

MAKING DISCIPLES

DISCIPLESHIP ACTION PLANNING



DISCIPLESHIP ACTION PLANNING: WHOLE LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

INTRODUCTION

This document will give you a framework to think through deepening discipleship within your community. Without deliberate planning we will only end up reaching accidental goals. It's in the planning that we are helped to reach the goals we see before us. Action planning is like an arrow; It points us in the right direction towards the end goal we are aiming for. We may not get there or we might over shoot, but at least we are pointing ourselves towards the destination. Action planning also helps us to evaluate and then re-evaluate how well we are doing in attaining this goal. Planning is a process and communicates our intentions. Making disciples is a clear intention in the gospels so must be our clear intention too.

The clear intention is the great commission set out in Matt 28 as, *“Go make Disciples, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”*.

With so many other pulls on our time and ministry if we don't set some goals we will never live out this clear calling for every leader, church and member. By clearly articulating our goals and indicating the steps for disciple making we make plans to achieve them, we create intentional discipleship points and dream up new plans and rework old ones.

HOW TO WRITE A DISCIPLESHIP ACTION PLAN

This document will help you review the width of discipleship, assess what you are already doing, work on the gaps, see what needs developing and what needs cutting. Within this document you will find a 'Discipleship Chart' outlining the work of discipling someone, a tool to take an audit of present activity and a tool to help shape an action plan for the future.

THIS IS THE GOAL

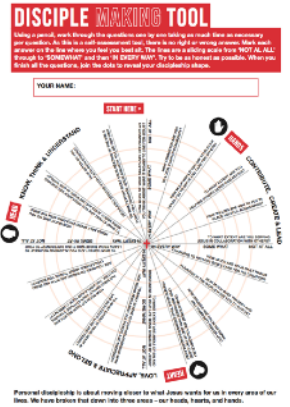
Discipleship is the 'whole life commitment' to seeing Jesus transform the 'whole of our lives'. Biblical Discipleship is surrendering one's HEAD, HANDS and HEART to the will and call of Christ. The way we mature in this call is to allow ourselves to be '**connecting**' in relationship with God and the wider Church, continue to grow in '**understanding**' of who Jesus is and His teaching, be '**equipped**' in the ministry given to each one through the Spirit and then '**serve**' God, the church and the world with this gifting.



STEP ONE:

If you have not already visit WEAREMAKINGDISCIPLES.COM and access the Discipleship shape tool. Using this tool with your whole church you will be able to ascertain the discipleship needs of your congregation. The Discipleship tool helps plot the congregation's health along 20 dimensions, under the 3 themes of Head, Hands and Heart.

The following chart aims to articulate the whole life shape of a disciple in these 3 dynamics of HEAD, HANDS and HEART.



