

Circle of Hope – Develop



As people with few options are contacted by believers from a local neighborhood church, it is imperative that the connection continue.

The connection allows for positive change to take place as a believer journeys with the newly contacted neighbor often because of a compassionate product outreach.

It is a spiritual connection that takes place. Discipleship is helping people new in Christ to gain life skills in all areas of life. Not only should a person grow to learn how to study God's word, pray, obey the Lord (Mt 28:18-20) but he/she must be shown how the truths of a new life in Christ enable them to become new in all areas of life.

We can't limit discipleship to merely biblical knowledge. Discipleship must include godly skills in work, money management, relationships with those around you and more.

With this in mind, we have developed skill-acquisition tools for the local church in two categories – youth and adult.

Discussion points:

- Why were you able to gain employment?
- Who taught you the skills to get your first job?
- Who encouraged you to work?
- What if this encouragement was not present in your life?

Cru Inner City gives long-term attention to those who are trapped in the cycle of poverty, helping them overcome the odds and develop into functioning members of society. We must give practical hope!

Clearly, the desperately poor need more than just physical resources. They need Jesus. And they need life transformation. We accomplish this through two effective components of career and youth development:

- **S.A.Y. Yes! Centers for Youth Development** S.A.Y. Yes! Centers are serving 3,500 children in America. While homicide is now the second leading cause of death among young people age 10 and older, these Centers provide children with a safe haven between the hours of 3 and 8 p.m. — the hours they are most at risk of being lost to the streets. This incredible program provides an environment where young people hear the gospel and encounter solid Christian role models. Many centers also include reading and math tutoring to help students succeed at school. (In large central-city schools and urban-fringe schools, the majority of fourth- and eighth-graders rank in the bottom 10th percentile for reading.)

• **Adult Development** — a proven strategy for moving the unemployed/underemployed into fulfilling careers. It involves five tools: *Holistic Hardware*, *CareerLink*, *WorkNet*, *BeyondBars*, and *New Focus*. This is not simply a job-training program. The objective is to introduce both a relationship with Christ and crucial career skills to help the inner-city person become a thriving member of society, to productivity as participants in society — and providing strong testimony to God’s love.

Holistic Hardware, which is the most user-friendly of the adult development tools, helps move people from crisis into productive, self-sufficient lives through ten video sessions and ongoing mentoring by volunteers. Developed out of a successful 16-year program at a rehab ministry in Harlem, it has been used by inner-city churches and ministries nationwide since 1998. At the heart of this program: acquiring life skills.

Encouraging a Movement of Development in Your City

If we want to see a movement of adult and youth development sites blanket our cities and make a comprehensive difference among those who have few options, we must mobilize volunteer leaders to facilitate the sites. It is always a temptation to go with a professional, paid leader; however, financial resources would limit the growth of these development sites in our cities.

Some of the kinds of leaders surfaced, especially for the S.A.Y. Yes! Centers, have been teachers who are available after school, people with unique shift work, firemen, retirees, people on disabilities, pastors, moms or dads not working outside the home, etc. Don’t limit God as to whom you and your partner churches raise up to lead the sites.

The adult development sites are more flexible as to when they operate; therefore, the candidates to give leadership are more numerous.

Having described the dynamics of a development movement in your city, it is important to linger long at getting the local partner church to surface the facilitator. It should be a supplement to have outside individuals give their time and talent to a Center in an inner-city church. Do not turn away volunteers from resource churches. However, they should be a supplement to the leadership in the local partner church.

In light of the description above, how would you creatively help the local church uncover leaders for their development sites?

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