

The Schedule

1. The Local Church Model

The majority of DiscipleNow weekends are planned and conducted in the local church. For the purposes of this guide we will concentrate on the local church event; however, adaptations are successful for all three models.

2. The Associational Model

DiscipleNow as an associational event works best if churches in your association have worked cooperatively in the past and if they are located in close proximity. In this situation, the association sets up the steering committee, choosing representatives from each of the participating churches. This committee accepts the different responsibilities necessary to prepare for the weekend. It also chooses a DiscipleNow coordinator for the event. The committee decides which events or items on the calendar will not be adaptable in an associational situation. Creativity and care in eliminating any significant part of the schedule are needed.

3. The Baptist Collegiate Ministry Model

This approach has been tried on several campuses. The Baptist Collegiate Ministry director trains a team of students to be youth leaders for DiscipleNow. The BCM director writes the local churches to introduce the concept of DiscipleNow and offers the leadership needed for the small groups. Students do this as a mission service, so little or no honorarium is expected. If your local BCM director has not started this, approach him with the idea.

When to Schedule DiscipleNow

After you have shared your DiscipleNow dreams and vision with your pastor and staff and secured their support, it is time to set a calendar date. DiscipleNow can be scheduled for any weekend of the year. In deciding on a date, you might find these suggestions helpful.

- Twelve months is the ideal amount of time to plan and implement a DiscipleNow weekend. If you have a strong group of leadership, you may be able to plan the event in as little as four months, but we recommend you start as early as possible.
- Consider a specific date and check it with your church, school, and community calendar. Try to avoid potential conflicts. Due to the involvement of the total church during a DiscipleNow weekend, it is imperative that no other group or organization within your church schedule a conflicting event.
- Because of the number of people involved it is best if the church calendar is clear for two to three weeks on either side of the suggested date.
- Discuss the possible date with the students in your church and let them talk to you about any possible conflicts.

A majority of churches have found early spring works well. This seems to be a time of year that is not so cluttered with school events, church revivals, and holidays. Many churches have found a date between the third week in January and the first week of April to be successful.

Factors to Consider in Designing the Schedule

- Church Structure—The suggested schedule will fit many churches as it exists. If your church has more than one Sunday School and/or worship service or a unique structure, you may need to be a little creative in developing your schedule.
- Distance Members Live from Church—If your members drive a considerable distance to church, you will have to allow more time in the schedule for travel.

- Facility Limitations—Some churches may not be able to provide an adequate place for the banquet on Friday night or the rally during Sunday School. You may decide to meet in your place of worship rather than have a banquet. You can choose to meet in your regular Sunday School department groups instead of having a rally.
- Budget Support or Limitations—An option to the banquet might be to have dessert or a snack supper. Use the resources you have.
- Number of Groups Participating—Any church of any size can have a successful and exciting DiscipleNow weekend. Churches with two or three small groups have found that this can be a very rewarding weekend for them. The fewer the groups you have, the less structure you will need.
- Number of Schools—If there are schedule conflicts of different schools, find a date that will fit best on your church calendar and go for it. There is no such thing as a perfect time for any event. Decide on a date and make the best of it.

Adaptations for the Small Church

DiscipleNow can be implemented in any church—even one without a full-time or part-time youth minister. A strong youth committee in a small church is sufficient. It is, however, necessary for one person in each church to assume the role and responsibilities of the DiscipleNow coordinator. This person will oversee all of the preparations made for the weekend.

Options for the small church include:

- Mix all grades together—Smaller youth groups have a better opportunity to form close relationships with those in other grades. It may be fine to mix 7th and 12th graders. Try not to put siblings together in a group.
- Separate groups by age—Consider developing one group for junior high students and one group for high school students.
- Use local people as group leaders—Enlist group leaders from your church or from your community. The savings

in honorarium and travel can be significant for a small church. Make sure you get a commitment from each youth leader to remain for the entire weekend.

