



AN (HELPFUL, SAVING-YOU-HEADACHES) INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS TO STARTING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

[#3 IN THE MC HANDOUT SERIES]

This Guide includes:

- A. Read this first
- B. Stages of starting a Missional Community
- C. How do we start?
- D. A Primer on identifying your MC's reason, roles, and rhythms

Note: this introduction can be a launching pad to the *Missional Community Start-up Field Guide* which will provide step-by-step guidance for a MC start-up.

A. READ THIS FIRST

A Missional Community is a mid-sized (12+ people) spiritual family, led by ordinary people, who are committed to multiplying disciples and joining Jesus in his mission within a specific relational context.

1. Start with the end in mind.

The mission is to multiply disciples who make Jesus known in everyday life [so we can join Jesus in seeing Gospel Lights, Everywhere](#). More people experiencing life in Jesus and becoming his apprentices. To become reproducing disciples is our prayer and priority.

Put differently, we are growing a family where those in the family mature to become spiritual parents themselves and make disciples. And we are finding people of peace whom we can invite to experience Jesus and be adopted in his family. The goal is to be a loving sent family that multiplies sent families.

2. Leadership is discipleship. Discipleship is like spiritual parenting

There is obviously more to say but spiritual leadership is about discipleship, discipleship is relational, and relationships are about love. Our logo is a visual reminder of how we love in three relational directions: Up-In-Out. Loving leadership is not abstract or theoretical but works out in lovingly discipling a few specific people towards maturity. A parent has kids.

"I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children. Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me." 1 Corinthians 4:14–16 (NIV)

If we boil it down, *who* is a Missional Community leader?

One who is becoming a reproducing disciple (aka a spiritual parent).

3. Start with making disciples.

There is a saying, "you can start a church and not end up making disciples but if you make disciples you will end up with a church." Similarly with Missional Community. Don't start by focusing on gathering a group or starting a program, that's not the goal. The goal is multiplying disciples. Start by making disciples. Who are you discipling and who is discipling you?

Have you identified people of peace you are discipling? Have you started a discovery group?



4. Before you start, be a disciple.

It could be obvious but sometimes stating the obvious is important, we can only help others follow Jesus as we follow Jesus. We start by surrendering to Jesus as Lord and strengthening rhythms of extra-ordinary prayer and fasting.

B. STAGES OF STARTING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

Because it isn't simply about gathering a group of friends for weekly discussion, there is often a process of discipleship and development for a Missional Community. Here is a framework for MC development:

1. Pre-Emerging Missional Community stage: 1-3 disciple-making leaders who are living as missionary disciples and seeking people of peace. For numerous reasons, it's not yet time to see a MC begin to emerge. This could be because of geographical distance, the focus on learning their context and identifying people of peace, or the lack of a broader team who align with the sense of a specific call/focus. This leader(s) would ideally be in a d-group and/or be receiving coaching and support. *This is like a missionary or missionary couple* who don't currently have a team.

2. Emerging Missional Community: There is active movement towards clarifying a reason, rhythm, and roles amongst a team of people. An Emerging MC may not be prepared to publicly invite large groups to join them because they are still prayerfully discerning their sent focus, seeking out people of peace, confirming the roles for the leadership team, and aiming to start discovery groups. *This is like a missionary team.*

>>>>> [See the Emerging Missional Community Start-up Field Guide to help you at this stage.](#)

3. An (Established) Missional Community: A MC is always learning and it can be messy but they have an affirmed reason, rhythm, and roles. There is an affirmed team with clear roles, a rhythm that is understood, and others are being invited in. This is a mid-sized community, ideally with active d-groups. *This is a missional community.*

C. HOW DO WE START?

The general process includes: Exploration > Identification > Affirmation.

- **Exploration:** Discover the possibilities and receive coaching as you discern.
- **Identification:** clarify the *reason*, *roles*, and *rhythms* for the MC.
- **Affirmation:** public affirmation and commission of a new MC.

To expand further, the process would adapt and be customized depending on the stage of development. See below:

1. Pre-Emerging MC Stage

This is about living as a missionary disciple. Join Jesus and walk out the steps of obedience noted in our discipleship pathway. Keep living as a missionary and planting gospel seeds. B.L.E.S.S rhythms, prayer walks – go for it! Start discovery groups. Create rhythms and routines that reflect who God is calling you to.

Invite others to join you as they are able but focus on living as a sent missionary disciple, not gathering a team.

2. Starting during the emerging MC stage

>>>> [See the Missional Community Start-up Field Guide to help guide you and the team.](#)

- Identify a **reason**. What's the sent focus? What's the reason people will join this emerging MC?
- Identify **roles**. Do you have a missional catalyst (out leader?). A shepherding discipleship catalyst (in-up leader)? A logistics catalyst (the leader who helps hold your focus and people together practically)?
- Identify a **rhythm**. What's the starting rhythm in light of your reason? How will you live out our identity and join Jesus?

With coaching and support, this is about identifying the sent focus (the reason), forming a leadership team (initial roles), and starting a rhythm together. Again, see the guide for further details around development and formation.

3. Starting or Recalibrating an (established) Missional Community

If a MC is recalibrating, multiplying, or onboarding new leadership then it's helpful to walk through a clarifying process together looking at the reason, roles, and rhythm together. Pioneering a new MC with a team of 3-5 is different than if one already has a community of 15+.

