



WELS DISCIPLESHIP

Fall 2018 Conference Report

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A Blessed Beginning

The WELS Commission on Discipleship (formed from the merging of Adult Discipleship and Youth & Family Ministry) along with elected district coordinators met on September 20th at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. The mission of discipleship is “... **to provide resources, encouragement and training to assist congregations as they seek to strengthen individuals and families in their connection to Christ and their ongoing walk of faith.**”

Recently ...

- **2018 International Youth Rally** – 2,100 attendees at Bowling Green State University, OH under the theme “Never Alone”. The 2020 Rally will be held at University of Tennessee-Knoxville, TN. Dates are still pending.
- **“Kids Connection”** – free samples mailed out this fall encouraging congregations to use as a youth ministry resource. Subscribe online at www.kidsconnection/nph.com

Key Areas of Discipleship

Three key, broad areas of discipleship were identified for immediate prioritization and goal-setting:

- Member Integration & Absenteeism
- Family Ministry
- Youth Ministry

MEMBER INTEGRATION GOALS

Year 1 –

- Develop biblical description of what a “fully-assimilated” member looks like.
- Identify “best practices” (both large and small) within every district to share online.
- Create a module on the Congregational Services online resource center for “intentional assimilation & follow up”.

Year 2 –

- Create Elder training resources or identify materials already in use within districts and post to Congregational Services online resource center.
- Organize tracking options for member worship attendance.
- Produce Exit Survey for backdoor losses.

FAMILY MINISTRY GOALS

Marriage Enrichment

Year 1 –

- Find person within every district who is passionate and can be a local “expert”.
- Create options for marriage enrichment retreat (e.g. weekend, 4 sessions, quarterly get togethers, etc.)
- Evaluate marriage enrichments for financial affordability and time availability.
- Begin planning brief marriage-tip materials, using a variety of delivery methods: email, podcasts, video-shorts, etc.
- Work with NPH on couple’s devotional books.

Year 2 –

- Begin to work the plan.
- Roll out expanded schedule of marriage enrichments that best fits every district needs.
- Provide more web-based resources on the Congregational Services online center.
- Partner with NPH on recommendations for marriage devotional materials.

Catechism - create one-page instructional for how to use catechism within the family.

Confirmation –

- Create a module that models ways for parents to be involved.
- Identify congregations “doing it well” (best practices).
- Evaluate if there’s a need for a confirmation task-force.

YOUTH MINISTRY GOALS

- **Equip parents** as primary caregivers of their children –
 - Conduct district-level survey of family needs
 - Identify best practices from WELS congregations modeling parent/youth spiritual growth
 - Develop online resources family devotional life
- **Sunday School** - Identify congregations “doing it well” (best practices)
- **International Youth Rally & district summer camps** – Get coordinators together to share resources