- Joint recreation on Saturday—You don't need to rent facilities for recreation even if you have a small church facility. Use a local park, a city recreation center, or a lake for your recreation time. Build into the afternoon the opportunity for the small groups to keep their individuality. Let each group compete as a team or have "group" activities.
- Share Time—Smaller churches have an advantage during the share time. Arrange for some or all of the Sunday evening worship service to be given to the students to share how God worked in their lives during the DiscipleNow weekend. Allow as many participants as possible to share.

DiscipleNow Schedule

Friday

10:00 a.m.	Leader Orientation
12:00 p.m.	Lunch at Host Home
2:00	Leader Orientation
5:00	Leadership Banquet
7:30	Rally for Students/Parents/ Leaders/Host Families
9:00	Go to Homes/Orientation
9:30	Bible Study 1
10:30	Break
11:00	Bible Study 2
12:00 a.m.	Free Time
1:00	Lights Out

Saturday

9:00 a.m.	Breakfast at Host Home
9:30	Bible Study 3
10:30	Break
11:00	Bible Study 4
12:00 p.m.	Break
12:30	Lunch at Host Home
1:30	Recreation at Church (everyone)
3:30	Go to Host Home/Free Time
6:00	Dinner at Church
7:00	Worship at Church (include an invitation)
9:00	Go to Host Home
9:30	Bible Study 5
10:30	Break
11:00	Affirmation Activity
12:00 a.m.	Lights Out

Sunday

8:30 a.m.	Donuts and Juice at Church
9:00	Sunday School in Family Groups/ Challenge from Leader
10:30	Worship Rally with Church
12:00 p.m.	Send Youth Home/ Leader Evaluation and Lunch
5:30	Share Time/Snack Supper at Church
7:00	Report/Testimony to Church

EVENTS TO CONSIDER

The suggested schedule at the left is one that many churches have used successfully for their first DiscipleNow weekend. It is designed for the typical five-session schedule. Time slots in the schedule can be adjusted to meet the needs of your church and your youth. Consider what you hope to accomplish and plan the time to best accomplish your goals. Several event options are presented below to help you as you design your schedule.

Rally

This event kicks off the weekend. The purpose of the rally is to build excitement about the weekend. The rally is for youth participants, youth leaders, host families, cohosts, committees, and church staff. A typical rally would include a mixer, music, drama, introductions of leaders, preaching, and any other creative idea that comes to mind. Some churches kickoff DiscipleNow by conducting a rally on Thursday night and then asking students to go straight to their host homes on Friday night. The event could also be done at a banquet either on Thursday night or on Friday night.

Bible Study Sessions

Each session is informal, but the leaders do have a specific curriculum to teach. Make sure that your leaders have their material in plenty of time to prepare. Encourage them to be flexible as they teach and try to meet the needs of the students in their group. However, help them to understand that the materials you have chosen have been carefully selected to give students the optimum experience for this weekend. For study options, check the current LifeWay youth ministry catalog.

Recreation

A recreation time is helpful to leaders and youth alike. By this time the DiscipleNow participants have been "locked" in the host homes for over 16 hours together. This is a welcome time of change in scenery and emphasis.

You may live in an area in which planning will simply involve instructing all groups to meet at the nearby wave pool or amusement park demanding little specialized planning by you. The host families would help provide transportation to and from the event (avoid allowing youth to drive if possible). Check around for roller skating rinks, bowling, swimming pools, ice skating rinks, museums, amusement parks, gymnasiums, batting cages, go-cart tracks, video game arcades, state parks, and so forth. Provide youth with an afternoon that is not typical for them.

You may want to design your own afternoon of recreation. Determine if you can use the local high school football stadium for this, or if you need to rent a gymnasium. Design this time to be a low competition, high energy, involvement activity. Group building games like crazy relays or trust activities work well for some churches. Events like video scavenger hunts or car rallies are used by other churches. Use a theme to help the individual events hold together throughout the afternoon. Avoid programming every minute of free time during the afternoon.

Witness Experience/Ministry Project

Another option for your afternoon recreation time is to plan witness or ministry experiences. The youth, group leader, and host families work together on the ministry project. Possible experiences include distributing tracks at a shopping center, making evangelistic visits to students the group knows, serving in a soup kitchen, visiting a nursing home, or collecting food for a food bank.

