

**Discipleship & Service
Handout**

Discipleship Panel Planning Sheet

Discipleship seems like a foreign term or experience until we meet people-like-us who take discipleship seriously and attempt to live it out in their lives. The purpose of this panel presentation is to expose young people to people in the local community who are putting discipleship into practice here and now.

To organize your discipleship panel, use the following process:

1. **Identify 3 to 6 key individuals, couples or families** who take faith seriously and try to live it out day to day in service to others. If you've been involved in your parish or school community for several years, it may be easy for you to identify several people. If you're new to the community or would like to expand your list of potential contacts, ask for recommendations from other ministry leaders. In narrowing down the list of people you will personally contact, consider the following:

Discipleship needs to be lived out in all parts of life. A good mix among panelists would bring together people who live discipleship out through service to the parish or school community (e.g. someone involved in visiting home-bound elderly, or working with the parish outreach or St. Vincent de Paul society), through their careers (e.g. a social worker or health care professional who works with families in need, and frequently goes beyond "the call of duty") and/or through volunteer commitments (e.g. an accountant who works as a Big Sister on the side, a carpenter who gives volunteer time to Habitat for Humanity, or family that regularly prepares and serves a meal at a local soup kitchen).

Discipleship is for all people and all ages. Try for a mix of ages and lifestyles. Involve singles and marrieds, men and women, twenty-somethings and sixty-somethings.

Peer ministry is particularly effective with youth. Young people listen more attentively and understand things better if there's someone their age doing the talking. If at all possible, involve another young person as a panelist, either as an individual or as part of a family unit.

This session is one in a series aimed at moving young people from awareness to action. As you finalize your list of panelists, look ahead to unit 5 and the service experience connected with it. If possible, select panelists who can later serve as project coordinators for one-time service programs for your team.

2. Contact the people you've selected asking about their availability and willingness to take part in an educational program on justice and service. Emphasize the informal nature and brevity (10-12 minutes) of the presentation. Let them know you'll provide them with several key questions to guide their presentation and that you're willing to meet or work with them as they gather their thoughts and ideas. People may need some convincing that they're the "right person" for the panel. Note that you're not looking for perfect people, but for people who are consciously trying (sometimes successfully and sometimes not) to put their faith into action.

3. Share with the panelists an overview of the session and the role they'll play in it. Meet or talk with them beforehand to make sure they're comfortable and prepared. The format around which the panelists will build their presentations is simple:

- *Introduce yourself* (Who are you? Where do you live? What do you do?)
- *Offer a brief reflection* on faith and discipleship (How do you see Jesus? What do you think he expects of people?)
- *Share* how you try to incorporate discipleship in your life (How does faith influence what you do individually or as part of your family? How does it impact what you do at work or through volunteer efforts with service groups in the community?)
- *Offer an example*, or share a story (What is your service experience like? What have you learned from it? How does your work help others? What do you, personally, get out of it?)

4. Gather the panelists just prior to the session to meet each other and decide the order in which they'll speak. Introduce them to your group at the start of the panel presentation and thank them profusely afterwards.