

Effective Change Always Requires a Strategy

Midway Church 12 Month DiscipleSHIFT Launch Strategy

The people need to know: What? Why? How? Following is a description of our strategy to intentionally develop a disciple-making culture throughout every facet of Midway Church, identifying where we have come from, where we are, and what is ahead. This strategy took over a year to get the ball rolling on the deep internal shift that would be required. The final phase was a sermon series based on the *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual* that we did while simultaneously having all small groups work through the manual. During this series, we launched new home groups, and a major foundation was laid that is giving way to a renewed culture and mindset regarding discipleship done Jesus' way. Though the temptation would be to jump right into such a strategic series, the fact is that it took a full year to properly prepare the staff, volunteer leaders, and influencers in our church to embrace the coming shift. For Midway, that process ended up being a “**12 months for 12 weeks**” preparation process that required a full year of groundwork just to be ready for the three months of impact that followed. Our process looked something like this:

12 Months Out: Have the Lead Pastor and Discipleship Pastor take a vision trip to Post Falls, Idaho and Real Life Ministries to participate in DiscipleShift 1 Conference.

11 Months Out: Introduce staff and key leaders to the take-away points brought home from the vision trip. Begin a weekly small group with leadership staff using the new relational strategy, so they can experience the process and lead the way.

10 Months Out: Address the entire congregation through our annual business meeting/vision weekend to inform and introduce the coming cultural shift over the course of the next year.

9 Months Out: Hold a vision meeting for current small group leaders to begin the “buy-in” process with these “on the ground” leaders.

8 Months Out: Recruit leaders (both staff and lay leaders) to attend a DiscipleShift 1 Conference done by Real Life Ministries and hosted at our church. These leaders would be our first home group leaders with the new relational strategy.

7 Months Out: Host DiscipleShift 1 Conference in partnership with the Georgia Baptist Convention at our church.

6 Months Out: Begin to promote and personally recruit for a church-wide training venue taking place a couple of months later. Ask all current children, youth, and adult group leader to participate and invite any potential leaders to come and experience the shift that we have been describing. We called this event “DiscipleShift Boot Camp.”

5 Months Out: Hold another vision meeting for small group leaders to hear from those who attended DiscipleShift 1. This was done to inspire and encourage participation for the upcoming DiscipleShift Boot Camp the following month.

4 Months Out: Execute the DiscipleShift Boot Camp. It was a 4-hour training experience for both current and potential children, youth, and adult group leaders. It allowed people the opportunity to experience a mini DiscipleShift conference in a relational environment, with an intentional leader, using the Bible storying method.

3 Months Out: Facilitate follow-up and debriefing with those who participated in the training experience through one-on-one meetings and leadership gatherings to celebrate and build on the momentum created at the training. We began a sermon series built around the parables of Jesus, modeling the “storying” process even in our Sunday services.

2 Months Out: Have all church attendees fill out a card indicating whether or not they are connected to a small group, building a prospect list for the new relational groups set to launch in the coming months.

1 Month Out: Hold another vision meeting with all current small group leaders and the newly recruited group leaders. This was to build commitment to and alignment with our newly structured leadership covenant for small groups.

Launch Point: We began 15 new groups with a strong commitment to the new strategy, and encouraged existing group leaders to implement some of the new strategies with their current groups. All groups worked through the Real Life Training Manual for the first 12 weeks as the teaching pastors led a 12-week sermon series covering the same material. During those weeks, our church experienced a 15% increase in our weekly small group attendance. 76 people were baptized during this time frame and the momentum is just getting started. Without the above 12-month strategy that culminated in the 12-week implementation, the impact we saw would never have taken place.

DiscipleSHIFT 12 Month Transition Process

November 7-10, 2012: Todd and Kevin – Vision Trip to Idaho to participate in Immersion Conference at Real Life Ministries

January 8, 2013: Vision Meeting for LIFE Group Leaders

January 2013: Recruitment of 15 person team to participate in February Immersion conference as “Launch Team” (7 pastors and 8 lay leaders who also committed to be our first home group leaders)

February 7-8, 2013: Midway hosts Immersion 1 Conference for West GA

March 2013: Launch leadership team (L-Group) to learn/model small group

March 10, 2013: Vision Meeting for LIFE Group Leaders

April 21, 2013: DiscipleShift Boot Camp (Over 200 leaders including all current LIFE Group leaders, children and youth leaders, and over 40 potential leaders)

April 28 & May 5, 2013: Boot Camp Experience Evaluation meetings with leaders

April – May 2013: “Timeless Stories of Jesus” sermon series incorporating storying

June 5-8, 2013: Pastoral leadership team visit to RLM in Idaho to meet with children and youth leaders and determine how relational discipleship concept fits into age graded ministries

June 2013: Moving “director” roles to “coach” roles / coach recruitment & buy in

July 14, 2013: Gave out and collected DiscipleShift cards from all attendees (two sided – one side labeled “I’m not in a group” and the other labeled “I’m in a group” to collect their stories and gather prospects)

July 21, 2013: Vision Meeting for LIFE Group Leaders and intro of Midway LG Book including our view of discipleship, coaches, Groups, beliefs, and leadership covenant

July 24, 2013: Deadline for ALL LIFE Group leaders to sign / return leader covenant

July 2013: “Priesthood of All Believers” sermon series – Ownership in ministry – Pave the way for the following “DiscipleShift” Series and group kick off

August, September, October 2013: “DiscipleShift” Sermon Series going through all 12 weeks of the Real Life Discipleship Manual and requiring all groups study concurrently

August 2013: Launch 12 new home groups and on campus groups poised with co-leaders and training to branch new groups in the following January and April

August 3, 2013: Home LIFE Group baptism at the lake – LG Leader baptized 8 ppl

August 4, 2013: Open video room where all our members could share their LG stories (over 40)

August 11, 2013: New atrium desk specifically for LIFE Group connection (coaches to man the desk and take ownership of LG connection)