HEAD	HANDS	HEART
<p>Knowing, thinking and understanding who Jesus is and his teachings and allowing them to transform belief and attitudes.</p>	<p>Contributing, creating, leading and equipping in the gifts and skills of the Kingdom and servicing by participation in God's mission and activity in the world.</p>	<p>Connecting, loving, appreciating and belonging personally with God and a Jesus community and allowing the heart to be transformed.</p>
<p>A growing disciple of Jesus will be deepening their understanding of who God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are through a developing Bible knowledge and through community conversation.</p> <p>Be able to articulate and explain God's plan of salvation and their role within it.</p> <p>Be developing an understanding of the role of the church in God's mission; be obedient to God's call to a Christian life and the act of being a living sacrifice.</p> <p>Be maturing in the Biblical narrative and teachings of the whole church around the fall, salvation, redemption and the mission of Jesus.</p> <p>Be deepening in their knowledge of the bigger God story and its impact on the local community.</p> <p>Being shaped in their thinking by this story affecting all areas of their life.</p> <p>Be challenged by those not like them to think differently and be shaped by the wider church thinking.</p>	<p>A growing disciple of Jesus will be discovering spiritual gifts and their part in using them as a tool kit for a Jesus way of life.</p> <p>Be growing in the awareness of how these spiritual gifts are to be used to build up the church as well as a call to personal mission and ministry.</p> <p>Be living in such a way that this Jesus way of life is contagious to others.</p> <p>A growing disciple of Jesus will be actively looking for opportunities to serve and minister to others in natural and normal ways especially the last, the least and the lost.</p> <p>Be maturing in sharing their personal testimony of God's grace with community members, friend's family and co-workers.</p> <p>Be investing themselves into discipling others.</p> <p>Be supporting and equipping ministries in the local and global church.</p> <p>Be resourcing the church with finance, time and prayer.</p> <p>Be shaped by the call to be the hands, feet and mind of Christ in the world.</p> <p>Be willing to accept Jesus' call to serve the servant church through His gifting and supporting.</p>	<p>A growing disciple of Jesus will be developing a personal journey as well as communal one in terms of spiritual formation.</p> <p>Be growing and deepening a living relationship with God.</p> <p>Being shaped in a loving Jesus family, developing positive and supportive Christian relationships.</p> <p>Be developing in a devotional life of prayer and intercession.</p> <p>Be able to apply sound Biblical teachings to discern direction and make decisions that harmonise with beliefs, values and practices.</p> <p>Be maturing in relationship and fellowship with others.</p> <p>Be allowing areas of sin and brokenness be challenged and restored.</p> <p>Be open and honest about struggles with a close group who can encourage healthy living.</p>



STEP TWO: WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE AT PRESENT IN THE LOCAL CHURCH?

Within any church community there has to be a buffet of resources for discipling and forming an individual. We need to have places to teach, correct, model and serve. Sadly many of our churches have been doing the same thing for so long we think it's the best way to do what we do. If we want to change the outcome of our work then we need to change what we do and how we do it. Doing the same old things will only yield the same results. Taking an audit will help us see what is happening and how effective the results are. It is also paramount that we move away from 'this is how our tradition or denomination do it'. All Christian denominations and traditions have things for us to learn from. When a church is able to look to the other traditions to see the unique attributes and recourses we can learn from the wider body.

These activities of discipling could involve....

- Sunday activity or the sermon
- Serving on a ministry team
- Small groups, lent courses, regular theology groups or book groups
- Mission teams or serving on a mission program
- Leadership development programs
- Prayer triplets or groups
- One to one mentoring, spiritual direction or regular pastoral support
- Conference or spiritual retreats

Take some time to list and define all your church activities. Then score them on a scale of 1-5, 1 being low and 5 being high according to the Impact of the Activity and the Level of Effort required to run it. Doing this activity audit will help understand what's working well right now and how much work it requires.

ACTIVITY	ESSENTIAL IMPACT OF ACTIVITY				LEVEL OF EFFORT TO RUN		
	Hands	Head	Heart	Total	Staff time	Volunteer Time	Total
List here all the activities from your Church							
Example: Church hopscotch club	1	4	3	8	5	4	9
Example: Sunday morning service							
Example: Sunday evening service							
Example: Morning Prayer							
Example: Mentoring Program							
Example: Lent course							
Example: Football outreach							
Example: Lunch club							
Example: Study groups							
Example: Evangelism course							



ESSENTIAL IMPACT AUDIT

ACTIVITY	ESSENTIAL IMPACT OF ACTIVITY				LEVEL OF EFFORT TO RUN		
List here all the activities from your Church Community. Be as comprehensive as possible.	Hands	Head	Heart	Total	Staff time	Volunteer Time	Total