Saturday Night Worship

Saturday night is a great time to draw students back together for a time of worship. Host parents, group leaders, parents and everyone involved in DiscipleNow should be encouraged to be present. Use a praise band or music leader to lead music that will engage your students. Many churches use praise bands and may be willing to “lend” them to you for a Saturday night. Encourage youth to participate in worship by sharing testimonies, doing drama, or singing. Ask your pastor, a group leader, or a special speaker to share a message related to what your students have been studying. Keep in mind that God may be speaking in very pointed ways to your students; offer an invitation or an opportunity to share what they sense God to be saying to them.

Parent/Youth Session

Some youth groups have programmed the Saturday night Bible study as a dialogue session for the parents of DiscipleNow youth. This dialogue session could begin with a video as a kick-off, with discussion to follow. Invite parents to join the host family groups where their youth are staying just for this session. Your objectives determine if this optional event is an advantage or disadvantage.

Affirmation Activity

By late Saturday evening the group leader should know the students in his or her group well. He or she should sense what needs the group has and where they are spiritually. Let this final session be one that encourages youth and calls them to make public commitments. The group leader should lead the group to affirm each other using notes of encouragement or words of encouragement. Then he or she should challenge youth to follow through with their commitments sharing them with their church and living them out in front of each other. He or she should encourage students to hold each other accountable for the commitments they have made.

Sunday Morning

Sunday is a day of commitment and celebration. For the Sunday School hour, consider these choices:

- All youth attend their regular age-graded classes with regular teachers.
- Youth meet in their host family groups with their group leaders teaching that morning’s lesson.
- Regular age-graded classes with the DiscipleNow group leaders leading traditional ongoing classes.
- Create one large Sunday School class for youth and bring all of your youth together taught by one teacher.

Remember that there will probably be students present dur-

ing this hour that have not participated in DiscipleNow. Make plans to help them feel included in the group.

One option is to use the Sunday School time as a testimony and sharing time. This change allows all who were a part of the busy weekend an opportunity to “catch up” on Sunday afternoon.

Morning Worship

Make every effort to plan this experience so that the music and message are related to the weekend. Reserve a large section at the front of your worship center for all DiscipleNow participants to sit together. Plan to have each host family group sit as a small group within the large group.

Take the opportunity to make comments about the weekend. Describe the purpose and schedule for the weekend to the congregation. Introduce the group leaders, host families, and cohost families. Have everyone stand who helped with any arrangements for the weekend. Finally, have all youth who are participating in the weekend stand. By this time there will be a large group of people standing. You may want to involve some of the youth or group leaders in a portion of the worship experience.

Remind the congregation of the schedule for the remainder of the day and invite them to the evening worship.

Leader Evaluation and Lunch

Send students home after the morning worship time. Ask your host families and group leaders to stay for a brief lunch. Distribute evaluation sheets and ask leaders to talk with you informally about what they liked and disliked about the weekend. Take time to express appreciation to all of your leadership. If possible, have honorarium and expense checks ready to give to your group leaders.

Share Time and Snack Supper

This is the first opportunity most of the youth will have to verbally express what the weekend has meant to them. All participants gather in one room for a time of fellowship and sharing just prior to the evening worship. Encourage students to share what they learned and what decisions they made. Many of the adults will want to share during this time. This is fine, but the time is primarily for the youth. This is not a time for a special speaker or program.

You may want to talk to a few of them in advance so that some will start the ball rolling. Allow enough time before the service begins to let each small group meet for a short time of prayer.

Testimony Service

Enlist youth to help with music, prayers, and testimonies. Allow the students to express what God has taught them and share commitments they have made. Use the time to challenge the entire church to make commitments similar to those the students have made during their DiscipleNow experience. Allow plenty of time for students and other members to pray together for God to continue to lead them and help them to keep their commitments.

Expanded Schedule with Leadership Checklist

The leadership will be required to attend a few extra meetings during the weekend. Again, these are suggestions for you to use as you design your schedule.

