

# FAQs . . . Frequently Asked Questions

## **Is it possible to do DiscipleNow in a retreat setting?**

Yes, but involvement of the total church is missing. The benefit of groups in a home setting is lost. DiscipleNow is unique as it was originally designed and works best in the church/home setting.

## **What if the pastor or music minister will not allow you to have the Sunday morning and/or evening worship hour during DiscipleNow?**

Look for ways to feature DiscipleNow in the worship service. Perhaps you can use the DiscipleNow logo on the bulletin cover. Maybe one or more students could give testimonies. Even if you do nothing unique in the Sunday worship times at your church, the fresh experience your students have had with God will create a sense of expectancy. Encourage students to make their commitments public at the invitation time in your service.

## **What if the youth are unruly, disruptive, or ugly to the host and/or group leader?**

Discipline in the home falls mainly on the host families. If youth are continually disrespectful, the host family should notify you and you should intervene personally at the home. If things do not improve immediately, have the disruptive student's parent come and get him or her. It is never fun to send a student home from an event, but don't allow the behavior of one or two to ruin the experience for the entire group.

## **What about rumors of youth becoming sexually involved at a host home?**

If you have co-ed groups, make sure there are separate areas for them to sleep in. Encourage the students and leaders to avoid any appearance of evil. If you do hear rumors, go to the source before making any decisions or prejudging any individuals. If the rumor has truth to it, deal with the individuals involved.

## **Do you need to secure specialized additional insurance for this weekend?**

Check with your church and with an agent you trust to discover what is currently applicable to this type of church meeting. Discover if the church's insurance policy covers possible injuries or damage to property; if the host family's insurance policy covers injuries or damage to property; or if you, the church, and host families are covered if someone is injured while traveling to part of DiscipleNow. The liability in this unique situation may demand a short-term rider being added to the church policy to cover all that is a part of the weekend. Make sure you, your church, and all involved are covered.

## **What do you do if damage occurs at one of the host homes?**

Pay for it. You are responsible. Collect the money from the students responsible for the damage after the fact.

Make sure this rule is clear to all participants before the weekend—students will be responsible for paying for damage to any property in the host home.

## **What if extra students show up and want to come for DiscipleNow?**

- Answer 1: The deadline must be enforced. If you allow one student to come in at the last minute you will have to allow all students to disregard the deadline.
- Answer 2: Look closely for God's moving. Who are these students? Why did they not register earlier? Are they truly open to what God will be doing at DiscipleNow? If good things can come out of their presence allow them to attend.

## **What if some students only want to come to parts of the weekend?**

If you have a widely known concert artist, you may have people from other churches wanting to attend. Will this help kickoff your DiscipleNow weekend? If it will, then sell tickets and publicize this as an event open to the community. Some students may want to come to the worship services and rallies but not participate in a small group. If their participation won't be a disruption to the weekend, allow them to attend. God may choose to do great things in their lives.

## **What if the students try to sign up late?**

Determine the precedent you want to set. If you allow students to sign up late, you will likely build your crowd. Students will continue to invite friends until the day of the event. However, it will be more difficult to get students to sign up on time for the next DiscipleNow weekend.

## **What if you have more visitors attend than members?**

It is a great advantage to have more Christian students than lost students in a group. If you have a large number of visitors through publicity, consider setting up homes that have several mature students, your best leaders, hosts and cohosts, and five to eight visitors. Alert your group leader, other students, and leaders to this unique group. This group may need to be more evangelistic in focus.

## **What if a leader has to go home early?**

If one of your group leaders has to leave early because of an emergency, consider the following options: finish the sessions personally; allow the host family to lead them; or as a last option combine the group with another host family group. When you enlist group leaders be sure to clearly explain that you need them for the entire weekend.

## **What if extra youth show up on Friday night at one of the host homes?**

If youth have not registered and filled out all the permission forms—they may not attend.

**What if a youth can only come to half of the meetings?**

The parental release form allows a youth the structure to miss sessions. This card, signed by the student and his or her parent, states what times the student will be away. Missing too many sessions may not make the time worthwhile for the student. Use discretion with these requests.

**What do you do when a youth wants to attend but really doesn't have the money?**

Seek scholarship help from classes or individuals. Plan in your budget a couple of extra registration fees. Allow youth to pay off the debt over a period of time. Involve this student in aspects of the weekend that would require paid personnel, such as setting up before, and cleaning up after the banquet, and pay him or her instead.

**What if more students sign up than you have made provisions for?**

Consider placing one or two extra youth in several homes. This is much more simple than trying to find another leader and home at the last minute. Make a note for next year to have an extra home on stand-by in case this happens again.

**What if a leader is not teaching what you planned?**

If a leader has left the designed content and wandered into something inappropriate, you must act. What is being taught in that house is your responsibility. Allow simple rabbit chasing as this may meet specific needs of a group of students. If reports are that the teaching is inappropriate, sit in on sessions of study. In the most extreme of cases, quietly replace him with yourself or another leader for the remaining sessions.

**What if a youth brings a banned item (TV, radio, CD or cassette player, fireworks, drugs, or weapons)**

Remove it until the end of the weekend. The host family has every right to decide what is in their home. Make sure you made clear to all students a list of things to bring and things to leave at home.

**What if a person younger than seventh grade or older than twelfth grade wants to attend?**

Use your discretion. If a youth wants to attend who is outside the parameters of the design of this program, decide if there is an appropriate group for the person to join and if the person will receive anything from the chosen curriculum.

**What if more youth respond than you are prepared for in follow-up discipleship?**

What a wonderful challenge. Follow-up is too important to allow it to be crowded and poorly staffed. Try your best to provide small enough classes for a good student to teacher ratio. If you must, crowd the first month with large groups. But as soon as possible get the group size down to where adult leaders can know every student personally.

**What if the DiscipleNow coordinator has to resign before the weekend?**

If the coordinator has planned carefully and involved other leaders, a new coordinator could pick up where the old coordinator left off. The best option would be to ask someone on the steering committee to take the coordinator's position and ask someone on his or her work team to take the responsibility of leading the work team. In many cases, however, a new coordinator will be asked to pick up the event with little time and lots of work left undone. If you find yourself in that position, quickly assemble a team to help you. Make fresh contacts with all leaders and host homes that have been enlisted and let them know that you are moving ahead with the event. Only cancel the event as a last resort.

**What if a home is closed to you at the last moment by illness or death in the family?**

It is always good to have a host home or two on stand-by. You may find that your pastor or another staff member will be willing to be a last resort host home in a situation such as this. If you don't have a host family on standby and existing host homes can't handle additions, consider using part of the church facilities for this group. If you do this, make sure that you enlist someone to stay and act as host family; do not leave a group of students at the church with only a group leader to supervise.

**What if a leader fails to show up?**

You have several options:

- Divide the students into your other homes adding one or two youth to each group (do not reshuffle all of your groups).
- Call an experienced DiscipleNow group leader in a nearby location and ask the person to come just for the sessions on Friday night and Saturday.
- Allow a veteran host family to lead the sessions.
- Ask an experienced Sunday School teacher or a church staff member to lead the group. You might be surprised at what it would do for your pastor and your older students to have a weekend together.
- As the DiscipleNow coordinator, lead the group yourself.