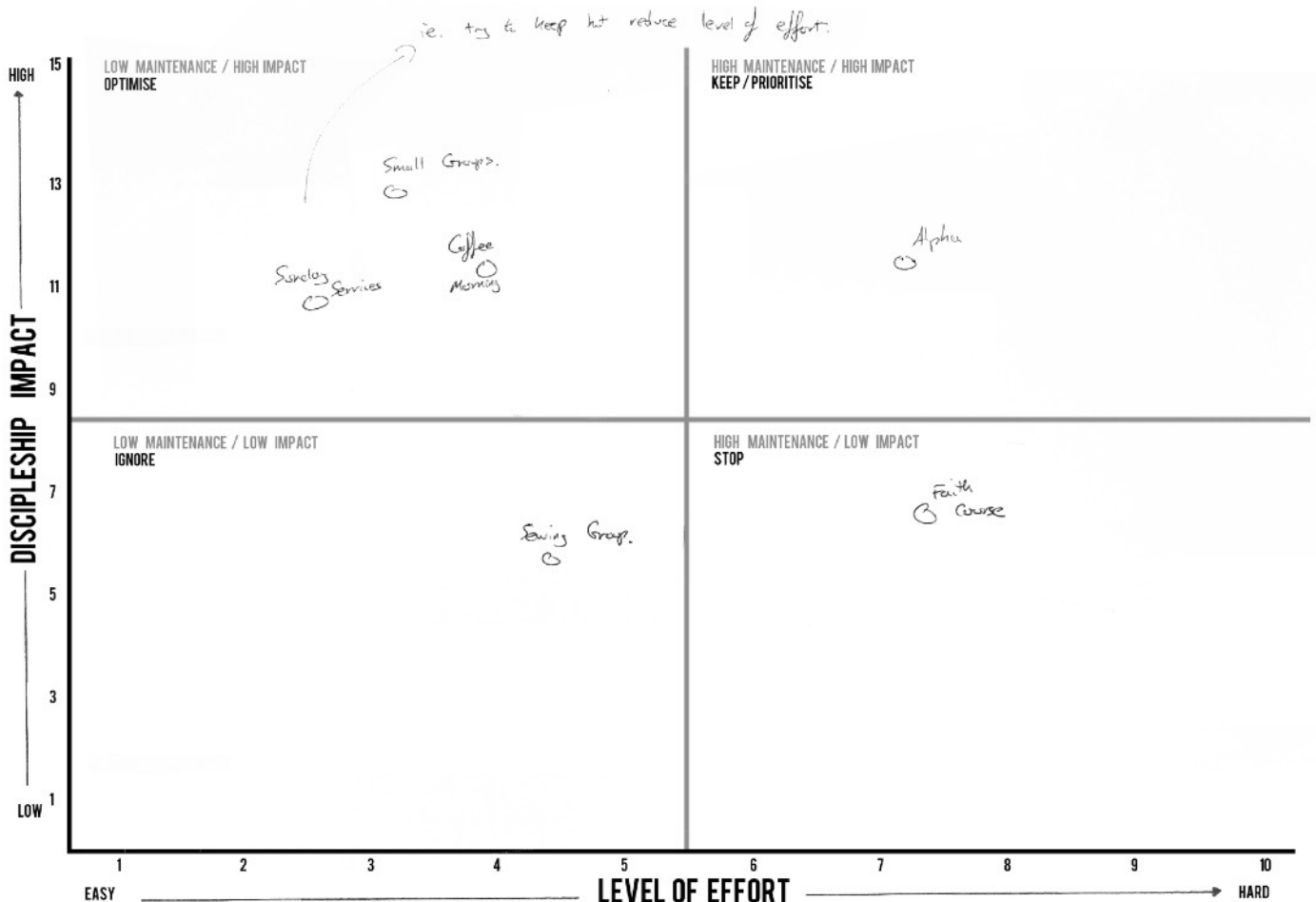
STEP THREE: DISCIPLESHIP IMPACT

Sadly we can be doing a lot but not achieving what we think we are achieving nor making the impact we wish. Some of what we do is high maintenance and low impact, in other words it takes a great deal of time, effort and maybe money to put on, but doesn't achieve a great deal; and of course there is the opposite too, somethings are high impact and low to maintain. Then there are all the things in-between.

