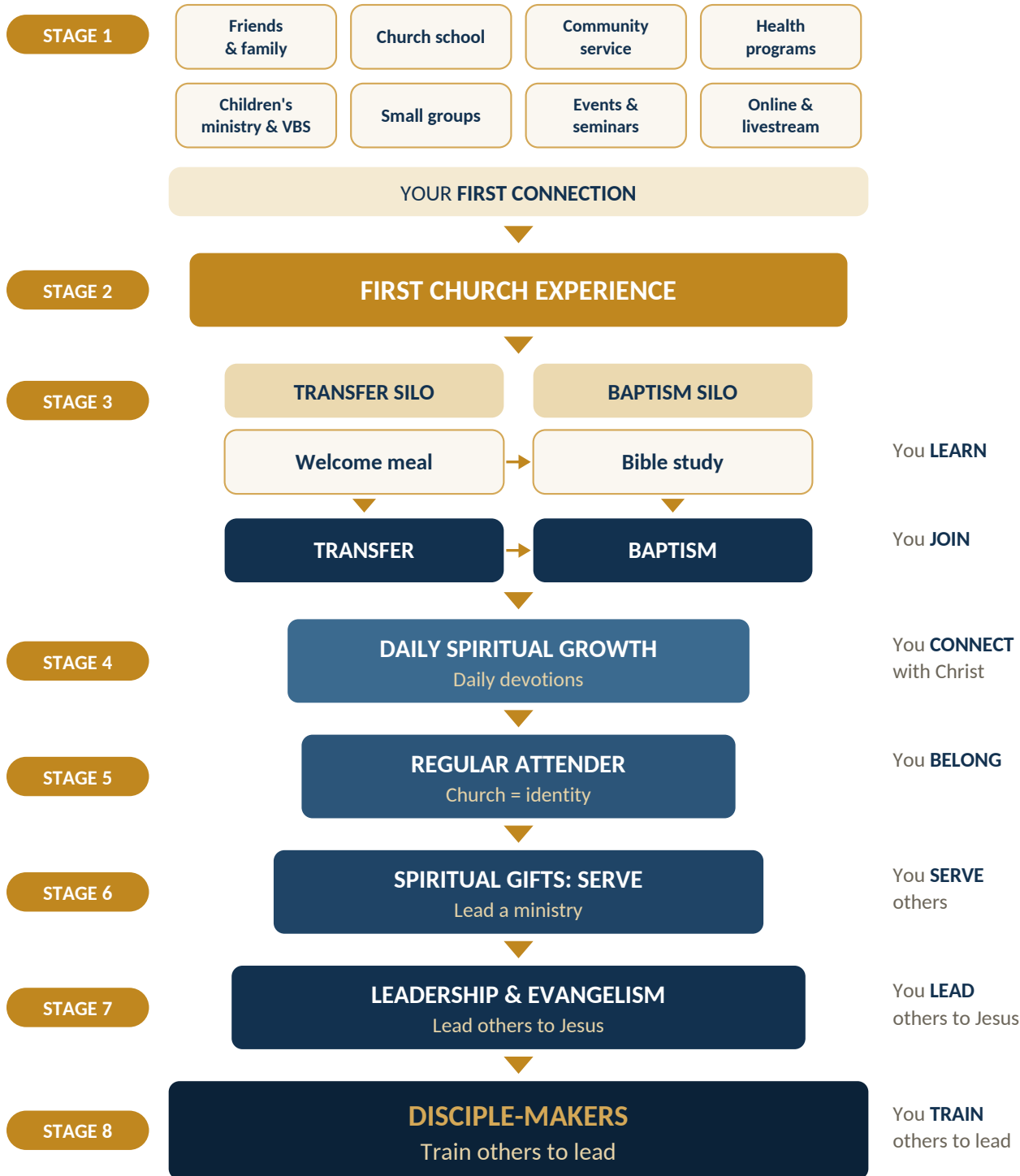


Pathway for Making Disciples

Every person who comes in contact with the church is somewhere on this pathway.



One process for the whole church

Jesus did not ask His church to gather crowds. He asked us to make disciples: people who follow Him, grow in Him, and lead others to Him. The Pathway for Making Disciples puts that whole process on one page, from the first time someone meets your church to the day they are training others to make disciples.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” — Matthew 28:19–20 (KJV)

Three convictions behind the Pathway

- 1 Everyone is somewhere.** The neighbor at the community dinner, the transfer member, the teenager in the back row, and the elder of forty years are all on this pathway. Nobody is finished, and nobody is off the map.
- 2 Every ministry moves people one step.** An event is not the goal; the next step is. Before you plan anything, name which stage it is designed to move people from and to, and build the invitation to that next step into the event itself.
- 3 Our work is not done until disciples make disciple-makers.** Stage 8 is the finish line: people who are discipled, making disciples, and training others to do the same. And disciple-makers feed Stage 1, opening new first connections. The pathway is a circle, not a chute.

