

What If There Were a Better Way? Combining Evangelism and Discipleship

By Bob Young

Many churches do not have any plans in place to make sure that every person who becomes a member of the church receives teaching on the essentials of Christianity. In fact, most churches assume that people already know the essentials, but have no way to verify that assumption.

Some churches depend on Bible classes to meet the need for basic Bible teaching, but problems exist. Many members do not attend Bible classes. Few churches have a well-designed curriculum that covers Bible books and teachings systematically. Few churches use a required curriculum in all classes. Some churches have tried a “newcomers’ class,” but most newcomers do not want to be immediately segregated. They want to spend time with the social group and friends that brought them to the church in the first place.

Using evangelistic lessons such as “Fishers of Men” or “Quest for Truth” helps meet the need for teaching the essentials of faith. Using such lessons for evangelism-discipleship provides continuing orientation and fundamental teaching. New Christians are taught as a part of the evangelism-discipleship effort. New Christians continue personal studies after becoming disciples. Members receive teaching because the lessons are taught periodically in sermons and Bible classes to encourage more evangelism. Participants in the outreach effort are continually reminded of basic truths—including those who are silent partners. The faith and faithfulness of each person is reaffirmed and strengthened.

When each new convert studies basic Bible teachings, when members hear basic teachings in sermons, classes, and training sessions, when members study the lessons in evangelism efforts—the result is faithfulness. In one research project, a church using such lessons to integrate evangelism and discipleship found that 95% of converts were faithful after five years.

How many of the members where you attend have a clear biblical understanding of the Bible, how to study the Bible, who Jesus is, how to listen to Jesus, how to pray, faith, grace, sin and repentance, commitment and discipleship, the church, the gospel, and baptism? How much time does the average church spend trying to encourage member attendance and to restore the wayward? What if that time could be spent on outreach and effective discipleship?

There is a better way! Contact me for more information. Studies are available in English and in Spanish.