



**MY MASTER'S
TOOLBOX**

LEADERS HANDBOOK

My master's toolbox

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

SECTION-1	Page nos.
<i>OUTREACH GUIDELINES</i>	
A. GUIDELINES FOR HAVING GOOD BIBLE TALKS.....	3
B. BIBLE TALKS VS DEVOTIONS; THE DIFFERENCE.....	5
C. "DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY"	7
SECTION-2	
<i>MATURING IN CHRIST</i>	
A. DISCIPLING & SANCTIFICATION; ITS SIGNIFICANCE.....	9
B. COUNSELLING SKILLS NEEDED FOR LEADERS-LEARNING FROM JESUS.....	12
C. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING YOUNG CHRISTIANS.....	16
SECTION-3	
<i>BUILDING GREAT FAMILIES (Youth and family)</i>	
A. ROLE OF A FAMILY GROUP LEADER.....	17
B. GUIDELINES FOR DATING AND WEDDING.....	20
C. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING MARRIEDS IN THE CHURCH.....	22
D. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING TEENS & CAMPUS.....	24
E. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING SINGLES.....	26
SECTION-4	
<i>ENTERING A NEW LIFE</i>	
A. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A BAPTISM SERVICE.....	27
B. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A FUNERAL SERVICE.....	30

My master's toolbox

Section-1

OUTREACH GUIDELINES

Jesus called all of us to be fishers of men. There is no other joy like seeing lost people coming to Jesus. And it's the noblest thing that we can do as disciples. Bible talks are a great way to reach out to people. But it's very important to know how to prepare and do a bible talk to have the full impact. The following section will take us through the details. Also, there are guidelines on "Discovery bible study" which is a very simple and effective method to do a study on a passage from the bible as a group.

1A. GUIDELINES FOR HAVING GOOD BIBLE TALKS.

SIZE OF A BIBLE TALK

Bible talks must be small in numbers for them to be impactful. About 10 to 12 in number including the disciples. [If more visitors come that is ok too!]

Jesus operated in small groups (Mark 3:13-19, 6:7, 6:30, 9:2-13). The first-century church met in small numbers, just enough to fit in a home (Acts 4:46, Rom 16:4-5, Philemon 1:2)

Small groups help to make personal connections and make inclusiveness easier in discussions and less intimidating for a new visitor.

PURPOSE OF BIBLE TALKS

To discuss God's word and its practicality in everyday life and draw them into the discussion so that they may develop an interest in studying the word.

To allow them to experience the love of Jesus in action through hospitality fellowship and friendship offered.

To have maximum impact on a visitor in an informal and relaxed setting to develop a desire to know God.

To make a personal connection and get to know their life so it's easier to set up studies.

HOW TO PREPARE A BIBLE TALK

The talk should not be more than 30 minutes. Select a passage and stick to that one text. The use of too many scriptures can be confusing.

My master's toolbox

Have an opening question that can get the discussion started that is not necessarily spiritually inclined but can connect to the main idea of the passage.

Identify the big idea in the passage. Study passage thoroughly to identify that and stick to it. Don't deviate from the main idea.

Design questions around the main idea to draw out a response and discussion. Make the questions clear, useful, and relevant to the group. Questions produce discussion, preaching kills discussions. Ask open-ended questions.

Questions can be formed around these three types

Interpretation – what is happening in the text. Focus on the setting, the people involved, the story/plot emotions involved, what is this passage saying about God, what is this passage saying about people[us]

Application – how does this apply to us. What is this passage talking about you, Bringing it alive to our world and life. Share about yourself.

Contemplation – Is this important to my life, why should I do this? What has stopped me from doing it? How do we justify not doing it, talk about excuses.

When concluding give them a charge. Recap the main question and answer it with the main idea.

SETTING FOR A BIBLE TALK

A home is a good setting. If not you can use a place that is made comfortable with chairs etc. Sitting in a circle is ideal.

Create a warm friendly atmosphere where they feel welcomed and relaxed.

Provide snacks and refreshments that can be put out beforehand or after the talk.

Keep some casual games going before the discussion starts.

Make sure the visitor is introduced to those present. [You could ask everyone in the Bible Talk to introduce themselves as you start the Bible Talk]

Prepare Christians in advance to participate in the Bible Talk and encourage them to answer vulnerably, to help the visitors also to feel comfortable to share.

After the Bible Talk is over, plan to set up an individual time for a Bible study with each visitor according to their availability.

My master's toolbox

1B.BIBLE TALKS VS DEVOTIONS; THE DIFFERENCE

In our congregation, these two terms were widely used to differentiate between two unique midweek meetings that were conducted in yesteryears. Every disciple was expected to attend both the meetings without fail apart from the Sunday service. Even though the English meaning of these words and the context of how we use them differs to some extent, the following table gives certain differences of both, the way it is used in our congregation.

