

# NRHC Dgroup Apprenticeship Guide

## I. Identifying Potential Leaders

What are you looking for?

You're not looking for someone who's already ready to lead—you're looking for someone who's growing. Spiritual children may still show these traits. They do not need to be fully formed to begin apprenticing. Watch for these key markers in people:

### 1. Naturally Loves People Well

- a. Look for care that comes without prompting.
- b. Asks good follow-up questions and remembers people's needs. "Hey, I remembered you had that stressful meeting this week—how did it go?"
- c. Shows concern for others' lives and spiritual growth.
- d. Encourages and includes others naturally.

### 2. Faithful

- a. **Consistent** attendance
- b. Mentally and emotionally **engaged**
- c. **Follows through** on prayer, care, or commitments

### 3. Available

- a. **Willing** to step in or step up when asked
- b. Open to taking a next step spiritually
- c. **Interruptible**—doesn't guard their time so tightly that they can't be used

### 4. Teachable

- a. They receive input with **humility** and a desire to grow.
- b. Engages with group discussion, even when unsure
- c. Shares **personal** (not generic) prayer requests
- d. Responds to encouragement, challenge, and feedback **without defensiveness**
- e. Respect group guidelines ( uses "I" statements, listens well, respects others)

**Disciplemaker tip:** Celebrate these things in your group members, even if they don't become an apprentice.

When You Say: "I don't have anyone ready."

Ask yourself:

- Why do you think that?
- Have you prayed about it?
- Are you looking for perfection or for potential?

Look for the markers above. You're not looking for all of them—just something *noticeable* and *commendable*.

## II. Training an Apprentice

### Start with the “I See In You” Conversation

If you’ve noticed potential, pray. Then have a direct conversation:

- Tell them what you see in them.
- Ask them to pray and consider apprenticing.
- Explain expectations above and process below.
- Set a specific date to follow up.

### Once someone has agreed to begin apprenticing, let your group know.

Transparency strengthens group health and reinforces the mission of multiplication. Don’t spring it on them by surprise when the apprentice starts leading a section. Instead, clearly explain what’s happening and why.

*Example Language:*

*“Eric and Sarah are going to be stepping into an apprentice role in our group. They’ve been praying about this, and we’ve talked through it together—and they’re ready to take this next step in their discipleship journey. In the coming weeks, they’ll begin to take on some responsibilities and opportunities to lead. We believe that discipleship leads to multiplication—not just in our personal faith, but in our group life too.*

*What we have here is special—and the best way to honor that is by helping more people experience it. We want to share what we have, and this is one of the ways we do that.”*

You don’t have to use those exact words, but make sure your tone is celebratory, clear, and confident. Let your group see that this isn’t about losing something—it’s about investing what’s already growing.

### Progressive Roles to Assign

1. Prayer Time
  - a. Before, after, or both
  - b. Ask them to follow up on requests during the week
2. Share Their Personal Story with the group after sharing with you
3. Lead a Storying Moment
  - a. Help them prep in advance
4. Involve Them in Your Prep
  - a. Teach them that preparation is about facilitating openness and Holy Spirit movement, not checking every box.
5. Assign a Few Questions
  - a. Let them lead part of the discussion
6. Teach Them How to Pivot in small group

- a. When the group gets quiet or awkward
  - b. When someone is monopolizing the conversation
  - c. When someone breaks the guidelines
  - d. How to use the facilitator guide flexibly
7. Have Them Lead the Whole Night
- a. Increase frequency as they grow

### **Debriefing After Leadership Moments**

ALWAYS FOLLOW UP. A simple 20-30-minute convo is often enough.

Build debrief into the rhythm of your week. It is crucial to debrief as soon as possible. Either right after the group, they stay behind to talk or the very next day over the phone or coffee.

Feedback Tips:

- Be specific: Instead of "I'm proud of you," say "When you circled back to that prayer request, it showed care and helped the group feel seen."
- Give constructive feedback when you have it—don't hold back, but don't manufacture it.

### **A Note on Timing and Flexibility**

Apprenticeship is an expectation—but not a constant pressure. We believe every group should be moving toward multiplication, but **you do not need to have an apprentice 100% of the time.**

You know your group best. It's okay to go through seasons of **prayerfully watching and waiting** before starting an apprenticeship. That kind of discernment *is* leadership.

When you do identify someone, remember: they **don't need to be perfect**, but they should be:

- **Faithful** – showing up and following through
- **Available** – willing to grow and serve
- **Teachable** – open to feedback and formation
- And importantly, they should **love others well** – not with flair, but with genuine, Spirit-led care

Apprenticeship may take time. That's okay too. There's **no set timeline**, because growth isn't linear. Some may take a few months to lead a night; others may need a full year or more.

That's not failure—it's formation.

*We trust you as a leader to walk with people at a pace that honors both their growth and your group's health.*

When in doubt, talk with your coach or someone on the discipleship team. We're here to help you navigate those discernment moments together.

### **III. Apprentice to Leader: Expectations & Checklist**

Before leading their own group, apprentices must:

#### **Complete These Steps:**

- Attend RD101
- Finish the Apprenticeship
- Become a Partner (member) of the church

#### **Discipleship Essentials:**

- Faithful – They show up, they follow through.
- Available – They're present, interruptible, and flexible.
- Teachable – They listen, learn, and receive correction.

### **IV. How to Branch a Group**

#### **When you and your apprentice are ready:**

1. Communicate with the Discipleship Pastor
  - a. We'll help assess readiness and finish any next steps.
2. Communicate with Your Group
  - a. Be clear and celebratory. This is a *win* for the Kingdom.
  - b. Share what's happening and why.
  - c. There will be hard conversations about sending. But remember what makes your group so special is something to share with others.

#### **Different Ways to Branch:**

- Send the apprentice (and maybe another) to start from scratch
- Send the apprentice with a portion of the group
  - This could be an even split or a prayerfully chosen few.
- Send the apprentice to start a new group from scratch