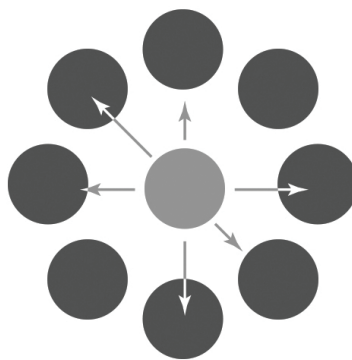


A PATH FOR
YOUR FIRST YEAR
OF LEADING HUDDLE

HUDDLE LEADER GUIDE



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HUDDLE LEADER GUIDE

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PART 1

**BEFORE
YOU BEGIN**

PURPOSE OF THIS **LEADER GUIDE**

This guide is a response to people who have asked for a more detailed resource as they begin to lead their first few Huddles. In the past, my teams and I were leery about putting out such a resource, because we didn't want to convey the idea that there is a magic formula to leading a Huddle. So let us say from the outset that **there is no perfect formula.**

However, we also think it is helpful to provide a basic framework for the first year of a Huddle. That's what you'll find here. At the same time, this guide is meant to teach you how to find freedom within that framework. This is another way of saying that each Huddle leader should discern the best way forward for their Huddle. Each Huddle, each leader, and each participant is different. Over 20+ years of leading Huddles and Huddle leaders, I have never seen a Huddle look like any other Huddles I have led. But there are also similarities in every Huddle based on values, principles, and practices that you find in this guide.

Our one caveat: This guide cannot compensate for you not having been in a Huddle where you were the participant. It is essential that you be in a Huddle before leading one. I can't emphasize that strongly or loudly enough.

I pray that you will find this revised version of the Huddle leader's guide to be a helpful resource that aids you during your first year of Huddle.

HOW TO USE THIS **LEADER GUIDE**

This guide consists of three sections.

- Part 1 lays the foundation for Huddle, and gives an overview of the framework and how the freedom you can find within it, while also providing details you'll need to know heading into your first Huddle.
- Part 2 is the framework for the first year of a Huddle.
- Part 3 includes some additional notes as well as thoughts on how to lead Huddle once you've finished going through the LifeShapes and the framework provided here. It also includes the Appendix.

Take time to read through the entire guide before diving into your Huddle, because this guide contains many puzzle pieces that fit together

into an integrated whole. Also, please note that throughout the book, you'll find strategic places for you to take notes via short exercises to help you discern the path God is taking your Huddle. Put these to good use.

You'll want to keep your copy of *Building a Discipling Culture* regularly have at your side, as it is a superb reference guide, particularly in Part 3 of the book, which goes into meticulous detail on how to lead Huddle. This revised guide coordinates with the third edition of that book, which was released in 2017.

There is also a revised Huddle participant guide that mirrors the framework in this book. It will be quite helpful for the people you are huddling.

Lastly, throughout this book you will find coaching tips that other leaders have found really helpful in leading Huddles. As I have often said before: "You'll make mistakes along the way—just make different ones than we've already made!"

WHAT IS **HUDDLE?**

In a moment, let's begin with a bullet-point list defining a Huddle. But first, it's important to clearly state that a Huddle is a vehicle designed is for current or future leaders. Over 20 years, the discipleship movement that you and I are a part of has proven that if you disciple leaders well and give them the tools, vehicles, and principles to disciple, everyone in your church will be disciplined. So as you begin the journey of leading a Huddle, remember that it's crucial for you to invite leaders into the discipling relationship with you.

HUDDLE IS:

- A place to directly disciple your current or future leaders in mission and discipleship
- A place to give and receive encouragement and accountability
- For a group of 4 to 10 people (we recommend starting with 4-6 people)

- Regular and consistent in its rhythm of meeting (at least every other week, but usually held weekly)
- Led by the Huddle leader
- Something you are invited into by the leader. This is not something people bring a friend to. If you lead a Huddle, then it is your Huddle, and you set the terms, including whom you choose to disciple and invite.
- A privilege, not a right
- Relaxed and fun. Laughter should happen regularly!
- Dependent on openness and honesty within the life of the Huddle
- Helping people answer two questions each time they meet:
 - a. What is God saying to me?
 - b. What am I going to do about it?
- For a season only, not forever. We tend to ask people to commit for a church ministry year at a time. Obviously, your current leaders remain in Huddles for as long as they are leading people, but you will want to shake things up from time to time.
- Measured by growth in maturity and fruitfulness of members
- Something that multiplies over time, as members start their own Huddles

Coaching Tip: Your Huddle will plateau and stall within 3-6 months if your participants aren't leading something. Without the opportunity to lead, Huddle becomes just another thing they do in an already busy life.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROCESS

PHASE ONE: LANGUAGE

As is thoroughly discussed in *Building a Discipling Culture*, language creates culture. LifeShapes is a powerful discipling language, and so this guide recommends focusing on this language during your first year of Huddle.

It's important to understand this language lays the foundation for everything else. It helps establish the biblical worldview of Jesus and gives people a lens to see the world in the way that Jesus did. Huddle is a tool for slowly teaching people this language. The first few months of Huddle are similar to learning basic Spanish. You have to know some of the nouns and pronouns and how to conjugate verbs before you can really start immersing yourself in the language and becoming fluent in it. It's all about the basics.