No.	Particulars	Bible Talks	Devotions
1	Definition	Meetings conducted to meet the needs of those who are not part of our congregation/movement	Meetings conducted to meet the needs of those who are part of our congregation/movement
2	Members Expectation	Members / Disciples are encouraged to bring at least one new friend (visitor) to this meeting	Members are encouraged to get direction from the message delivered by the leader of the group to meet the needs of the group
3	Place / Ambience	Place and ambience must be chosen to make the visitors feel special. Can be anywhere indoor or outdoors like on a college campus... Circular seating or an informal setting is better	Generally, the disciples' houses are chosen to conduct devotions. The goal is to edify relationships and encourage learning from one another in these devotional settings.
4	Opening / Closing Prayer	Not necessary as the people who visit may be from different walks of faith.	It is a good practice to do.
5	Introduction	As many new people are expected, it is generally started with everyone introducing their name, job, and answer to a question which the leader asks pertaining to his sharing.	As most of them know one another, any new person is introduced during a good news session or the welcome done by the group member.
6	Game	It is encouraged to start with a game as an ice breaker	Optional.
7	Good news	As a question is asked in the introduction, this can be avoided...	Optional but encouraged to have this as good news can build more faith.
8	Message / Sharing	The leader keeps in mind to engage all to participate and ask different suitable questions to draw his concluding idea. So more of a question and response meeting choosing some generally easy to	The leader understands the needs of the group, chooses a passage from the Bible, and encourages everyone to imitate Christ and follow God's word.

My master's toolbox

		understand parable or a story from the Bible	
9	Snacks	Good to have	Good to have
10	Focus	On winning over the trust and interest of a non-believer.	On knowing the needs of your members

Both Devotionals and Bible talks have three things in common- they cater to small groups and they should be short (max 40 minutes only) and lastly, they include the element of warm fellowship and genuine interest in listening to one another.

My master's toolbox

1C. "DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY"

Discovery bible study is the simplest way for anyone in a bible study group to conduct an effective bible study. This method will help everyone in the group to participate by asking specific questions.

Questions Are the Key.

Connect:

How did God show up in your life this week?

What are you thankful for?

What is causing stress in your life right now?

Were there any lessons you applied or shared?

Did you follow through on your "I will" and "I will tell" statements?

Discover :

Read the passage

Ask one person to read the passage aloud

Close the bible Have someone retell the story in their own words. Ask if Anyone has anything to add to the story?

Discuss:

What does the passage say? (Repeat it in your own words) What does the passage mean? (What does it tell us about God? About people? Or relations

between God and people?) What did you like in the passage? Why?

Apply:

How can I apply this passage to my life this week?

What specifically will you do differently this coming week? (everyone should have a

My master's toolbox

practical "I will" statement.)

Multiply: How can we help one another in our group?

"With whom will I share this Passage this week?"

My master's toolbox

SECTION-2

MATURING IN CHRIST

Just as it gives us tremendous joy to see a baby growing up and start walking on his own and taking care of his needs, it also gives us the joy to see the young disciple of Jesus growing up in his understanding of our Lord Jesus and the bible. The best way to see the great commission fulfilled is when the new disciples start helping others. This has a double impact on helping self and others. Discipling and counseling are the best ways to help people grow when it is done properly with the right motives. These biblical principles are seen throughout the bible and we can learn them better from Jesus and his disciples. These are not only useful for helping young Christians but also useful for helping the older ones to grow into the likeness of Jesus. The following section helps us to understand the purpose and effects of discipling and counseling in-depth and the various aspects of these biblical principles.

2A. DISCIPLING & SANCTIFICATION; ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

What is discipling?

Why do we need discipling?

How do we need to disciple one another?

In the world, we lived for several years independently. Even though we didn't publicly proclaim it our mindset was something like this "It is my life, my rules so don't tell me what to do!"

We saw the result of it, our life was going in a path of 'ever-increasing wickedness'! By the grace of God, we are saved now but we must be careful how we live this life for Christ our Lord. Can we live a Christian life alone and independently? Not at all!

God has given us 3 primary means to sanctify ourselves. Sanctification is the process of making every disciple be set apart for God and His service and transforming them into the image of God.

1. DISCIPLING IS TRAINING TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT

1 Peter 1:2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the **sanctifying work of the Spirit**, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

My master's toolbox

Sanctification - is the work of the Holy Spirit. He does that in person by dwelling in us and directing us daily. Our role is to listen to his promptings and surrender to His will moment by moment.

2. DISCIPLING IS TRAINING TO BE LED BY THE WORD

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 15:3 "Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you"

Word of God is used to sanctify us. So another aspect of discipling is to train the disciples to be led by the Word of God.

3. DISCIPLING THROUGH PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

God also has established the Church - the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit to help us in this journey. Just as in the body every part is needed for each other, in the body of Christ, the Church, we need each other throughout our lives.

So Christian life is not independent but an interdependent life.

GOAL OF DISCIPLING

Paul spoke about how he did it in Colossians 1:28,29 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

What was the goal Paul had in all that he did for people? Present everyone fully mature in Christ!

This is the goal of discipling.

