

Leader's Guide
A New Creation
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A New Creation is a simple, inexpensive discipleship tool that I have used in discipling many new believers and other Christians over the years. It is highly adaptable and simple to use. Below you will find some specifics about how ANC is implemented. However, this resource is designed to be contextualized by the user. So, make it fit your ministry, and your approach.

What is ANC designed to do?

- To disciple new believers through an entry-level training course.
- To disciple older Christians through systematic small group Bible study
- To provide a place where those outside the Church can explore Christianity in a safe environment.

What is the heart of ANC?

- A commitment to discipleship as a core mission of the local church.
- Unconditional acceptance of new believers and seekers, giving them lots and lots of room to ask questions, disagree, and grow. This will include accepting their failures, and may require insulating them from "older" Christians for a while.
- A belief that authentic relationship is the only way to do discipleship. Small groups are my favorite vehicle for ANC.
- The realization that discipleship is accomplished largely by imitation. So the key question when choosing facilitators is: "would we want our new believers to become like this person?"
- The idea that discipleship is a process of spiritual formation over time, not a series of courses. The test of any discipling enterprise is the change in the hearts and lives of the participants. Graduation certificates prove little.

How can ANC be used?

- For small group discipleship classes
- For adult elective or mid-week study
- For home fellowship groups
- For individual or 1:1 Bible study
- For youth discipleship programs
- For house church settings
- For the many formats that have not yet been invented

How does ANC achieve results?

- Focus: on exploring Jesus and the Bible in a caring, relational context.
- Study: by an inductive method makes students responsible for their own learning.
- Scripture: they dig for answers in the Word itself.
- Reinforcement: through Scripture memorization and personal action projects.

- Relationship: in small groups that will maximize learning while building strong bonds with newcomers.

How would an ANC class work?

A new believer or an interested seeker can join the group immediately.

A rotating schedule, with newcomers entering at any point can be very effective and flexible. This means no waiting for newer Christians or the spiritually curious.

Begin each class with a heavy dose of relationship time. Keep it up throughout the experience.

The group facilitator can present a brief teaching on the week's session. *ANC* works best in a non-lecture environment, making participants responsible for their own learning.

If the group is large, you can divide into sub-groups of four or so, facilitated by qualified staff to discuss the week's questions. Encourage students to share their own questions.

The group facilitator can ask for feedback on the "Your Turn" section of the session. This will provide an opportunity to support the new Christian in living out his or her faith, and the help seekers see the faith as lived out.

After discussion, the facilitator can take prayer requests. Conversational prayer, emphasizing simple, one-sentence expressions of faith, is a non-threatening way to ease people into prayer. However, many other forms of prayer can also be powerful

Staff people can stay in touch with students by way of phone, email, IM, etc. during the week. This contact should be non-intrusive and take place only if the participant has agreed in advance.

If the church uses altar workers, they can bring those who responded to an appeal in a service to the next group session.

Some churches will want to have a "graduation" exercise. If that day comes, make it a big deal, with certificates, a meal, etc

What happens after ANC?

Some groups will want to stay together and just move on to other topics, projects, etc. This can make *ANC* an organic way to develop fellowship-based small groups. Other churches will prefer additional discipleship experiences or ministry involvement.

When should we use ANC?

Obviously, the best attendance occurs when most people are in church anyway. This means Sunday morning in most cases. Getting new believers and seekers into the

spiritual discipline of corporate worship is a fringe benefit. However, be flexible. Adapt *ANC* to your local situation and way of "doing church." The best ideas will be your own!

What now?

- Familiarize yourself with the *ANC*.
- Select spiritually qualified facilitators who have a heart for seekers and new believers.
- Train the facilitators. The best method is to take them through *ANC* as a group.
- Make the group's existence know, but also emphasize inclusion by relationship.

orientation session
a new creation

1. relationship time [do something fun!]
2. introductions
3. what is a *new creation*?
 - an entry-level small group, discipleship experience for those new to or investigating the christian faith.
 - a place to learn without pressure
 - a place for questions
 - a place for making friends
 - scheduled on rotating basis so new people can join at any time
4. what are the goals of *anc*?
 - to investigate the bible
 - to grow spiritually in our friendship with Christ
 - to network with christians and with those taking a look at christianity
 - to begin growing into prayer as a way of life
5. how will *anc* meetings work?
 - open space for connecting with each other
 - teaching that launches questions and dialog
 - prayer
 - attention to individual needs for prayer and support
 - variety of formats and settings for meetings
6. what can I do between meetings?
 - read the teaching for the week, look up the bible verses and write your answers to the questions. (one question per day is plenty)
 - talk with God about your life and the needs of the others in the group
 - stay in touch by e-group, IM, or whatever method your group likes
 - invite a friend to the next group time
7. how does the group dialog stay on track?
 - we respect everyone in the group, and their point of view
 - we are not looking for “right” answers
 - we don’t interrupt or condemn each other
 - we stay on the subject-mostly
 - we try not to dominate the session so others can share
 - we speak from the heart
 - we interact about the week’s teaching, but consider our lives to be part of it
8. group exercise for the first meeting:

- take the group through a basic explanation of *anc*
- divide into discussion groups if you have lots of people
- ask each person to share some aspects of their spiritual journey with their group
- ask each person submit a prayer request by writing it on an index card
- have the cards turned in
- close in prayer for the group, lifting the cards to the Lord
- as individuals give permission, form a group prayer request list

9. for next week:

- read session 1 and work through the exploratory questions
- remember to pray for class requests
- bring your booklet back to the group next week.

10. what happens at the end of ANC?

- additional discipleship experiences are available
- ministry involvement is also available
- the group may decide to just stay together and move on to other topics or activities