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” — Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing, p. 143

People are lost in the handoffs

Most churches don’t lose people inside a stage. They lose them *between* stages: the first-time guest nobody calls, the new member nobody invites to serve, the Bible study that ends without a decision. Every step on the Pathway needs a named person who owns the handoff and follows up within 48 hours. The chart on the next pages shows what each handoff looks like.

A note on order: people don’t always move in a straight line. Some attend faithfully for years before baptism; some begin daily devotions long before they join. The Pathway shows the direction of growth, not a checklist to complete in sequence. Meet people where they are, and invite them to the next step.

Stage by stage: the step and the handoff

Use this chart to see what each stage looks like, the next step to invite people toward, and who is responsible for making sure no one falls through the gap.

STAGE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	THE NEXT STEP WE INVITE THEM TO	WHO OWNS THE HANDOFF
1 Your first connection	A church school family, a friend's invitation, a community service day, a health program, VBS, a small group, an event, or a livestream.	A first church experience: a Sabbath, a meal, a program inside the church family.	The ministry leader who made the connection
2 First church experience	They visit, and their experience decides whether there will be a second.	A second visit, and a personal next step: a welcome meal or a Bible study.	Greeters and a guest follow-up team (call within 48 hours)
3a Transfer silo • You learn, you join	Believers from another congregation are welcomed at a meal and learn the church family.	Membership transfer, then daily spiritual growth and a place to serve.	Pastor, clerk, and a host family
3b Baptism silo • You learn, you join	Seekers study the Bible personally and discover Jesus and His truth.	A decision for Christ and baptism (or profession of faith).	Bible worker, pastor, or trained Bible study leader
4 Daily spiritual growth • You connect with Christ	Personal devotions, prayer, and Bible reading become a daily habit.	Weekly worship and fellowship: regular attendance.	Small group leader or Sabbath School teacher
5 Regular attender • You belong	Church becomes identity: 'these are my people.'	Discovering spiritual gifts and a first place to serve.	Ministry leaders and the nominating committee
6 Spiritual gifts: serve • You serve others	Members serve in a ministry that fits their gifts, and some lead one.	Leadership and personal evangelism.	Elders and ministry supervisors
7 Leadership & evangelism • You lead others to Jesus	Members lead ministries and personally bring others toward Christ.	Discipling a Timothy who can lead in their place.	Pastor and elders (mentoring)
8 Disciple-makers • You train others to lead	Members disciple others and train them to disciple, and they open new first connections.	Back to Stage 1: new people, new connections.	Every disciple-maker

Questions for your board

- ☐ Which stage has the most ministries aimed at it? Which has none?
- ☐ Where are we losing the most people: between which two stages?
- ☐ Who owns each handoff today? Which handoffs have no owner?
- ☐ Does our budget follow the Pathway, or just our habits?

Map every ministry onto the Pathway

List every ministry and recurring event in your church. Name the primary step each one is designed to move people toward, the invitation built into it, and who owns the follow-up. Then count the tally below to find your gaps.

MINISTRY OR EVENT	MOVES PEOPLE FROM STAGE → TO STAGE	THE NEXT-STEP INVITATION BUILT IN	HANDOFF OWNER
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

TALLY: HOW MANY MINISTRIES AIM AT EACH STEP?

1→2

2→3

3→Join

Join→4

4→5

5→6

6→7

7→8

EVENT _____ DATE _____

This event moves people from Stage _____ to Stage _____ Win looks like: _____ people take the step

Three people we're praying will come:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

The experience we're designing (what should they feel and discover?):

The next-step invitation built into the event itself:

Follow-up within 48 hours: who, and how?

cut here

EVENT _____ DATE _____

This event moves people from Stage _____ to Stage _____ Win looks like: _____ people take the step

Three people we're praying will come:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

The experience we're designing (what should they feel and discover?):

The next-step invitation built into the event itself:

Follow-up within 48 hours: who, and how?

Where am I on the Pathway?

For members and guests. Read each statement and check the one that fits you best today. There is no wrong answer. The point is to find your next step, and to ask someone to walk it with you.

☐ **STAGE 1** I've connected with this church through a friend, a program, or an event.

☐ **STAGE 2** I've visited a worship service or church gathering.

☐ **STAGE 3** I'm learning: studying the Bible, or getting to know this church family.

☐ **JOINED** I've been baptized or transferred my membership here.

☐ **STAGE 4** I spend time with Jesus every day in prayer and His Word.

☐ **STAGE 5** I worship here regularly. This is my church family.

☐ **STAGE 6** I've found my spiritual gifts and I'm serving in a ministry.

☐ **STAGE 7** I'm leading a ministry and helping others come to Jesus.

☐ **STAGE 8** I'm discipling someone and training them to disciple others.

My next step is:

NAME _____

SOMEONE WHO WILL WALK IT WITH ME _____

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." — 2 Timothy 2:2 (KJV)