Change of Role in Discipling

Discipling someone has similarities to parenting. When children are small they are fully dependant on the parents, but the right parenting is focusing the children to have their own identities and helping them to grow up as mature adults. The relationship stays life long but the influence will keep changing as children grow up.

Similarly in discipling, our role has to evolve as the disciple matures in Christ.

My master's toolbox

Begin as Teacher

Usually also Advisor

Sometimes a Counsellor

Always a Friend

A young Christian needs a discipler to be a teacher and an advisor and sometimes to be a counselor and always a friend.

They need instruction on how to live a new life. They need guidance on the application of principles learned in studying the Scriptures for their discipleship in daily life.

Like young Christians, new leaders of groups need to be taught and trained by older leaders. The singles who are getting married and newly marrieds by those who are already married, new parents, by experienced parents, new staff, by older staff.

At a certain point, the relationship moves from Over/ Under to more of an advisory role maturity dependent, not the time or age-Dependent

In that case, the discipler primarily is an advisor, but also teaches, sometimes counsels, and remains as a friend as well.

Paul's advice to Timothy when he was leading people was that as a Lord's servant, he must not be quarrelsome. Even to those who oppose us, we are called to not be resentful. Rather teach them gently with the hope that God will grant them repentance.

Discipling is not easy because some of them may not follow your teaching and advice sometimes. But it is so important to guard our hearts that we don't allow any resentment to enter into us.

We must remember we are not here to change the person all alone with our knowledge, understanding, and experience. We are only one of the channels of God and God is the one who has the power to grant them repentance.

The most important part of discipling is to pray for those whom you are discipling, surrender them to God and seek His divine help to move their hearts through Holy Spirit and Spirit to transform them into the image of God.

Study the prayer of Jesus in John 17; study the prayer of Apostle Paul in Eph 3:14-21

My master's toolbox

2B. COUNSELLING SKILLS NEEDED FOR LEADERS

LEARNING FROM JESUS

IN NUTSHELL

(These bullet points are explained in detail in the article/lesson below)

COUNSELLING SKILLS NEEDED FOR LEADERS BASED ON LESSONS FROM JESU

Listen (As Jesus Listens)

Be a humble listener

Hold your judgment long enough to listen and understand fully

Listen for lies

Ask Questions (Jesus did)

The solution-focused question.

Future-focused questions

Obvious Questions

Information Seeking Questions

UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE POINTS BY GOING OVER THE STUDY BELOW

Luke 2:46

After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions.

Jesus is amazing. Even as a 12-year-old, he astonished others. The following article about counseling skills required in leaders is based on insights of a 12-year-old Jesus.

Every Christian leader should have a passion for counseling and be constantly learning from the Master Counselor himself, Jesus.

Let's learn a few lessons from him as a 12-year-old!

Jesus Listens

His parents were confused...where is Jesus? They were on their way home after an exhausting festival time in Jerusalem and Jesus was nowhere to be found. So after a few days of searching, they found him, sitting with the smartest guys of the city - the elders. He was listening to them,

My master's toolbox

asking questions, and growing in his understanding of the human condition, and it astonished his parents. Let's examine Jesus and learn how to better help each other.

Be a humble listener:

Take a position of "not knowing" when others are speaking. Be curious in your heart to hear the perspectives of another's world. Don't prepare your responses as another is speaking. Clear your mind and heart out, so you can bring in your friend's story and learn their perspective on the problem.

Hold to your judgments long enough to get to the heart of the matter:

Too often we quickly respond to others' sharing and cut off their ability to fully share their heart. When you hear something that bothers you or something that may not be right, hold off your comments and allow them to continue to speak. Park your judgments.

To answer before listening— that is folly and shame. Proverbs 18:1

Give your friend the safe & confidential space to dig down and remove some of the depths of their heart. You'll be surprised at how much more you will learn when you park your judgments and continue to listen. Once your friend has had enough time to share, then you may respond with a question like, "Tell me more" or "Can you help me to understand what you just said?" There will always be time later, to share your thoughts and a helpful Scripture to correct what you've heard.

Listen for lies:

Often, we get into our dysfunctions by believing lies and structuring our lives by lies. In psychology, those lies are called cognitive distortions. Christians know them as lies and we know where they come from - our enemy, Satan. But a good listener picks up on lies and can *gently* confront those lies.

When we are personally sensitive to the Word of God, we're able to hear how lies hurt our friends' lives. We can say, "Wait, What?" or "Can you help understand what you just said?" Listening for and clearing up deceptive lies can be of great benefit to others. The Word of Truth is a powerful antidote to the lies of Satan.

Jesus Asks Questions

Why are questions so important? Why can't we just tell each other what to do? Here are a few benefits of asking questions:

My master's toolbox

Questions create an open dialogue

Questions examine our hearts, attitudes, and motives

Questions allow people time to respond less defensively

Questions help us focus on God

Questions lead to more positive and sustainable change

Examples of the many kinds of questions Jesus asked:

The solution-focused question.

