubator beside her sister, Kyrie. And according to news reports, in that very moment Brielle's oxygen levels suddenly soared, her breathing became less labored, her crying stopped, and a normal pinkish complexion spread... The twins are doing fine today. The picture? Lying on their tummies side by side in the incubator and sound asleep, Kyrie has her little arm draped around the shoulders of Brielle, tiny friends in repose. They call the picture 'The Rescuing Hug.'"

Today we want to remember that we have a story, not just a list of truths separated in distinct logical lessons, but a warm, compelling invitation to extend, and share—friend to friend. The kingdom of heaven is advanced by friends.

[Slide 4] Revelation 1:5,6

⁵from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood ⁶and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father--to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

[Slide 5] This is a picture of Julie, a friend I met while I was serving as a chaplain at a school. She was a bright, cheerful, and capable 10th grader; a leader. Her teachers began to notice that she had dark rings around her eyes. More and more often her home work was not done, or forgotten. They talked with her parents, but nothing had changed about her home life. Then they asked her to come visit with me.

It took several visits for her to share what was happening in her heart. Aida had been introduced to witchcraft. At first she found the power of it exhilarating. But gradually it became more dark, dangerous, and frightening. She was unable to sleep because of visits by demons.

[Slide 6] Together, we read Scripture, and rediscovered the Author of real power, Jesus Christ. Julie gave her life to Jesus again. She was rebaptized in the presence of her family, classmates and church family. Today she is a young Mom. She is teaching her children about Jesus. She is active in her church and in her witness.

[Slide 7] We each have a story about how Jesus reached out to save us. We serve God and witness of His goodness out of our certainty that Jesus has freed us from our sins. We are disciples because of the victory of salvation.

[Slide 8] Let's stop right now. Please take the journal book and pen out of your package. (Provide a small package for each participant that includes a journal and a pen. You can include other items that you find meaningful in your personal devotional time like a pad and pencil to write down the distracting things that interfere with that time. Please explain each item in the packet.) I would like you to spend 10 minutes remembering and writing about when you met Jesus. Later, you will be sharing with a group member, so write about your experience by telling about how old you were, who offered you a 'rescuing hug' and helped you to meet Jesus, and how it felt to know He loved you. (Take 10 minutes to allow group members to write in their journals.)

Jesus has also given us the call and commission to tell others that He has gained our freedom from uncertainty, defeat, failure, and eternal death. He is the Source of life; full, free, joyful, fruitful life! He wants others to know what He is offering them. In Revelation 7:9,10, we find a picture--a prophecy of the fruit of active disciples.

[Slide 9] Revelation 7:9,10

⁹ *"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; ¹⁰and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

Can you see yourself in this picture? You are not alone; with you is a vast multitude from your neighborhood (apartment building), family and friends. Together in the white robes, the vast multitude of disciples are praising God for His salvation.

[Slide 10] Revelation 1:7

⁷ *"BEHOLD HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen."* Some translations have capitals for that first sentence. Jesus will keep His promise to take us to heaven!

[Slide 11] We are a people with a message.

[Slide 12] Matthew 28:18-20 We call it the Great Commission. Will you repeat it with me?
*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

[Slide 13] When Jesus went to heaven after being with His disciples, they stood—watching—hoping that He would come back right then. But Jesus sent His angels to encourage them into active discipleship.

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And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

[Slide 13] When Jesus went to heaven after being with His disciples, they stood—watching—hoping that He would come back right then. But Jesus sent His angels to encourage them into active discipleship.

[Slide 14] The angels said *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11)

[Slide 15] We must tell everyone! Every voice is important; men and women, young and old! Everyone needs to know.

[Slide 16, 17] This picture is of two active disciples who served in a Mongolian village. Their names are Shin, Sung Eun and Tchomoo. Sung Eun is a Korean college student, and Tchomoo is a Mongolian lady who is preparing to be a pastor. They have planted a church in Naleck and baptized 9 people during the year that they served.

What is a Disciple? How can I be like them? Let's describe it through an invitation to follow some chosen ways of living. Future presentations will explore each component more fully.

[Slide 18] As a part of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, and recognizing our prophetic role in history, a disciple of Jesus Christ is one who is growing in an authentic relationship with God and others. I will commit to: **REACHING FORWARD**

[Slide 19]

Following God through daily spiritual practices

Opening myself to God by participating in regular corporate worship

Returning time, talents, and resources to God

Willingly serve my local church and community in the context of my spiritual gifts

Anticipating spiritual growth in others by being in genuine relationships

Reproducing the discipleship journey in others through the power of the Holy Spirit

Developing in my life of faith as evidenced by the fruits of the Spirit

[Slide 20] We are not alone as we go out to share our good news about Jesus with our friends.
Revelation 1:8

⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

[Slide 21] Every voice is important; men and women, young and old! People NEED to know!
We follow Jesus and His example. And we daily claim His promise to help us.

[Slide 22] To conclude our time together, let's divide into groups of two. Please share your story about meeting Jesus with your partner. Then they will share their story with you. Close this time with a season of prayer that we will be faithful, fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to show each of you who you are to share a 'rescuing hug' with and invite to meet Jesus as a personal Friend and Savior (We will have fifteen minutes for this sharing time; five minutes for each story, and five minutes for prayer time.)

[Slide 23-27] Sing a closing song that the group chooses or the hymn "*Take My Life and Let It Be*"
Conclude with a group benediction. (You might choose a chorus that will become the theme song for your study time during the discipleship series.)