D. A PRIMER ON IDENTIFYING YOUR MC'S REASON, ROLES, AND RHYTHMS

1. Identifying your MC's Reason (aka sent focus).

The reason a MC exists is larger than connection, support, or study (though those are all great). It's making disciples and disciples are made in community on mission. Therefore, the question is who are we sent to? Once we identify who we are *sent to*, then we can discern who we are *sent with*.

A sent focus could be the people of a local school, a certain subculture (mountain bikers and their families, newcomers to Canada), or an area of justice (refugees, a local prison, or troubled teens). A sent focus gives reason for the rhythms of the MC and for people to join. It's people focused (not simply picking up garbage), it's tangible, and it's invitational (you can bring invite others along).



>> See the [Missional Community Start-up Field Guide](#) to help guide you and the team work through questions like:

- What about proactive vs reactive mission?
- What about people of peace?
- What about justice?
- What if we have ideas but aren't sure what to focus on?
- What if our team can't agree?

2. Identifying the Roles for the MC leadership team

Initial start-up leadership roles are:

1. **Missional Catalyst:** a natural desire to reach out and has a vision for multiplying disciples and owning the mission of Jesus within a specific context. [This role is best for people with evangelism or apostolic gifting.](#)
2. **Shepherd and Discipleship group catalyst.** Find at least one person who is attune to the emotional and spiritual needs of the community. This person is a catalyst for identifying who needs specific gospel shepherding and who could be in a Discipleship group. [This role is best for people with a shepherding gift.](#)
3. **Logistics Catalyst:** this person helps make a schedule for food and clean-up, sends out calendar updates, and ensures attendance is done. [This role is best for people with an administrative or helper gift.](#)

Additional roles, some of which can be done by leaders or participants, that could develop in time are: Training Facilitator, Host, Food Coordinator, Children's coordinator, and prayer coordinator.

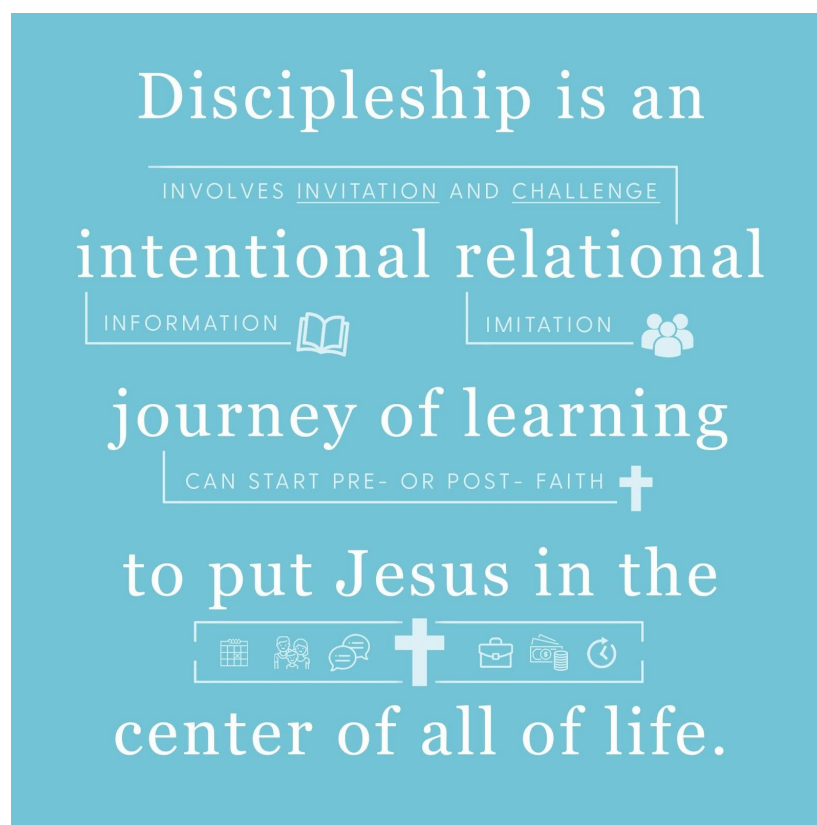
For more details on roles and forming a MC covenant, see the MC Start-up Field Guide.

3. Identifying **Rhythms** for the MC

A MC has **Up-In-Out rhythms**. We love UP (we are Jesus-centered), we love IN (we are family), and we love OUT (we are sent servants). We love God, each other, and the world. It can be helpful to recognize that for many MC's many of the UP rhythms occur with the broader church family (i.e Celebration Gatherings, prayer experiences).

Each MC will want to identify a starting rhythm. More guidance is available In the MC Start-up Field Guide as leaders will want to consider questions like:

- Organic and Organized rhythms?
- Open and closed events?
- What about D-groups within the MC?
- What's too much? Where it crowds out the organic or becomes tiring.
- What's too little? Inconsistency makes it hard to invite and include others or means our relationships lack time to deepen and flourish.
- What about seasons? There is a time to plant and a time to water.



GOSPEL LIGHTS, EVERYWHERE:

Ordinary people joining Jesus in saturating Greater Vancouver because Jesus loves everyone, everywhere.