DISCIPLE-MAKING LAB

A Ten-Month Journey to Equip You and Your Team to Create a Holistic, Disciple-Making Pathway for Your Church

We want every person to meet Jesus.

We believe that every disciple of Jesus can be equipped to make disciples in the everyday stuff of life.

Many pastors are busy leading their churches and doing many good things. They want to see disciples making disciples, but find it difficult to develop a clear plan for multiplication in everyday life.

We want to help.

The Disciple-Making Lab is a ten-month journey to equip you and your church leadership team to create a holistic, disciple-making pathway for your church. An intentional plan to help disciples mature and multiply in your context. The aim is the one we keep coming back to: know Jesus, be changed by Jesus, join Jesus in what He is doing.

Through the Disciple-Making Lab, you and your team will:

- Clarify your definition of a disciple.
- Design, build, and implement a disciple-making pathway for your church.
- Create tools, strategies, and processes to intentionally equip everyday disciples for the places they live, work, learn, and play — from those who are spiritually lost to spiritually mature leaders who can develop and lead disciple-making environments themselves.
- Cultivate a culture for disciple-making.
- Align around Jesus' invitation, common language, and practices.

For over 12 years, our leadership has come alongside leaders of various churches, denominations, and organizations, equipping them to create unique, disciple-making pathways for their contexts. The Disciple-Making Lab leads to proven, multi-faceted outcomes—for both your leaders and your church as a whole.

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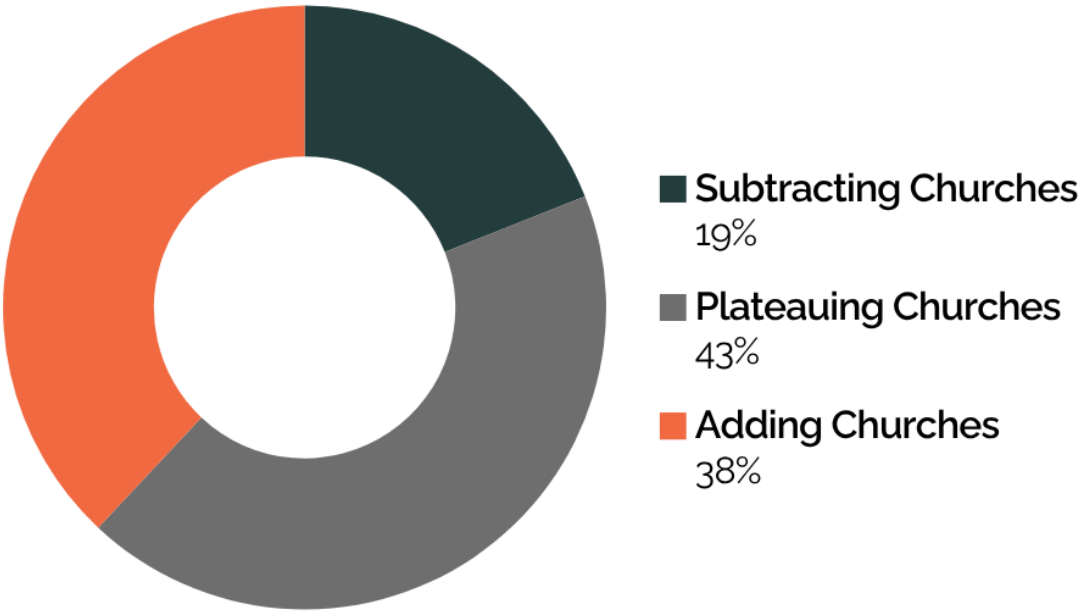
WHY IS THE DISCIPLE-MAKING LAB AN INVESTMENT WORTH CONSIDERING?

A 2025 study from Exponential showed that 62% of churches in the United States and Canada are declining or plateauing. Out of 1,001 pastors surveyed, only 7% said their churches were reproducing new churches.



Source: Becoming Five Multiplication Study, Exponential, 2025.

Jesus loves the world, and the commission He left with us is to make disciples who make disciples. We want to see a move of God in our day, in our cities, in our churches! If we want to shift the trend away from decline and plateau, we are going to need to make some changes.