Thousands were following Jesus to hear his teachings - they had gone days without food and were hungry. Jesus, as always, had compassion and wanted them fed. He asked his disciples to feed them and they (like us) only saw the problems inherent in feeding so many. They focused on the problem (*that would take a year's wages!*). **Mark 5:37**

Jesus on the other hand focused on the solution. *"How many loaves do you have?"* he asked. *"Go and see."* – **Mark 6:38**

Future-focused questions

Jesus thinks of solutions. Ask questions that consider the future – future-focused questions that seek solutions.

Jesus considered the resources at hand. The disciples responded by finding five loaves and two fish. The rest was up to Jesus. Often if we simply think of our available resources and go after those areas, Jesus can fill in the gaps. Think resources.

Obvious Questions

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" – John 8:1-11

This rhetorical question was designed to drive home a point and can lead to a needed conviction. Asking an obvious question must be well-timed and not be tinged with sarcasm. Jesus wanted this woman to fully understand his love for her, despite her sin, and used the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of the day to help him.

My master's toolbox

Information Seeking Questions

When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" – John 5:6

Perhaps this man did not want to get well – Jesus gives us choices in every situation and we need to be respectful of this for others.

Asking questions like:

"Can you help me understand this?" or... "What else?" ...or "Can you tell me more?"

WHEN TO ASK?:

When the situation is complex or you have too little background. If your friend needs to get in or emotions out or you feel they may be withholding or unaware of their feelings.

It would be a great idea to ask people for their permission before you give out advice. This does two things: first, you show respect to them, and secondly, they now own the advice since they consented to it. It is up to them to take it or leave it, as they choose.

Additionally: Watch Dr. Timothy Sumerlin's talk on the YouTube link provided by channel **Resources4life**.

2C. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING YOUNG CHRISTIANS

Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, [20] and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded** you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

It is Jesus' command that the people who are baptized need to be taught continuously even after baptism.

Just like how we take care of a newborn baby, we are supposed to take care of a spiritual baby.

We need to make sure that baby is spiritually well-nourished.

For this purpose we need to;-

1. Make sure He or she has a discipler in their life who loves them & who will walk with them consistently.

2. Make sure that they are doing their basics.

A. Read Bible

B. Pray every day.

C. Pay Contribution

D. Attend meetings

3. Make sure that they are comfortable confessing their sins & sharing their struggles in their life.

4. Make sure that their questions are answered & their doubts are cleared.

5. Make sure that they have friends in the church.

6. Make sure that their **follow-up studies** are done.

7. Make sure that their gifts are used to edify the church.

My master's toolbox

SECTION-3

Great families are an integral part of the church as they bring stability to the church. When families thrive, churches thrive. A family group leader has a big responsibility in helping the family members to connect well within the families as well as to help connect the families. For this purpose, he/she needs to make sure children get godly values and the right direction from a young age to singlehood to marriage and further. The section below throws light into aspects of helping build great families.

BUILDING GREAT FAMILIES (Youth and family)

3A.ROLE OF A FAMILY GROUP LEADER

INTRODUCTION

In the book of Acts, we see references of the early church meeting together in houses which we can broadly call a house church. This was a very practical and powerful practice when it came to local outreach. The house church model is also a very practically useful one in managing the needs of members, especially when the number of people in the local region increases. This model is similar to Jethro's counsel to Moses.

One or few main leaders cannot serve a large group of people effectively, which is why Jesus himself formed his first set of disciples, called the apostles and this pattern continues effectively even to this day.

Their most immediate and major role being a shepherd, the below-mentioned points help form principles and guidelines for anyone desiring to learn, grow and serve in the role of a family group leader.

The purpose of each family group is twofold: namely,

Edification within the body of Christ, his church *and*
Proclamation of God's good news.

Keeping the above in mind, a Family Group Leader's role would be in a broad sense to shepherd people in the family to be able to love one another, have a learners heart to learn from God and one another, stay united despite the various conflicts that will arise as in any family and continue using that unity to serve the community in and around the family group.

BELOW ARE FEW IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR A FAMILY GROUP LEADER TO KEEP IN MIND:

Leadership In God's Presence (Luke 11:1, John 5:39-40)

My master's toolbox

This means the shepherd should prioritize a consistent walk with God in a way that understands and surrenders to God's direction in personal life and overseeing ministry.

Providing for the family (John 14:26, 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

As the head of the family, the leader should be planning about providing lessons from God's word for the spiritual edification of the family and in doing so inspiring them towards a deeper relationship with God.

Delegating Responsibilities (Acts 6:2-3, Eph 4:11-16)

FG Leaders will have to help members grow in their giftedness through delegating responsibilities as much as possible

Choose and have members appointed for various roles within the family for meeting times and other activities. Some roles within the family group

Assistant FG Leader (support as and when FG leader requires to support)

Worship Leader (Song Leader)

Admin Support (to help with executing meeting, connecting with church admin for any assistance, contribution collection, funeral support, benevolence support, etc)

Fun time facilitator (to help with birthday and other celebrations, and fun times)

Outreach facilitator (to help plan local campaigns or community service outreach events, this include caroling during Christmas)

Hospitality Facilitator (Have someone in charge of planning activities that build relationships, try and meet emotional needs of members, visiting the sick, praying for any requirements in a family, coordinating refreshments during meetings) (Matt 25:36-40, 1 Pet 4:9-10)

FG Leaders will be prayerfully asking the Lord to raise an assistant leader whom they can train and send out for ministry work.