Learning the basics of the language is key, particularly as people learn to engage the two central questions:

- A. What is God saying to me?
- B. What am I going to do about it?

This is foreign for so many people. Most people don't even know how to hear and discern the voice of God, much less respond to it.

Jesus clearly establishes this foundation of language. On the first day of his ministry, he introduces the idea of the Kingdom. Very soon after that he delivers the Sermon on the Mount, exploring more fully the reality of the Kingdom of God. Everything that he teaches, every story he gives, and every action he makes is wrapped up in the language of the Kingdom of God. This language of the Kingdom put handles on truth so people could remember and understand. This should be the goal of the language you use in your Huddle as well.

PHASE TWO: RHYTHMS

This phase is about learning the rhythms of life that Jesus talks about in John 15—how there is an ever-swinging pendulum between rest and work that was written into our bodies from the creation of the world. Jesus is trying to draw out this principle: *We are designed to work from a place of rest; not rest from work.*

He makes it quite clear that real rest is found in him being connected to his Father. It is in times of rest that we not only receive the Father's life and energy, but also hear his voice.

Because so few people have ever sustained daily or weekly rhythms in their lives, it usually takes months for this to happen in the lives of the

people in your Huddle. In order to do this, most people will need to start getting up early every day to spend time in scripture and prayer. Of course, this isn't how everyone will function, and that should be OK. It isn't law, and certainly some people don't start their day this way, but the experience of the movement tells us this is generally the case. The experience of Huddle leaders in the movement tells us that if we can win this first, all-important battle of the day, the other battles of the day go our way a lot easier.

This tends to be a hard adjustment for most. You will likely find that most people don't get up at the same time and rarely go to bed with any consistency. Changing this and developing rhythms isn't an easy process. It will be something the people in your Huddle struggle with. Undoubtedly, they will want to give up. And as the person discipling them, remember that you lay down your life to get them through this. If they can't get these rhythms down, our enemy will render them virtually ineffective because he has cut off their source of life and energy: the Father.

They will want to give up during this phase, so give them a tremendous amount of grace and keep reminding them why they are doing this. One helpful tidbit: many Huddle leaders find it helpful to text the people they're discipling each day, for 6 weeks straight, to remind them of the passage of scripture you're reading as a way of holding them accountable.

The same goes for taking a day off (Sabbath), an important weekly rhythm. You have to give a massive challenge and a massive invitation for them to make this happen in their life. They might fail more at this than they do in their daily rhythms. Many people are addicted to work, to emails, and to doing, doing, doing. It's so very difficult in our culture to take 24 whole hours off. You have to help people in your Huddle fight to take a Sabbath. The best way to do this is to model it in your own life. Invite them and their family to spend their day off with you and your family. Show them what it's like and why it's such a beautiful thing.

PHASE THREE: BOLDNESS IN MISSION

Very clearly, we are to be about our Father's business. We are the agents of the Kingdom. We have an interior world, but as we become deeply connected to the God of mission, we respond in kind since we have been made in the same image. We carry his authority and have been told to exercise his power. So every day, there is a mission.

A Huddle allows you to disciple your members in such a way that they integrate the mission into their way of seeing the world and balancing their relationships.

You can do this in two ways in a Huddle. First, use your Huddle time to get out on a mission together. Afterward, process the Kairos that was provoked.

You will notice that this is intricately worked into the framework we have laid out in this leader guide. Second, Huddle is about holding the people you're discipling accountable to living out the OUT component of Jesus' life through concrete, actionable plans. Every disciple is missional. It's part of the deal! Yet most of us simply don't live that way.

Now, when we first start interacting with this, some timidity is natural. More than likely we will stick to the People of Peace that we know well and in front of whom we won't risk embarrassing ourselves. (*See the Relational Mission chapter and the Octagon section from the appendix in Building a Discipling Culture for more details here.*)

But what happens when we sense we are supposed to pray for someone we don't know? Or ask someone we have only met once a personal question? Or ask for healing for someone we just passed on the street? Or maybe spend time in Section 8 government housing where people have to choose between buying food or paying rent? Or make a spiritual

insight into the life of someone whom you know very well, even though you are scared what they may think of you afterward?

If you're like most people (including me when I was first starting out), the thought of this petrifies you! But we can't read scripture and avoid the fact that God prepares us to be present with others for a specific purpose. This third phase is an exercise in learning boldness and walking in the economy of a different kind of kingdom.

Does that mean you don't engage in a mission in the previous two phases? Of course not. It simply means that as someone learns the language, and as they have rhythms of listening to the Father regularly governing their lives, out of the overflow of this will be an increased intentionality, authority and boldness that wasn't present before. It starts from inside you and works its way out.

PHASE FOUR: LEADERSHIP

One of the stated expectations of a Huddle at the very beginning is that if you're in a Huddle, you will start one of your own someday or lead out a missional vehicle that will one day lead to the formation of leaders in a Huddle. This is how we keep the Gospel imperative of the Great Commission: *Make disciples who then make disciples who then make disciples*. A Huddle isn't just for our sake (though we receive great spiritual benefit from participating).

If we receive anything, it's so we can give it away. Once people know the agreed-on discipleship language, their lives are evidence of this. And when they have sustainable rhythms in their lives and begin to learn to boldly enter into mission, then the expectation is that they will begin a Huddle (or another missional/discipling endeavor) of their own. Every disciple leads someone, even if it's just 4 people.