As we have walked with churches over the years, a pattern has emerged. Most leaders will honestly say:

> *"We know how to do Sunday."*
> *"We're running a lot of programs."*
> *"But we cannot say that we are effectively making disciples who make disciples."*

Often, they are clear about their vision and mission. And they can talk about their programs and ministries. But if you ask, *"How would you define what a disciple is and the plan you have for helping them grow from spiritual infancy to maturity?"* their strategy is not so clear.

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That's not because these leaders don't love Jesus or care about people. They do. It's often because:

- They've never had a clear, shared definition of a disciple.
- They don't have a holistic pathway that reflects how people actually grow up into maturity in Christ.
- Their training spends more time informing than practically transforming people.
- They lack effective tools and processes for formation.
- Their culture unintentionally creates attenders and consumers instead of equipped, mobilized disciple-makers.

The journey laid out in the Disciple-Making Lab was created to address these gaps.

Our goal is not to give you one more curriculum to run or a plug-and-play program to bolt onto your existing ministry. Our aim is to help you and your team return everything to Jesus and His mission, and build a way of life together, unique to your context, that consistently forms people into mature disciple-makers.

Programs don't make disciples. Disciples make disciples.

We want to help you become a disciple-making leader of a disciple-making church. This is where the Disciple-Making Lab comes in.

WHAT DOES THE DISCIPLE-MAKING LAB LOOK LIKE?

The Disciple-Making Lab is a ten-month journey. It opens with a two-day, in-person workshop, followed by four monthly, three-hour online sessions. A second two-day in-person workshop comes at the midpoint, followed by four more monthly online sessions. Every session is packed full of teaching, guided reflection, exercises, team breakouts, coaching, and more.

New cohorts will be kicking off with these two-day in-person workshops:

- September 15-16, 2026 in Charleston, SC
- October 7-8, 2026 in Seattle, WA

Please fill out this form to let us know whether you're interested or have any questions. Our team would love to talk with you.

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First Two-Day In-Person Workshop

DISCIPLE-MAKING DEFINITIONS

We'll get to know each other and dwell on disciple-making in light of Jesus and the gospel. Then we'll define a "disciple" and assess your current and desired vision and culture. We'll discuss biblical stages of spiritual growth and what each means, and set up the online sessions.

Four Online Sessions

DISCIPLE-MAKING PATHWAYS

Each month offers feedback and coaching, and helps you take steps toward developing your own customized and contextualized pathway for disciple-making. You'll learn, discuss, practice, and present on the tangible parts of a pathway — getting feedback from your trainers and from other teams along the way. Helpful tools and frameworks will be provided to help you gain momentum.

Second Two-Day In-Person Workshop

DISCIPLE-MAKING PLANS

We'll consider the realities of giftings, team, and "equipping the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12). We'll dive into D.E.E.P.E.R. training, and take tangible steps, modeling various practices. You will have important breakout time with your team to work on specific plans for implementing a disciple-making pathway in your church. You will receive specific coaching. We'll focus on emotional health — deepening our relationships with one another and our dependence on God.

Final Four Online Sessions

DISCIPLE-MAKING PRACTICES

Each month continues our pattern of learning, discussion, practice, and presentation. Your team will work toward a clear implementation plan for your ministry context. Our final online session will look back, celebrate God's work in you and your church, and discuss specific next steps for the upcoming season.

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WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

The Disciple-Making Lab is a guided cohort experience. A high priority of its design is journeying through it with like-minded leaders from within your church as well as leaders from other churches.

- You will choose three to eight leaders from your team to join you. These are often a mix of staff, elders, or deacons, and lay leaders. Together you'll work through our sessions to create your custom disciple-making model, then launch it in your context.
- Your Lab cohort will include five to ten different teams that will share the journey with your team. This creates a dynamic learning environment where everyone benefits from different experiences, ideas, questions, and points of view.

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WHO WILL BE LEADING THE JOURNEY?

JEFF VANDERSTELT

Jeff serves as the Executive Director of Saturate. He is also the Founder of Soma, a global family of churches committed to seeing every woman, man and child meet Jesus through His body on mission everyday. He regularly works with teams toward gospel saturation in greater Seattle, Charleston, and Tokyo. Jeff has authored *Saturate*, *Gospel Fluency*, and *Making Space*. He lives in Seattle, WA with his wife Jayne and their three children.