Vision and Goals (1 Cor 14:40, Prov 29:18)

FG Leaders need to assist in planning and making sure members serve with one another in the family group, executing the "Serving With One Another" component of the FG through establishing group ownership of visions, goals, and guidelines.

FG Leaders will assist in planning and executing the "Serving" component of the house church through facilitating an outward focus of prayer, service, and active ministry involvement in and outside the group

Personal Growth (James 1:2, James 2:17)

FG Leaders need to attend FG leadership meetings for their refreshment, fellowship, envisioning, information, inspiration, and support.

FG Leaders need to keep in communication with and report to an assigned Zone leader or assigned leader to gain support and direction when needed.

FG Leaders should periodically participate in regular self-evaluations of themselves and their groups, with a commitment to grow and develop in their gifts and abilities.

Further Responsibilities

My master's toolbox

Seek counsel from the assigned leader for help periodically by communicating the state of the family group. When directed reach out to other mature members for counsel too.

Be quick to help resolve and bring biblical reconciliation when conflicts arise in the family group. Seek help where needed.

Additional Points To Note

Plan well in advance what is to be taught and plan the lesson and meet ahead of time. Avoid heading into a meeting without a plan.

Avoid making last-minute plans.

Avoid making last-minute changes if possible.

Avoid taking sides in a conflict.

Avoid focusing on what you as a leader like more than what the family needs.

Learn from others and make the meeting times as inspiring as practically possible, that the family members feel inspired to be part of it.

My master's toolbox

3B. GUIDELINES FOR DATING AND WEDDING

*Dating is an opportunity for single brothers and sisters to get to know each other at a greater depth in a safe environment. God has created man and woman in such a way that they do get attracted to one another. Those who feel interested in either dating or in just getting to know a particular brother or sister can feel free to approach their family group leaders and initiate to get to know that person.

*This process has to be done through the couple leading them rather than directly approaching them so that Satan does not use the opportunity to lead them into sin.

Ephesians 5:8-11 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light [9](#)(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth) [10](#)and find out what pleases the Lord. [11](#)Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

1 Peter 5: 8-9 *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. [9](#)Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

*The FG leaders are also responsible to set up regular Singles Encouragement Times in group settings as well as individual dates in coordination with other FG Leaders, Sector leaders, and Marriage coordinators. A couple can go on as many dates as it takes them to understand one another and as they feel necessary.

*Dating is a time to discover and understand one another's values, strengths, weaknesses, priorities, desires, and dreams.

*Dating couples need to seek plenty of sound advice from mature godly couples on various aspects of their dating.

Proverbs 15:22 *Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed.*

*Dating couples need to seek God's will in their relationship and follow godly paths.

Proverbs 16:9 *In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.*

*Dates are usually done along with another married couple, another dating couple, or in the home or presence of a married couple in the church. It is also good for the leading couple to get involved in their dating occasionally. When a particular couple becomes serious about their relationship, they can talk to their leading couple and the sector leaders.

My master's toolbox

Wedding:

Marriage is something God has established, and the purpose is to glorify God through a new phase of becoming a married couple. This is the second most important transition of one's life after baptism. Marriage is usually the longest and most intimate relationship we can have with another human being. Hence, it requires a lot of learning and training as well.

Couples who have decided to get married are advised to read Christian marriage books to equip themselves, and also spend time with other mature married couples to learn from them.

They should have one leading couple who are going to guide them and walk with them through the whole process of Marriage registration, premarital studies, meeting with the families and involving them, making and keeping to their budgets, the actual wedding function, and post-marital counseling.

There are certain premarital lessons that the couple needs to attend before the wedding. This includes:

- Approach to marriage
- Difference between men and women
- Role of a husband/ Role of a wife
- Communication
- Resolving conflicts
- Finance and budgeting
- Romance and physical love talk
- Dealing with traditions

My master's toolbox

3C. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING MARRIEDS IN THE CHURCH

It is recommended for mature marrieds to help other marrieds.

If both the spouse are members of the church it is recommended for a mature couple to counseling them consistently. This is a big need especially for young couples for one or two years.

If one spouse is not a member, a mature couple in the church should show hospitality which can build a great rapport for the other one to understand how we love one another.

The couple who is helping other marrieds should be well acquainted with the following secrets of marriage. The goal is to build love and respect between the husband and wife.

Secret 1: Everyone you marry has a weakness. Only God does not have a weakness. So, if you focus on your spouse's weakness you can't get the best out of his strength.

Secret 2: Everyone has a dark history. No one is an angel. When you get married or you want to get married stop digging into someone's past. What matters most is the present life of your partner. Old things have passed away. Forgive and forget. Focus on the present and the future.

