



Commissioning Disciples: A Guide to the High Call and FACT

Vision

We want to share the High Call with every person who has completed Growing Discipleship. In areas where the disciple of Christ is not FACT and has areas of growth, we want to lovingly challenge and invite the disciple to take steps in growth before living as a commissioned disciple.

Lectio Divina

John 6:35-69

Knowing the context of the high call for mission, what can we learn from Jesus in this passage?

What reasons might Jesus have for sharing such a difficult teaching, knowing that many might not accept it?

What reasons might Jesus have for letting many disciples walk away (v. 66), even though they had been following Him up to this point?

How did Jesus present this aspect of the faith to those whom He was inviting to take the next step with Him? How can we model after Jesus in check-ins through the Plan of Discipleship and through the High Call?

Process

01

Disciplers should give the High Call to any disciple who has gone through Growing Discipleship. That High Call should be robust, including not only our baptismal call to mission but also the invitation to live out mission as understood within FOCUS → within CO/Parish → within the particular campus/parish.¹

When the High Call is shared, three possible outcomes arise – Red Light, Yellow Light, or Green Light – as discussed below.

- If the recipient says “no” to the High Call (Red Light), continue in friendship and regular participation in Bible study.
- If the recipient says “yes,”....

¹The practical commitments to FOCUS discipleship will be similar across all FOCUS campuses and parishes but do allow for some flexibility. It is important that your team has aligned around a clear set of expectations. You should write them down.

Following are examples of standard practices of commissioned discipleship:

- Daily prayer and Mass (teams could decide on a starting amount of time for prayer)
- Attendance at weekly CD group (pod)
- Attendance at monthly Upper Room
- Leading a Bible study (some campuses/parishes may specify a timeframe)
- Desire to walk with at least two others in discipleship and to teach them to make disciples

02

You do not commission them into commissioned discipleship until they are **FACT** as defined in the *Discipleship Articles* and fleshed out in *Examining Preparedness for Christian Leadership*.

a. To help determine FACT, the discipler should invite the disciple into a conversation.

Discussion points should include:

- i. What FACT entails?
- ii. Does the disciple desire to be FACT?
- iii. Where does the disciple think he or she is at in terms of FACT?
- iv. Does the disciple think he or she has been progressing in FACT?
- v. What further growth in FACT does the disciple think he or she needs?
- vi. Does the disciple desire accountability in their needed areas of growth?

b. Informed by that conversation with the disciple, the discipler must take responsibility for the ultimate determination of FACT.

Key questions the discipler should ask himself or herself are:

- i. Gravity – is the Growing Disciple engaged in grave sin (and thus not FACT yet)?
- ii. Scandal – is the Growing Disciple engaged in activities that are causing scandal (and thus not FACT yet)?
- iii. Availability – is the Growing Disciple willing to make time to lead others?
- iv. Teachability – is the Growing Disciple willing to learn from his or her discipler?

While the Growing Disciple needs to desire to be FACT and needs to demonstrate progress in growing in FACT, desire and progress are insufficient for commissioning.

Consider three cases.

A person who gets drunk less often than he used to and desires sobriety is nevertheless not yet FACT. Or, a person who desires to agree with Church teaching and has grown in that regard, but still has notable disagreements, is not yet FACT. Likewise, a couple that used to contracept regularly but now only contracept on fertile days is not yet FACT.

Being "FACT" means having acquired the habits of being faithful, available, contagious, and teachable. One can have a habit and still experience challenges, still make mistakes/fall/backslide. Consider, for instance, the habit of Faithfulness, which includes The Big 3. To have the habit of Faithfulness, Big 3 mistakes/falls/backslides cannot be frequent and grave. One who has remorse for such falls (e.g., Saint Peter after denying our Lord), desires to overcome them, shows commitment to improving, and puts forth effort toward it should be commended and is not excluded from serving as a commissioned disciple. In such a case, it is important for there to be accountability and honesty with that person's discipler to ensure progress over time. Over time, backslides should become less common and less severe.



Following the age-old FOCUS principle that you can't give what you don't have, a Growing Disciple must be FACT to the extent that they can say to those they would lead, *"Imitate me as I imitate Christ"* (1 Cor 11:1).

c. If the missionary or student discipler is struggling to determine whether the Growing Disciple is FACT to the extent that they should be commissioned, he or she should discuss with his or her Team Director or discipler, respectively.

d. If the disciple is FACT at the time they accept the High Call (Green Light), you may commission them.

e. If the recipient is not FACT at the time they accept the High Call (Yellow Light), you share with them the need to become FACT and your willingness to help get them there.

- i. You assist them in creating an individual plan (by utilizing the Examining Preparedness for Christian Leadership document). That plan should contain 1-3 areas in which the disciple needs to grow.
- ii. You ask them if you have permission to hold them accountable to the growth areas.
- iii. Taking into account the nature of the growth needed (minor tweaks vs. major improvements), the discipler should challenge the disciple to set an aggressive, yet realistic, timeline for the plan. That timeline could be very short for minor tweaks, 2-4 weeks for modest interventions, or longer for major improvements (such as changing habits). The discipler then accompanies the Growing Disciple to become FACT.
- iv. As long as they continue to progress, you continue to work with them. Some conversions materialize more slowly than desired (think of Augustine's). But investment in others should not stop, especially when they desire to grow and are continuing to make progress.

f. If progress halts, you discuss it with them. If progress does not resume—and especially if they no longer desire to become FACT (Red Light)—then you stop preparing them for commissioned discipleship but continue with them in friendship and regular Bible study.

g. If and when they become FACT (Green Light), you commission them.