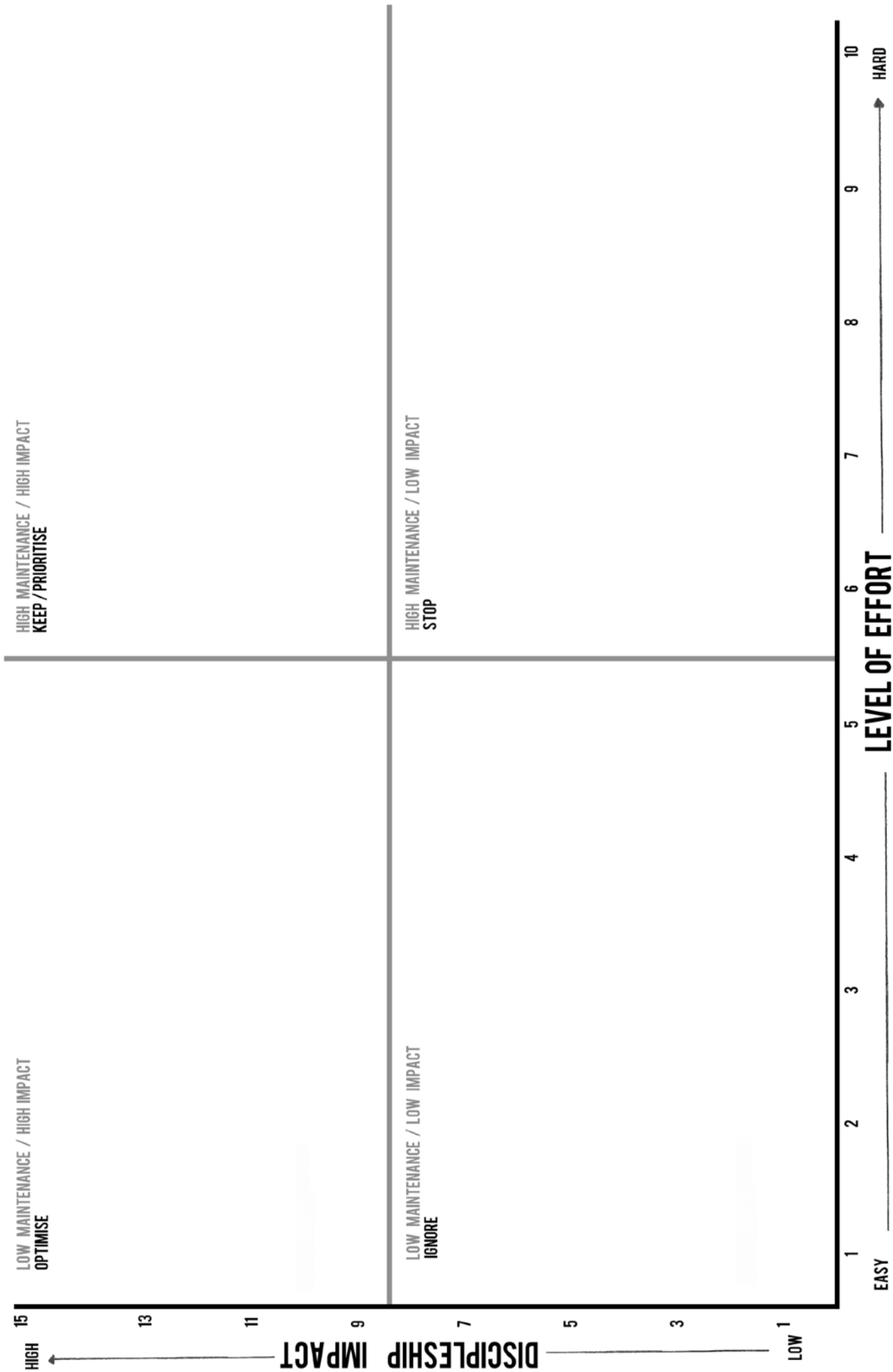
By reviewing all our activities we are able to look at the church as a whole and see whether we are providing opportunities to make disciples. Obviously, some things are hard work and high maintenance but when we assess it we decide they are worthwhile although of course there may be ways that these activities can be optimised for even greater affect. Some things might need to be paused for a season or even stopped to make space for new ideas and initiatives. Some things are necessary but could these be changed in some way to invite others into the process for the purposes of discipleship?

