

Discipleship Pathways

Part 2: The How, and Some Examples

Introduction

- So, we've talked extensively about what a DP is and why you need one
- Let's look now at how to create a DP
- Then we'll look at a few examples of DPs that other parishes and dioceses have created, and then we'll look at what's possible in the 4 categories

How to Create a DP

- Your DP should be informed by the thresholds of the faith journey and by the stages of the process of evangelization and catechesis
- That way it is properly responding to the spiritual needs of people, meeting those needs, and facilitating progression along the faith journey
- This is what the PED Diagram is for!
 - The PED Diagram is not your DP – it *informs* the DP
- So, **the first step in creating a DP is for everyone involved in its creation to learn the PED Diagram frontwards, backwards, and sideways**
 - Everyone involved in decision making around the DP has to be on the same page regarding the PED Diagram
 - Otherwise, you're going to make the wrong decisions about how to make missionary disciples
 - To help everyone get on the same page, we've created a website: www.missionaryparish.com
 - It has a Diagram PDF, an Info Packet, and a 6-session small group study that you and your co-workers can take together in order to learn everything there is to know about the Diagram
- Next, **identify your missionary disciples**
 - It's crucial that the DP is supported by MDs who can provide prayer and accompaniment throughout the entire process
 - You might need to spend a year discipling a core group of 12
 - If more than one person could disciple 12, that's even better
 - This could also be a yearly offering
 - Without accompaniment and prayer as core features of the DP, it will fail
- After that, **determine what you're already doing to serve people in the 4 main categories of the Diagram**
 - You don't always have to create something new, sometimes you can just leverage something you're already doing – but you have to make a list of everything
 - Get a poster, divide it into 4 columns, and see which items can go under each one

- Title each column “Pre-Evangelization,” “Proclamation/Encounter,” “Catechesis/Apprenticeship,” and “Missionary Initiation,”
- Briefly defining each title:
 - **Pre-evangelization** is everything you do to prepare the way for the proclamation of the Gospel
 - **Proclamation/Encounter** covers the opportunities for people to encounter Jesus and to hear the Gospel proclaimed to them
 - Remember, these are encounters for people who are not yet disciples
 - **Catechesis/Apprenticeship** is how teach disciples their faith and equip them to more deeply penetrate the mysteries of the faith
 - **Missionary Initiation** is how we activate disciples and send them on mission to proclaim the Gospel, accompany others on their journey, and make disciples
- **Assess the quality of what you have in each column**
 - You can’t just slot a few programs in each quadrant and be done
 - You should ask yourself:
 - Is this personal and relational?
 - It is building a sense of community, support, and belonging?
 - Is it kerygmatic?
 - Is the leader of each ministry on board with what we’re trying to do?
 - If it’s not, can it be adapted so that it is? Or does it need to be discarded?
- Once you’ve laid out everything you do and you’ve assessed the quality of it, the next step is to **decide what your primary mission initiative (PMI) will be for each category**
 - You need a main thing that will be the primary driver for meeting needs and facilitating progress for people in that category
 - This is the thing that you will devote the most resources to
- After you’ve identified your primary mission initiatives, **identify 1-4 secondary initiatives or “on-ramps” that could move people into the main things**
 - For example, let’s say The Rescue Project is your PMI for “Pre-Evangelization”
 - Some on-ramps could be:
 - The Parish Festival
 - The Inquiry stage of the RCIA
 - The SPSE Street Team
 - The men’s and women’s fellowship groups
- Next, **choose easy-to-remember, immediately understandable titles for each quadrant**
 - If the person you’re trying to serve doesn’t know right away what this is and how it can help them, then you’re going to lose them
 - Make sure the titles are from the perspective of the audience, not the min leader
 - Is the DP for me, the ministry leader, or is it for the people we’re serving?

- It's really for both of us, but primacy should be placed on your audience
 - It's not as helpful to others if they don't see it from their perspective
- Don't forget the Pre-Evangelization step of the DP!
 - You can google "Catholic Discipleship Pathway" and you'll get tons of examples from parishes and dioceses all over the country
 - The problem is that almost all of them forget the Pre-Evangelization piece
 - They almost always begin with the Encounter, when someone meets Jesus anew or for the first time
 - But, there's work that must be done before a person is ready for this encounter, and we cannot forget that
 - What could you call this stage? ("Come and See," "Rest," "Be Loved," etc.)
- You really ought to pray about this
 - "Jesus, what is the word that you have for the people in each phase?"
 - Give Him the chance to reveal His own plan for your parish!
- Finally, **graphically illustrate your DP in a way that is clear, beautiful, and attractive to your audience**
 - At this point the Business Manager gets a little twitchy because graphic designers cost money
 - Your budget dictates your priorities
 - Is this important enough to invest in, make it nice, do it right?
 - This is worth it
 - Design your website around it
 - You could even create an entire brand strategy around your DP so that all of your communications are thematically tied together
 - Website, logo, email signature, letterhead, bulletin, signage, etc.
 - You'll need a communication strategy, too, for getting the word out about the mission of the parish and how, as a parish, you plan to fulfill it via the DP
 - Emails, homilies, letters, bulletin inserts, posters, parish missions, etc.

Looking at Some Examples

- Knowing what you know now about DPs, what do you think about these examples?
- Are they good, or can they be improved in some way?

Assessing Your Parish Ministries, Activities, Services

- With the last page, I want you to spend some time thinking about what you do as a parish to serve the people in each category
- List them in the proper place
- Are you overloaded in some areas? Not doing enough in others?
- After you've considered this privately, will do some large-group brainstorming about what could be possible in each category