

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

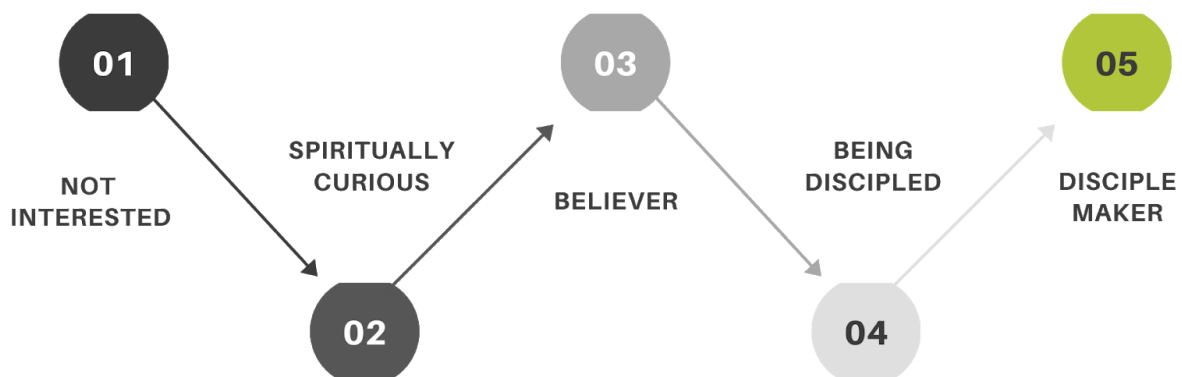
# How to Make Disciples Online - Episode 171

## *Building a Successful Digital Ministry Strategy (Part 1)*

While most churches have shifted to online services, there's still a lot to learn. Developing a strong digital ministry strategy is a lot more than simply putting the usual Sunday service online, and 10 months into this pandemic, many churches are seeing declining online engagement. Fewer and fewer people are tuning in, most churches don't know what to measure, and their team isn't structured for successful digital ministry.

If you want your church to thrive in 2021, you need to figure out how to make disciples digitally. In order to do that successfully, you need to understand the spiritual journey and how to reach people where they are. In the first episode of this 3-part series, Tony and Amy share what we're learning about making disciples using digital strategies.

### *The 5 Stages of Our Spiritual Journey*



#### NOT INTERESTED

- In this stage of the spiritual journey, faith is not on a person's radar. They may be too busy, disillusioned or apathetic towards church and faith.
- In order for someone to take a step to the next stage, something needs to happen to pique their curiosity in faith.

## SPIRITUALLY CURIOUS

- The curiosity could come from a relationship or a life event: People become more interested in spiritual conversations, and possibly what your church has to offer.
- To move to the next stage this person needs to make a decision to follow Jesus.

## BELIEVER

- They have decided to commit their life to Jesus, and they begin to engage more intentionally with a church.
- We all know we can't stay in this stage as a new believer: To continue growing as a disciple this person needs to take steps towards spiritual maturity.

## BEING DISCIPLED

- In this stage we experience spiritual catalysts that help us grow our faith. We're engaging in the discipleship pathway with others.
- For too many, though, the faith journey stops here and they don't take the critical next step.

## DISCIPLE MAKER

- In this stage people begin to intentionally build relationships with people outside of the church and faith. They begin to think more about what they can bring to their church rather than what they get out of their church.
- Our strategies as a church should be designed to help every person get to this stage of their journey.

## *Keys to Communicating with Outsiders and Insiders*

- A key mistake churches make is focusing on *insiders* in public places where we're crossing paths with *outsiders*. In other words, they focus on people in Stage 3 or 4 online in places where they might be reaching people who are in Stage 1 or 2.
- Most churches right now are focusing on keeping insiders engaged and missing opportunities to engage with people outside the faith.
- We need to strategically use digital content for both discipleship *and* evangelism.
- **Communicating with Insiders**
  - Remember this communication is internal and not intended for everyone.
  - Use platforms that are less public like email or Facebook Groups, GroupMe, Slack, or your church's app.
  - Focus your messaging on celebrating your mission and vision, the life of the church family, and invite insiders to take next steps in faith like getting baptized, being generous with their resources, or serving. Equip them to reach outsiders.

- The call to action for insiders should be to point them to their next step in their spiritual journey.
- **Communicating with Outsiders**
  - This communication is more external and intended for everyone.
  - Use platforms that are more public like your website, social media, YouTube etc.
  - Be intentional about how to build your email list of people that aren't currently connected to your church.
  - Focus your messaging on celebrating your community and the people in it, answer real life questions about marriage, finances, relationships, mental health, etc.
  - Try to be genuinely helpful for the people in this group.
  - Demonstrate the fruits of the spirit, so that they want to be part of the church.
  - The call to action should be to point them to their very first (small) steps. It's a big step to ask them to come to a service or watch service online every week or join a small group. Focus instead on baby steps like reading an article or subscribing to your email or sharing a prayer request.

## Next Steps

- Download our [FREE guide](#) to Designing Your Digital Ministry Strategy.
- Take some time to talk through these questions with your leadership team:
  - Why do we exist as a church?
  - What does our community look like?
  - Who are we trying to reach?
  - Do we have a digital strategy that accomplishes our mission and actively reaches our community?
- Review the 5 Stages of a Spiritual Journey and then answer these questions, as well:
  - Do you have a digital next step and in-person next step for people at each stage of the journey?
  - Is your discipleship path clear and easy to understand?
  - Review your messaging (both online and in-person) and see which areas are geared towards outsiders and which might be focused on insiders. What needs to change?
- **Need more help? Let's talk.** If you need help with your digital ministry strategy and structuring your staff to support it, take a look at our [Strategic Planning Process for Digital Ministry](#).

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at [theunstuckgroup.com/episode171](https://theunstuckgroup.com/episode171).