BRETT DONALD

Brett Donald (MCS, Regent College) has been in church leadership as a pastor, church planter, and occasional coach and professor for over 20 years. Ever since accidentally becoming a pastor at 18, he has focused on learning how to intentionally make disciples. Brett is passionate about helping ordinary people join Jesus in His mission, seeing a growing convergence of Word and Spirit, and strategic disciple-making. Brett is a founding pastor of CityLights Church in Vancouver, B.C., and is currently church planting again. He loves the ocean, good coffee, and time with his wife Natalie and two children. Find Brett at @brettgd on various platforms.

TODD ENGSTROM

Todd serves in various capacities for Saturate and served on the Advisory Board in the early years of the ministry. He ministered for 20 years at The Austin Stone in Austin, TX, equipping missional communities to live on mission, building and leading congregational teams, and most recently, stewarding local mission, global mission, counseling, and theological training. Todd now regularly trains and coaches leaders on ministry, discipleship, and organizational health. He also serves as the Executive Director for the Greater

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Austin Mission Society, with a continued burden from the Lord to reach all of Austin. For fun, he dabbles in some entrepreneurship and cheers a little too passionately for Notre Dame and Austin FC. He is married to his wife, Olivia, raising five kids, and has called Austin home for over 20 years.

BEN CONNELLY

Ben Connelly is a pastor, author, equipper, and occasional professor. He is honored to serve everyday disciples, ministry leaders, and church planters across the world through The Equipping Group, and to help lead Salt+Light Community and Plant Fort Worth in Fort Worth, TX. Ben has written/contributed to several books, workbooks, articles, and publications, has overseen church planting efforts for multiple organizations, and has also taught university and seminary classes. He and Jess have three children (Charlotte, Maggie, and Travis) and at times, host short-term foster kids too. You can find Ben at @connellyben on various social media platforms.

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

The training fee includes all supplies, exclusive resources, and materials during and between sessions.

The members of your leadership team who are participating will also receive unlimited access to Saturate's full digital disciple-making library with videos, e-books, courses, and more, as well as access to your trainers throughout the journey.

Each church covers travel costs for its team members to attend the two in-person workshops.

Our desire is for every willing team to be able to participate in the Disciple-Making Lab. We never want finances to be the reason you can't participate. We've created a scholarship process for those who need it, as well as a referral discount for other churches you invite to join in the journey. Please make a note on your interest form if you would like more information about the scholarship process or the referral discount.

WHAT ARE PAST PARTICIPANTS SAYING ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE?

"I am amazed at how God has used this Disciple-Making Lab to unify our staff and elders around the central theme of disciple-making. Defining what a disciple is and how we make disciples has been our main objective, and this cohort has been instrumental in helping us accomplish the mission Jesus called us to: make disciples who make disciples! I am already seeing our church family begin to grasp that they are missionaries, and I am seeing people grow in their maturity as a disciple and a disciple-maker."
— Mike Garner

"I can look back on my life and point to monumental moments that changed my life and propelled me forward into monumental seasons that changed the lives of those around me. My time with you has become one of those moments."
- Ryan Banashak

HOW CAN I PREVIEW SOME OF THE CONTENT?

Jeff Vanderstelt introduces several of the Lab's key concepts in the "180" series on the Saturate Podcast — a preview of what your team will work through together. Find the series in Season 6 wherever you listen to podcasts, or on our site.

You can also check out Jeff Vanderstelt's book *One-Eighty: A Return to Disciple-Making*, available as a free ebook download or for purchase as a paperback copy.

The Disciple-Making Lab isn't about downloading content or giving you a new program to run. Programs don't make disciples. Disciples make disciples. The Disciple-Making Lab will coach and guide you to make a clear plan for disciple-making in your unique context. Your team will know what it means for you to participate with Jesus in the Great Commission and the people in your church will know what their next step is!

HOW DO I TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

If you and your team are ready to sign up for the Disciple-Making Lab, or if you have questions and want to talk with someone, let us know by **filling out this form**.

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