



## What is YDisciple?

YDisciple serves as the post confirmation catechesis program for Saint Anthony of Padua Parish. It is a tool to multiply small group discipleship with teens in the parish. In order to mobilize as many adults as possible to facilitate small group discipleship with teens, YDisciple's online platform delivers practical training, video studies, activity sessions, and parent resources.

YDisciple meets the fundamental needs of teenagers through a model that is relational, relevant, and parent-driven. It is youth outreach fueled by parents and mentors.

## What is discipleship?

Discipleship is apprenticing someone in the Christian life and helping them develop spiritual disciplines. While Jesus could have reached the masses in His earthly ministry, He chose to devote the majority of His time to twelve men. He realized the fickleness of fallen human nature as well as the satanic forces of this world amassed against humanity. Therefore, He knew He needed to personally care for and form a small group of men who would be strong enough to do the same for others. In the end, this approach would multiply disciples and reach the masses. In other words, Jesus' plan to reach the world was through the multiplication of disciples, which is why He asked us to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations." (*Matthew 28:19*).

## What does a YDisciple Small Group look like?

- 2 Adult Mentors, same gender as the teens, and not normally a parent of a teen in the group
- 5–8 teens (separate groups for guys and girls)
- Teenagers should be as close in age as possible and preferably friends from the same school
- Meet 2–4 times a month for approximately 90 minutes
- Parents welcome everyone, provide snacks, and socialize for 15–20 minutes before allowing the group to have privacy for their meeting in the home or other meeting place. YDisciple advocates for building small groups of teens who already know each other. By starting with teens who are already friends and have common interests, you are able to build upon a foundation of trust already present. This is key to establishing confidentiality, transparency, and accountability. In addition, if teens are from the same class and school, they can begin integrating their faith into their daily life, through the support of their friends, as opposed to compartmentalizing their faith to an hour on Sunday. The question is often asked: "Does this strategy encourage cliques?" In fact, the opposite is the case. Cliques form due to the insecurities of teens. Through establishing a close brotherhood and sisterhood, the teens become more secure in who they are. This is key if we want to move them to missionary outreach to their peers.

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## Why are small groups important?

Pope Francis states that young people are searching for deep spirituality and belonging but often fail to find responses to their concerns, needs, problems, and hurts in the usual structures. He calls adults to listen patiently to young people, appreciate their concerns, and speak to them in a language they understand (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 105). Jesus focused on a small group. Making disciples is very relational and time intensive. There needs to be a strong level of trust, communication, and support in order to create the environment for discipleship. In a small group a teen can feel known, loved, and cared for. A level of confidentiality can be achieved which gives teens the freedom to open up about their struggles and doubts. In a small group there is the greater possibility to catch the things that teens don't understand and have a discussion about it. In addition, the small group allows the leader to know their disciples well and thus be able to customize the topics of discussion that best reach those teens.

## What does it mean to "launch young disciples?"

When teenagers leave home, we have to ask ourselves if they are rooted deeply enough in faith and virtue to withstand the tsunami of temptations they will face. We know that the majority of teenagers stop practicing their faith in their first year of college as the social activity and prevalent worldview that surround them comes in direct contradiction to the faith in which they were raised. But if teenagers have been touched by the love of Jesus and have developed the disciplines to stay close to Him, they can persevere in the faith, with His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. They are also more likely to be proactive in finding Christ-centered fellowship among their peers.