Take your scores from step 2 and place your activities on the following chart. This gives us a visual image of our activities in terms of maintenance and discipleship. Some things might be low maintenance and very high impact, these are the perfect activity we want. This audit should help you see review your activities and then try to optimise (i.e. make easier) the high impact, high effort things, ignore the low impact, low effort activities and prioritise and learn from the high impact, low effort activities.

DISCIPLESHIP IMPACT AUDIT



DISCIPLESHIP IMPACT AUDIT



STEP FOUR: REVIEW

In this step, we compare the Discipleship Impact Audit (Step 3) with the whole church discipleship shape. As a church leader you will be able to download this from wearemakingdisciples.com once your church has completed the Online Assessment Tool. By comparing the two you will be able to see if you are having the impact you were expecting. You might find some perceived low impact activity is having a greater impact than you think and high impact less of an impact.

	NOTES	ACTION
Which areas or questions on your whole church assessment are coming out as low discipleship areas? Does this match up with your findings on the Discipleship Audit?		
In what area do you have low scores on the discipleship tool but high impact scores on the activity audit? What could this be a reflection of? Is it linked to people's starting points, the length of time of the activity, a gap between leadership perception and the congregation's perception or something else? Consider what could change to be more effective at discipleship.		
In what areas do you have low scores on discipleship tool and low impact scores on your activity audit? Reflect on these activities and see if there is something you could change or introduce to address this gap.		
In what areas do you have high scores on discipleship tool and high impact scores on your activity audit? Reflect on these activities and celebrate their effectiveness and see if there are things you could adapt for other areas of the tool.		



**STEP FIVE:
ACTION PLAN HEAD**

Questions to consider focusing thought on the HEAD area discipleship.

<p>WHAT:</p>	<p>Do you have the right mix of activities to support this area of discipleship?</p> <p>What activities could you drop?</p> <p>What could you expand or grow?</p>	<p>Possible or suggested activities to develop could include...</p>
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<p>HOW:</p>	<p>What aspect of the church culture helps or hinders this discipleship dimension?</p>	<p>How could improved HEAD be embedded in all church life?</p>
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<p>WHO:</p>	<p>Who are the real champions of HEAD within the church?</p> <p>How could they be used or inspired to spread excitement and passion for HEAD through the congregation?</p>	<p>People to develop in this area of leadership?</p>
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ACTION PLAN HEART

Questions to consider focusing thought on the HEART area discipleship.

WHAT:	Do you have the right mix of activities to support this area of discipleship? What activities could you drop? What could you expand or grow?	Possible or suggested activities to develop could include...
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HOW:	What aspect of the church culture helps or hinders this discipleship dimension?	How could improved HEART be embedded in all church life?
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WHO:	Who are the real champions of HEART within the church? How could they be used or inspired to spread excitement and passion for HEART through the congregation?	People to develop in this area of leadership?
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ACTION PLAN HANDS

Questions to consider focusing thought on the HANDS area discipleship.

WHAT:	Do you have the right mix of activities to support this area of discipleship? What activities could you drop? What could you expand or grow?	Possible or suggested activities to develop could include...
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HOW:	What aspect of the church culture helps or hinders this discipleship dimension?	How could improved HANDS be embedded in all church life?
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WHO:	Who are the real champions of HANDS within the church? How could they be used or inspired to spread excitement and passion for HANDS through the congregation?	People to develop in this area of leadership?
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FINAL CLEAR ACTION PLAN

Use this following chart to give you a clear outline for your churches Actions Plan. The more detail the better, think SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time bound). This is all about being intentional with change. Discipleship does not happen by accident, it happens because we intentionally put the frame work for growth in place.

OBJECTIVE	What do we want to ACTION or see happen to develop in this area.	What TASKS do you need to do to achieve these goals? This may be new projects or ways of developing	By WHEN do you need to complete the task?	WHAT do you need to complete this task	WHO will do this?
HEAD					
HEART					
HANDS					