Secret 3: Every marriage has its challenges. Marriage is not a bed of roses. Every good marriage has gone through its test of blazing fire. True love proves in times of challenges. Fight for your marriage. Make up your mind to stay with your spouse in times of need. Remember the vow for better for worse. In sickness and in health be there.

Secret 4: Every marriage has different levels of success. Don't compare your marriage with anyone else. We can never be equal. Some will be far, some behind. To avoid marriage stresses, be patient, work hard and with time your marriage dreams shall come true.

Secret 5: To get married is declaring war. When you get married you must declare war against enemies of marriage. Some enemies of marriage are:

- Ignorance, Prayerlessness, Unforgiveness, Third-party influence, Stinginess, Stubbornness, Lack of love, Rudeness

Laziness, Disrespect, Cheating

Be ready to fight to maintain your marriage zone.

Secret 6: There is no perfect marriage. There is no ready-made marriage. Marriage is hard work. Volunteer yourself to work daily on it. Marriage is like a car that needs proper maintenance and proper service. If this is not done it will break down somewhere exposing the owner to danger or some unhealthy circumstances. Let us not be careless about our marriages.

My master's toolbox

Secret 7: God cannot give you the complete person you desire. He gives you the person in the form of raw materials for you to mold the person that you desire. This can only be achieved through prayer, love, and patience

Secret 8: Getting married is taking a huge risk. You cannot predict what will happen in the future. Situations may change so leave room for adjustments. Husband can lose his good job, or you may fail to have babies. All these require you to be prayerful otherwise you might divorce.

Secret 9: Marriage is not a contract. It is permanent. It needs total commitment. Love is the glue that sticks the couple together. Divorce start in the mind and the devil feeds the mind. Never entertain thoughts of getting a divorce. Never threaten your spouse with divorce. Choose to remain married. God hates divorce.

Secret 10: Every marriage has a price to pay. Marriage is like a bank account. It is the money that you deposit that you withdraw. If you don't deposit love, peace, and care into your marriage, you are not a candidate for a blissful home.

Some practical tips:

As leaders, we must make sure couples are spending enough time with each other to connect. When parents are well connected it's a blessing for their children.

Make sure we give enough teaching on marriage relationships at least once a month.

Teach couples to resolve their conflicts on their own, based on Mt 18:15-16, principle.

Teach them to appreciate each other and encourage each other more than looking at the differences.

Help each couple to connect with another couple in the ministry for mutual help.

Remind them often there are no perfect marriages in the world. The goal of marriage is holiness than happiness. As we go through struggles in our lives, God is moulding our character.

More than trying to resolve issues of the marrieds, it's better to focus on nurturing and building marriages.

My master's toolbox

3D. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING TEENS & CAMPUS

1. Christian parents who are committed and involved in the spiritual lives of their teens & Campus.
2. A strong teamwork between the church leaders, the Youth and Family leaders, the parents, the teen workers, and the teens & Campus.
3. Parents being regularly equipped by the church leadership through both discipling and training.
4. Teens being discipled and matured in faith, character, knowledge, and use of God's Word.
5. The majority of the kingdom kids (those who have grown up in the church) being converted and staying faithful through their later teen years.
6. Teen disciples successfully transitioning into campus and/or single ministries where they continue as faithful and giving disciples.
7. Teens of non-members and their families being influenced by teen disciples and their families, studying the Bible, and getting baptized.
8. Strong spiritual relationships with the other teens, campus students, and adults across the church.
9. A strong connection to other Youth and Family Ministries in sister churches, to the International Conference of Youth and Family Ministry, and to HOPE Youth Corps.
10. Strive for A dynamic, fun, and spiritual youth ministry!
11. Treat them like adults. Equals too.
12. Be a great model to them in prayer, purity, and overall Spirituality.
13. Create a judgment-free environment, where they share their fears, feelings, and desires with you.
14. Take them where they are and inspire them to where they can be.
15. Help resolve issues with their families.

My master's toolbox

16. Help them prioritize time with their family during the week.
17. Connect them with healthy couples in local ministries, to have dinner times, shepherding times.
18. Help them with real-life situations, questions on regular basis.

My master's toolbox

3E. GUIDELINES FOR HELPING SINGLES.

1. Treat them like adults. Equals too.
2. Give them godly dreams as early as possible.
3. Be patient as they try and adjust to a life of responsibilities coming from a life stage of freedom, fun, friends only.
4. If you are a mentor, understand the fear they have of the unknown stage in life.
5. Restore them gently through weaknesses and transgressions.
6. Include meals, food as much as possible during time together.
7. Be a great model to them in prayer, purity, and overall Spirituality.
8. Have regular/consistent discipling times.
9. Teach them that God has more in mind for them than just marriage as the next stage.
10. They are in a very unique stage where they can serve most for God's Kingdom. Help them utilize it.
11. Create a judgment-free environment, where they share their fears, feelings, and desires with you.
12. Take them where they are and inspire them to where they can be.
13. Help resolve issues with their families.
14. Help them prioritize time with their family during the week.
15. Connect them with healthy couples in local ministries, to have dinner times, shepherding times.
16. Help them with real-life situations, questions on regular basis.
17. Talk about their jobs. Being responsible with their money. Provide insight into how they can be great employees at the workspace.