Notes

Friday (Leadership Only)

- 10:00 Leadership Orientation Meeting (See page 7 for suggested agenda items.)
- Get acquainted, go over schedules and forms, and review the rules and guidelines.
 - Collect list of personal expenses.
 - Give supplies to the Group Leaders.
 - Stress that group leaders, host families, and all volunteers need to look for the opportunity to...
 - ✦ share with students what God is doing in their life today.
 - ✦ spend one-to-one time with individual youth.
 - ✦ challenge each student to evaluate his or her own walk with God.
- 12:00 Lunch with Host Family
- Group Leaders take supplies to host home and set up area for Bible Study 1.
- 2:00 Leadership Orientation (cont'd)
- 5:00 Leadership Banquet
- Express appreciation to all who will be helping during the weekend.

DiscipleNow Rally

- 7:30 Rally for Students/Parents/Group Leaders/Host Families
- Introduce Group Leaders
 - Students receive their home assignments and sit with leader and host family.
- 9:00 Students/Group Leaders/Hosts Go to Host Homes
- Group leaders discuss schedule and objectives for the weekend.
 - Discuss youth guidelines and rules for the weekend including time away, car use, and so forth.
 - Circulate a sign-up list for individual conferences with each youth. Allow about 20 minutes for each conference.
 - Ask youth to fill out and turn in to you their Student Data Worksheet (see p. 47).
 - Lead a get acquainted time.
 - Turn the meeting over to the host family.
 - ✦ Discuss Saturday afternoon recreation options.
 - ✦ Go over house rules.
 - ✦ Pray for the weekend.
- 9:00 Leadership Meeting at Church with Cohosts, Coleaders, Volunteers
- Agenda items:
 - ✦ Discuss which registered youth were not at the rally.
 - ✦ Determine who will call and check on absentee youth.
 - ✦ Determine when you will have everyone complete their evaluation forms.
 - ✦ Pray (share needs, ask for requests).

9:30 Bible Study 1

10:30 Break

11:00 Bible Study 2

12:00 Free Time

1:00 Lights out

Saturday

9:00 Breakfast and Cleanup (Host Home)

- Attempt to make the meal times special and unique. Eat family style, all at the same time. Assign students the responsibility of cleanup after each meal.

9:30 Bible Study 3

10:30 Break

11:00 Bible Study 4

12:00 Break

12:30 Lunch (Host Home)

1:30 Recreation at Church (Everyone)

This is the most flexible time in the weekend. The DiscipleNow coordinator decides if...

- ✦ Everyone will have some free time; but a block of this time will have all of the DiscipleNow participants in one large group for games, recreation, or a ministry project. Programming a large event for the entire group at this time gives you the security of being able to check in with each group; but it interrupts the group-building that is so critical to the success of the weekend. After prayerful consideration, decide how to spend this time.
- ✦ Entire free time is programmed by you for all the groups OR each group will decide on how to use this time.
- ✦ Each group will choose from several options you have designated.
- ✦ Group leaders schedule personal conferences during this time while coleaders, cohorts, or volunteers lead programmed recreation.

3:30 Go to Host Home/Free Time

6:00 Dinner (Church)

- Provide a meal that volunteers can bring and serve.
- Allow students to begin eating as they arrive so that you can limit the line of students waiting for food.

7:00 Saturday Worship

- Include an invitation.

9:00 Go to Host Home

9:30 Bible Study 5

10:30 Break

11:00 Affirmation Activity

12:00 Lights Out

Notes

Sunday

- 8:30 Donuts and Juice at Church
- 9:00 Sunday School by Host Families
- Choose among...
 - ✦ one large group,
 - ✦ regular Sunday School classes,
 - ✦ Sunday School by family groups with one group for students not attending DiscipleNow.
 - Challenge from leader
- 10:30 Worship with Church
- 12:00 Send students home/Leader Evaluation and Lunch
- Collect the evaluation forms and give to the DiscipleNow coordinator.
 - Distribute expense and honorarium checks.
 - Make sure leaders have transportation to the airport after the service.
 - Chair an evaluation of the weekend.
 - After all have shared their concerns and affirmations about the weekend, ask leaders who have confidential concerns about a youth to meet with you privately.
- 5:30 Snack Supper and Share Time at Church
- 7:00 Report/Testimony of Weekend to Church
- 8:00 Dismiss