

# DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP

USING TECH TO GROW FAITH  
ALL WEEK LONG



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***IBSA* | Leaders**

# **DISCOVER HOW TO LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO GROW FAITH EVERY DAY.**

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**there is a link to more information.**

**To see a demonstration of this content,  
attend a live training or watch the video. **



# **DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP**

## **DISCIPLESHIP AT A DISTANCE**

From the very beginning, Christians embraced the technology of their time to make disciples, not just in person, but at a distance. Much of the New Testament consists of letters written to churches and individuals to instruct them in what it means to follow Jesus. These letters were only possible because of Roman roads, a common trade language, and accessible writing materials.

Today, we have new opportunities to use modern technological tools to disciple a new generation of believers. Just as the early church leveraged the best communication tools available in their day, we can do the same in ours. Smartphones, social media, video conferencing, podcasts, and Bible apps allow us to extend teaching, encouragement, and accountability far beyond Sunday gatherings. These tools are not a replacement for face-to-face relationships, but they can strengthen them, keeping discipleship conversations alive throughout the week.

## **DIGITAL REALITY**

In 2025, 90% of Americans own a smartphone.   
Baby Boomers spend an average of over 4 hours on their phones a day. Gen Z will spend almost 6.5 hours on their phones daily. 

While excessive screen time can contribute to issues with social interaction and mental health, it also represents an unprecedented opportunity. Most people are already comfortable learning, connecting, and sharing through their devices. Church leaders can redeem this space by using modern technology not as a distraction, but as a powerful tool for making disciples.

## **DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY**

Today's technology allows the church to go where people already are - on their phones, tablets, and computers. From Bible apps and podcasts to livestreams and video calls, these tools make it possible to share God's Word instantly, answer questions in real time, and encourage believers throughout the week. Unlike any other time in history, we can connect with someone across the street or across the globe with the tap of a screen.

But the opportunity is more than reach. It's about depth. Digital tools give us ways to provide regular teaching, personal encouragement, and accountability that strengthen in-person relationships. Used wisely, they can create rhythms of engagement that help believers grow in their faith every day, not just on Sundays.

## **FROM PROMOTION TO DISCIPLESHIP**

Too often, churches use digital platforms mainly for announcements and event promotion. While communication is important, discipleship goes further. It means creating content and conversations that help people follow Jesus.

This shift requires intentionality. Instead of only posting “Come to this,” we can also share “Here’s something to help you grow.” That might mean posting a short devotional video, sharing a Bible reading plan, hosting an online Q&A, or sending out prayer prompts. The goal is to move from using technology as a digital bulletin board to using it as a discipleship pathway—meeting people where they are and helping them take their next step in following Christ.

### **Pause to Ponder**

How is your church currently utilizing technology to disciple people?

# AI & DISCIPLESHIP

## WHAT AI CAN DO

When used with wisdom and care, AI can be a valuable tool for discipleship. AI can quickly help you create everything from lesson plans and devotionals to coloring sheets and activities.

## WHAT AI CANNOT DO

AI cannot love, pray, or walk with someone through life's challenges. It has no heart, no Spirit-led discernment, and no ability to truly know a person. While it can be useful, it is prone to error, can offer poor or even harmful advice, and may create unhealthy dependence if treated like a friend or spiritual mentor. AI can serve as a helpful assistant, but it is a poor substitute for the living presence of Jesus and the fellowship of believers.

## Additional Resources

*Ultimate Guide to AI (For Pastors and the Church)* by Carey Nieuwhof 

*How AI Can Transform Discipleship in Your Church* by Kenny Jahng 

*How Can Church Leaders Use AI in Discipleship* by David Thorne 

## HOW YOU CAN USE AI

"In my Next Gen context, I upload my sermons and have AI create small group guides, draft clear emails, and even make simple graphics for social media (nothing fancy, but effective). What I've found is that using AI for these kinds of admin-heavy tasks frees me up to focus on the most important things: teaching, shepherding, and other top priorities. That's the real benefit: AI helps minimize the busy work so we can maximize our impact where it matters most." - Daniel Kim, Student Ministry Pastor, Gospelife Church