My master's toolbox

Section -4

ENTERING A NEW LIFE

There are 2 major events in the life of a disciple of Jesus; first one is entering into a new life in Christ. This happens during his/her baptism. Second one is death of the saint. As we all know death is not the end but it is the door to the eternal life promised by Christ to every believer. Following guidelines help us to understand the importance of these 2 events and make it memorable for the new believer as well as giving a final farewell to the saint who went to be with the lord.

4A. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A BAPTISM SERVICE

1. Be Reverent

The meaning of reverent is feeling or showing deep and solemn respect. Baptism service is an event where a person commits his life to Jesus. So we need to expect every disciple to show complete respect during this service.

Remember the person who is getting baptized is committing their lives to the Almighty God. It is a huge decision.

2. Arrangements to be made ahead of time

As Baptism is a new birth, it would be great to have the place of Baptism free from any distraction or disturbance. Make sure all things are taken care of well ahead of time to avoid any confusion or commotion during the service.

- Make sure there is water in the baptistery.
- The person is walked through the whole event explaining what happens when one is baptized.
- Towel and Change of clothes

Remember, this day and event will be remembered forever by the one who is getting baptized

3. Prioritize Salvation

Receiving Salvation is the most important event in one's life. We want to be saved today not tomorrow! So there needs to be urgency in pleading with the person to be baptized.

For example, any baptism service should not be delayed for the following reasons:

My master's toolbox

- a. The next Sunday / holiday where other disciples/family members are free.
- b. The leader/mentor is busy or not in town
- c. Baptism/Salvation takes precedence over any other criteria or event or person's presence.
- d. It should not be based on other people's convenience.
- e. Find water and get baptized.

Remember: People who got baptized or who followed Jesus in the New Testament made an urgent decision and did not delay them being saved.

4. Time the event

Baptism service should not be too short and also not too long. It shouldn't be dragging or boring. The focus is to encourage the person who is getting baptized and make it memorable for the person so that he or she will remember this day for the rest of their life.

5. Invite near and dear

Whenever possible invite people [friends and family] to witness the baptism. The person's change is a great testimony of God's power and glory. How awesome it will be for our near and dear ones to witness it, if possible.

This is another way of spreading the gospel of Jesus. But always saving one's soul is the priority over people's presence or anything else.

6. Scheduling the event.

The sample schedule can be

- Opening prayer
- Scripture reading explaining Baptism [Romans 6:3-8, Matt 28:18-20 or any other scriptures in the Baptism study]
- Sharing (short and sweet, maximum 10-12 including family). [Optional] Even pre-determine who will share at the baptism. So it can be prepared and meaningful.
- The person can share what moved him/her to love God. He or she can share a passage from the Bible that has moved their heart. [If the person is willing to share]

My master's toolbox

- Song (I have decided)
- The person can get into the baptistery
- Allow the person to pray loudly/ pray in his/her mind to Jesus, committing his life to make Jesus Lord of his/her life.
- The person's true confession (questions being asked by the disciple or leader) can be done standing inside the water or before that also.
- Have a prayer after he/she comes out of the water (praising God for the New Life in Christ)
- Then he/she can go to change.

After he/she comes back changing clothes have or two stanzas of a song (like I've been redeemed etc.)

- A big hug from disciples welcoming him/her to the Kingdom of God.

Remember a good order of schedule will make the event memorable and meaningful.

7. Make it Memorable

Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Celebrate the new life in Jesus. Rejoice.

If affordable provide snacks/food.

Make sure you arrange a bible for him/her in her language. Can be also given a kit which consists of 40 days study book, a copy of guard the gospel, invitation cards, a pocket notebook, and a pen(Optional)

(The first letters of all points spell BAPTISM)

4B. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A FUNERAL SERVICE

First of all, we need to remember that this is a time of intense grief (as well as shock) for the family members of the departed soul. We must think empathetically about the family members.

So we need to put effort to comfort the family members as much as possible.

As soon as we hear about the death give a call and get to know the details about death and the time of the funeral and inform your ministry and the church by posting the news in the WhatsApp group.

Try to fix a time for the funeral depending on the availability of the leader who is involved.

Inform the admin of the church so that the permission for the graveyard is obtained and the cell is prepared on time.

Make sure there are people to go and visit the family and have some singing going on.

This is not a set of rules; just guidelines. You may have to do more than these guidelines that are appropriate to the situation.

Make sure that all of us are following Covid protocols for the safety of the family and all who attends to the grieving family.

