A Pastor’s Discipleship Triad is designed and intended to sustain the impact of the Find It Here emphasis through a hands on experience in disciple making as well as develop new potential leaders for ongoing, self-replicating Discipleship Triads. As the name suggests, each Pastor’s Discipleship Triad is made up of three individuals who covenant to meet once a week for approximately 60 to 90 minutes to study and discuss a selected discipleship related resource and pray together. The resource used could be the previous week’s sermon, a specific book of the Bible, a topical Bible study (related to some aspect of discipleship), a study series such as the Growing Disciples Series available from LifeWay, or a book discussion for example. A list of possible resources for consideration is available on the Find It Here webpage. In addition, a sample agenda and discussion guide for these meetings is provided. The desire is that this Pastor’s Discipleship Triad begins with the pastor inviting two others to join them in a triad for the purpose of discipling one another. The initial commitment will be for an eight week period immediately following the Find It Here emphasis but there is a desire that the Triad continue on for an additional eight to twelve weeks with a second study focused on a different discipleship resource. Ultimately, the hope is that the triads will become reproducing with each member of the initial triad inviting two more to join them for a new triad after their time together in the Pastor’s Triad. Given this, the selection of the members of this first Pastor’s Discipleship Triad is critical. People who exhibit a teachable spirit, a desire to grow in maturity and an interest in helping to disciple others should be the target.

It is important to note that this is not a class where the pastor teaches the other two members of the triad. Instead it is an opportunity for the three to gather and explore the selected resource together and engage in a time of prayer. Certainly the pastor should feel free to share their knowledge and understanding but should do so only as an “equal” and never to position themselves (in the minds of the other two triad members) as the “authority.” One goal of the triads is to mature the participants to the point where they become confident in leading a future triad themselves developing additional triad leaders. In this manner, the triads become self-reproducing, expanding throughout the entire congregation and perhaps even to the community and beyond!

The eventual impact of the triads can be strengthened by intentionally introducing diversity through the makeup of the triad itself. Intergenerational diversity can be achieved by inviting people older and younger than the triad sponsor. Likewise there is benefit to mixing people of different professions or from different parts of the country or new members with longer term members. However, it is strongly recommended that the Discipleship triads be composed only of members of the same sex. Men should only disciple men and likewise, women only disciple women. Besides the obvious reasons behind this, there will doubtless be conversations necessary for spiritual growth that cannot and will not occur in a mixed group of men and women. With this in mind, a second triad for women should be formed and led by the pastor’s wife or other qualified lady from the congregation. This triad for women would follow the same format as outlined for the Pastor’s Discipleship Triad.
There will inevitably be the question of “Can we have more than 3 in our Discipleship Triad?” The answer should be “Yes, but we encourage no more than 4.” The reasons behind this are several. First, a larger group makes it possible to sit back and not participate allowing others to carry the discussion. This denies that individual the opportunity to grow through engaging and wrestling with God’s truth for themselves. Secondly, smaller groups offer greater accountability. Triad members know they will be missed if they don’t show up for the meeting. Finally, the smaller number builds community faster and fosters a feeling of security in sharing with the certainty of confidentiality. However, while a smaller number is preferable for the reasons discussed above, it is acceptable to form a discipleship group somewhat larger if desired and that decision lies with the leader.

The Discipleship Triads should begin as soon as possible following the Find It Here emphasis.

Getting started:

A personal invitation is by far the most effective means of recruiting people to participate in the Discipleship Triads. Therefore, the recruitment process should begin with prayer at least one month before the Discipleship Triads are to begin and before the Find It Here emphasis concludes. Ask God to lead you to the two or three people He would have you to invite to join you in the new Pastor’s Discipleship Triad. Once you have the names in mind, contact each one individually and ask to meet with them to explain the Discipleship Triads and invite them to join you in the journey of exploring the scriptures of the sermon series. While this can be done with a phone call, a face-to-face conversation is far better in that it communicates a sincere desire to have them join you in this experience.

- Be sure to begin by explaining that it was through prayer that God led you to invite them.
- Explain that the initial commitment is only for the initial eight weeks (or time period covered by the discipleship resource selected) and the hope is they will commit to another 8 to 12 weeks of additional study following a different discipleship resource selected by the pastor (A list of suggested discipleship resources is provided on the Find It Here webpage). Ultimately the desire is that they will feel similarly led to sponsor a Discipleship Triad of their own and invite two new people to join them in a new Triad at the conclusion of the Triad.
- Explain that the Triad will meet each week for approximately 60 to 90 minutes to study and discuss the selected resource for a time of prayer. (An agenda and study guide will be provided with suggested timeframes for each of the activities during the meeting time.)
- Make clear that you will not be “teaching” the Triad but instead each member will be sharing in the learning experience.
- Share a copy of the discussion guide to give them a better idea of how each meeting will be structured.
- Ask them for an answer as soon as possible (While you are with them would be great!) but no later than 2 to 3 days.
- Pray with them and for them before you part.
The Pastor’s Discipleship Triad members should be recruited no later than two weeks prior to their first Triad meeting.

One additional option to consider is to have a Friday or Saturday evening dinner prior to the first week of Triad meetings to gather the Pastor’s Discipleship Triad members and spouses (including the women’s triad sponsor and members along with their spouses) for a time of fellowship and prayer.
Discipleship Triads – Agenda/Discussion Guide

Discipleship Resource being used:

Date:

Season of Prayer to begin time together: (10 to 15 minutes)

Prayer requests shared by Triad members:

Engaging God’s Word: (20 to 30 minutes)

Read and discuss the focal scripture passage [Note: if the discipleship resource selected does not include a specific focal scripture passage, the Triad may pick one of the passages used in that week’s study to discuss in more depth.]

Write the scripture passage here:

Observation Questions:

What is the event, topic, instruction or command contained in the passage? (It is often quite helpful to read the chapter, or at least a few paragraphs, preceding and following the focal passage in order to better understand the context of the passage.)

When was it written and to whom?

What are the key words in the passage?

What do other verses say on the subject matter of the focal passage?
Application Questions:

How does this passage apply to me?

What truth(s) are contained in this passage that I am to put into operation in my life?

What changes should I make in light of the truth(s) identified above?

Discussion of Resource Topic for this week: (20 to 30 minutes)

Notes from discussion:

Action steps: (5 to 10 minutes)

What action steps will I take to apply what I have learned today?

1.

2.

3.

Closing Prayer: (5 minutes)