"We've been using AI to edit sermon clips and to review our sermons to help build devotions that we send to our congregation each morning." - Daniel Good, Lead Pastor, Cornerstone, Savoy

"I'm using AI to make coloring sheets for kids in our services." - Sam Neill, Pastor, Hoosier Prairie Baptist, Louisville

"I use AI a lot for more relevant illustrations." - Rich Barnett, Church Planter, Bushnell

"I'm in charge of editing and publishing prayer requests on our website at my work, and I use AI to correct grammar, punctuation, and to summarize prayer requests. We have hundreds of prayer requests a week. It's definitely a time saver!" - Tonya Davis, On-Air Personality at WCIC, KJIL, KHYM




# DIGITAL TOOLBOX

## CURATION

With an endless supply of digital resources within easy reach of every member of your church, it can be overwhelming for those you lead to discern which resources are worth their time and attention, let alone their trust. One valuable role church leadership can play is that of a curator. Here are a few ideas on how you might select the best tools for your church.

- Create a Spotify or Apple Music worship playlist of songs your church frequently sings.
- Highlight trustworthy content creators.
- Recommend helpful podcasts or podcast episodes.
- Train groups on how to use valuable Christian apps such as YouVersion or Sow Evangelism.


## VIDEO & LIVESTREAM

In addition to recommending content others have created, your church can also create valuable resources! A cell phone and popular video editing apps, such as CapCut , DaVinci Resolve , and iMovie , have made video-making easier than ever.



Here are a few ways you can use video to disciple your church.

- Midweek sermon follow-ups or message highlights
- A series of videos on a topic of interest
- Short, devotional videos
- Highlight videos made by others
- Testimony highlights

Livestreaming of services is another way to use video to disciple. A livestream allows your church to minister to those unable to get out physically, those traveling, sick, or otherwise unable to attend. Additionally, most new attenders will check out your church via livestream before ever setting foot in the door. Tools like Church Online Platform  can allow you to engage with those who are watching your services remotely.



## **ONLINE GIVING**

Online giving is more than just a convenience. It reflects the way people manage and spend their money today, making it a natural fit for church life. By offering online giving, churches not only provide a simple and accessible way to give but also create opportunities to teach biblical stewardship and how Christians should view their finances. In addition, online giving encourages consistency and faithfulness, since generosity is no longer tied to whether someone is physically present each week.

Most church management software (ChMS) platforms offer giving options. Freestanding options are also available from vendors like:

- Tithely 
- Pushpay 
- SubSplash 

## TEXT MESSAGING & EMAIL

While text and email are commonly used by churches to promote events, they can also be avenues to deliver and follow up on discipleship. Using a service that integrates with your Church Management Software (ChMS) can be a strategic way to avoid managing multiple databases. Text In Church  and Gloop  are popular text service options.

Text Messaging (short, personal, and frequent)

- Daily or Weekly Scripture Verses
- Prayer Prompts
- Check-ins – Personally ask, “How can I pray for you today?” or “How’s your reading plan going?”
- Spiritual Challenges – Encourage small action steps like “Read Psalm 23 and reflect on one verse that speaks to you today.”
- Follow-up from Sermons
- Encouragement Notes

Email (longer, more detailed, and less frequent)

- Weekly Devotional Emails – Share a short teaching or life application connected to your sermon series.
- Discipleship Resource Roundups – Recommend podcasts, articles, or Bible studies
- Testimony Spotlights – Feature a member's faith story to inspire others.
- Prayer Prompts & Lists – Send updated prayer needs from the congregation or mission partners.
- Discussion Questions – Provide questions for personal reflection or small group conversation based on recent sermons.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is more than a place for announcements—it can be a powerful tool for spiritual growth. By sharing Scripture, video devotionals, testimonies, prayer requests, and faith challenges, church leaders can encourage and equip believers throughout the week. Every social media post should have a specific audience in mind. The message, theme, and even the format (text, photo, or video) should be tailored to that audience.