- Make sure they get death certificate
- If the death happened in a hospital, expect hospital to issue death certificate stating the

CAUSE OF DEATH; time & date of death

- If the death happens in the house, get the death certificate from a Dr who has been treating the person in the recent past. The Dr has to be approached immediately. If there is a delay most doctors will hesitate to give certificate and then it can become a police case and it will be very complicated.
- If the hospital declares the person was brought dead, they will inform the police immediately and will wait for the police to handle the case.
- In such a case, family has to carry the health and recent treatment related documents to the Doctor who has been treating that person and approach the police station that holds the jurisdiction of the deceased person's residence.

My master's toolbox

- Once the police is convinced they will accompany the family to the hospital with relevant documents and will help to release the body or else they will send the body for autopsy (post mortem)
- During this pandemic time there has to be a Covid -ve or +ve report of the deceased person is also a must for burial.
- If the person was tested recently, the report can be produced, if the person was not tested, it can be tested immediately after death also.
- As soon as the family gets the death certificate, scanned copy of it and the covid report along with the Addhaar copy has to be sent to the Church administration in case the Church has to do the burial.
- Call up the administrator and request to make arrangements in the grave yard.
- Administrator has to go physically with the printout of the copies of the death certificate and covid report to the burial ground to book the grave and direct them to dig the grave.
- If the deceased person was a covid patient there is one particular area of the Christian burial ground is allocated for such people for burial.
- During this pandemic time, it is better to do the burial the same day.
- If the family wants to wait for some relatives to come from out of station and need more time, it is best to keep the body in the hospital mortuary and take it out on the day of burial. Mortuary charges are very minimal.
- If it is a covid patient, most hospitals may not store the body in mortuary
- Once the body is brought to the house, have some disciples nearby to comfort the family and sing songs and pray and read Scriptures.
- Try and provide tea/coffee/food for the immediate family.
- Help the family to arrange freezer box if needed (if the burial is more than 5 hours from the time of death)
- Help the family to arrange a coffin and hearse van according to the budget of the family.
- Coffins are available from Rs.5,000 - 1.5Lakhs!

My master's toolbox

- Hearse vans are available with BBMP or funeral service providers. BBMP provides free service but private firms rates start with Rs.4,500 onwards depending on the type of hearse vans.
- Currently burial ground charge is Rs.5,000/- Funeral Service

A sound system with battery backup with 2 cordless mics and option to connect guitar and corded mic is available at the church office for the use of funerals. Someone can call the administrators and collect from the office and use it at the grave yard.

Make sure that the family carries the PHOTO COPY OF THE ADHAAR CARD, ORIGINAL DEATH CERTIFICATE FROM THE DOCTOR AND 3 PHOTOCOPIES TO BE GIVEN AT THE GRAVE YARD OFFICE.

- An hour before taking the body for burial, move the body to the coffin.
- Have songs and prayer in the house; if needed share Scriptures.
- Then take the body to burial ground.
- At the burial ground, if it is not a covid patient, they will allow the body to be kept in the chapel to conduct prayer service.
- If it is a covid patient, the body has to be directly taken to the grave and we can do prayer there.
- At the burial ground, have some songs, prayer and have few people share about the deceased person - give priority for the family but don't force the family members because they are under a lot of grief; some may share some may not be able to share. Give them the freedom to choose.
- After the sharing have a short eulogy (a speech or piece of writing that praises someone or something highly, especially a tribute to someone who has just died.) & short sermon
- Sermon may include Scriptures that gives hope to the family about resurrection and may inspire those who are witnessing to turn to Jesus for eternal life.
- Close out with prayer and take the body to the grave • At the grave have a song if needed, a prayer and give chance for the family members and others to pay last respect and families may kiss the deceased.
- With the permission of the family, cover the face with a cloth and cover the coffin.

My master's toolbox

- Lower the coffin.
- You may quote Ecclesiastes 12:7 “..the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.” and drop some mud and others will follow.
- Continue to comfort the family members and all those who are grieving.
- If the family has decided a date for memorial service, you may announce then and there about it or you may announce that the family will decide the date and inform later.
- Whoever conducts the burial has to sign the ledger at the graveyard.
- Pay the charges at the burial ground and take receipt.
- Help the family to make payment for hearse van and transportation etc.
- Family member has to meet the official at the office of the grave yard and get information about the procedure to get the final death certificate from the BBMP.
- Do as much as possible to comfort the family by providing them food, transport back home etc.
- Make sure that people who are close to the family visit and pray and comfort the family.

Names & Phone numbers of Church Administrators

- Devaraj: +91 93434 09779
- Grackraj: +91 99164 35589
- Raju: +91 98441 21806
- Office landline: 080-41467118

Sample of Appropriate Scriptures to read or to base the sermon

- Romans 8:35, 37-39
- John 14:1-3
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- John 11

My master's toolbox

- 1 Cor 15

Memorial Service

It is not compulsory to have a memorial service but it is a good thing to do to remember the deceased person and thank God for the life of that person. It is not necessary to arrange food - leave it to the family to handle it according to their financial situation. Encourage them not to feel obliged to spend a lot of money especially if they are not financially sound.

- Songs
- Prayer
- Sharing
- Short sermon
- Song and prayer
- Fellowship