### **COMMUTER BIBLE**

Commuter Bible is a podcast audio Bible reading plan designed to match your weekly schedule. [!\[\]\(cbe2492b119e39e02a1dab2af4a4b296\_img.jpg\)](#)



# YouVersion

YouVersion  was founded by Bobby Gruenewald (a native of Decatur, Illinois), and Life.Church in Edmond, OK. YouVersion aims to connect everyone, everywhere to the Word of God every day. Their Bible App  has been downloaded almost 1 billion times.

## PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL TOOLS

The YouVersion Bible App offers endless Bible translations, reading plans, guided prayer, and videos. With reminders, badges, streaks, and connecting with friends, YouVersion encourages Bible engagement.

## CHURCH TOOLS

YouVersion Connect allows churches to create a church profile with an in-app Page, post updates, and access church insights and technical support.





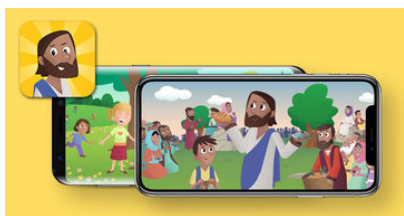
# The Bible App FOR KIDS

## ENGAGE KIDS


The Bible App for Kids , from YouVersion and OneHope, brings Bible stories to life with colorful illustrations, touch-activated animations, and kid-friendly narration. Fun facts, interactive elements, and rewards make Scripture exploration engaging and encourage kids to return again and again.

## FREE KIDS CURRICULUM

Churches can use the FREE Bible App for Kids Curriculum, which includes animated stories, memory verses, songs, activities, and leader guides. Available for preschool and elementary ages.





## Did you know...

Life.Church, which founded and runs YouVersion, also offers numerous free resources online, including sermon outlines, media graphics, worship music, and kid and student lessons. Check out Open.Life.Church 



# Lectio 365

## GUIDED PRAYER

Lectio 365,  created by 24-7 Prayer,  is designed to help people pray the Bible daily. Guided prayers are available for each morning, midday, and evening.

The prayers are written in the style of “Lectio Divina” or “Divine Reading” of Scripture, which aims to help users meditate on and pray Scripture. Each devotional follows the format of P.R.A.Y.

Pause, breathe, and be still in God's presence.  
Rejoice with a Psalm and reflect on Scripture.  
Ask God to help you and those you care about.  
Yield to God; welcome his love, his plans, and his presence into your day.





# SOW EVANGELISM

Sow Evangelism  is designed to motivate and mobilize a church in evangelism.

## PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE

This app helps you create a list of those you are praying evangelistically for and pray for them daily. You'll find encouragement from daily scripture and prayer that will encourage you to "do the work of an evangelist."

## INDIVIDUAL AND CHURCH TRACKING

App users can track conversations, prayer, and acts of love with those they are praying for. These are the seeds they are sowing! Church leaders can track engagement and progress for their church.

**Contact IBSA to learn more about how you can use SOW Evangelism!**

**FREE FOR IBSA  
CHURCHES**

**SUPPORT OFFERED  
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# OTHER APPS



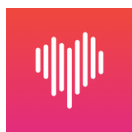
## **RIGHTNOW MEDIA**

A subscription-based streaming library of video Bible study and discipleship resources. Pricing by church size.



## **OUR DAILY BREAD**

The classic daily devotional, available in an app.



## **DWELL**

Audio Bible. Multitude of translations, voices, and audio backgrounds. \$39.99/year



## **PRAYERMATE**

Track prayer requests and be reminded to pray.



## **ECHO PRAYER**

Track prayer requests and be reminded to pray.



## **HALLOW**

A popular Roman Catholic prayer app.



# NEXT STEPS



If you could choose one digital tool to strengthen your discipleship ministry, what would it be - and why?

How could this tool help you make a greater impact in discipling your people?

What skill, training, or information would you need to use this tool effectively?

Who in your church or ministry could partner with you to make the most of this tool?

What obstacles might you face in using this tool, and how could you address them?

What's one small step you could take this week to start exploring or implementing this tool?





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