



CROSSBRIDGE

DISCIPLESHIP SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

THE PERSON WHO STARTS THE JOURNEY
ISN'T THE SAME ONE WHO FINISHES.

1

GENERAL OVERVIEW

**"...LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE
THAT IS SET BEFORE US." HEBREWS 12:1**

THE PURPOSE of the CrossBridge Discipleship School is to empower people to become lifelong Great Commandment and Great Commission followers of Jesus. The vision is simple. Aligned with the vision of the church at large, we desire to lead participants to love and obey God as He instructs us in His Word, and as His Spirit leads. Here are some ways that we define that mandate:

LOVE GOD - COMMUNE WITH GOD

- Passionate worship and devotion to Him
- Disciplined lifestyle
- Christ-like character (holiness, humility, obedience)

LOVE EACH OTHER - LIVE IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

- Open, vulnerable community
- Healthy relationships
- Mutual submission and service

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES - IMPACT YOUR WORLD

- Love the lost
- Make disciple-making disciples
- Live with a mission
- Reach the unreached

The CDS prepares you in the biblical basics needed for life-long ministry and your unique calling.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The CDS is CrossBridge Community Church's "Discipleship Training School." The leaders at CrossBridge believe the local church should own the process of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12). CDS's methodology is designed to accomplish that goal by:

Creating an environment that promotes individual and corporate encounters with God

Equipping through the application-based study of the Scripture

Empowering through hands-on training experiences

The Discipleship School seeks to support the overall process of disciple-making within the larger body of Christ. The teaching content revolves around the **Great Commandment** (to love God with all we are, and to love our neighbor as ourselves) and the **Great Commission** (to make disciples of all nations).

We facilitate personal growth in these areas through lecture-style teachings, practical equipping, life-on-life discipleship groups, simple inductive Bible study in groups, and various application exercises and outreaches. **The school takes a holistic approach** to spiritual formation with a heavy emphasis on integrated living, and not merely performance within the classroom. In this regard, the curriculum is designed with a view to incorporate all of life and not just time spent in a formal learning environment.

CORE COMPETENCIES

CDS is designed with outcome-based learning in mind. We desire to affect loving obedience to Jesus Christ, not just to transmit knowledge. Upon completing CDS, we expect you to:

1. **Apprehend** on an experiential level the character of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and to relate with Him in ways appropriate to your identity in Christ
2. **Operate** more confidently and proficiently in the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit

3. **Mature** in the spiritual disciplines (Bible study and application – including the ability to develop Biblical convictions, devotional life, worship, Scripture memory, fasting, worship, tending your heart, confession, timeliness, giving, abiding, etc.)
4. **Grow** in the area of wholeness and personal holiness
5. **Possess** the ability to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships and community
6. **Share God's story** and **your story** clearly and effectively with others in an effort to make disciple-making disciples who desire to see God include them in His plan to reach the world
7. **Understand** more clearly your unique contribution to the body of Christ and have a clear sense of your calling and direction for the next step beyond CDS

COURSE TOPICS COVERED

Experiencing the Father-heart of God

Prioritizing your life as God intended

Handling the Word of God accurately

Pursuing personal wholeness and holiness

Walking in the power of the Holy Spirit

Developing Christ-like character

Finding your place in community

Receiving freedom in forgiveness

Seeing the world through God's eyes

Learning to hear and obey the voice of God

Being fearfully and wonderfully made

Walking through God's story (OT & NT)

Mapping out your calling and destiny

Abiding and thriving for a lifetime

LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

CDS employs a combination of teaching styles in an effort to not merely transmit information but to bring about life transformation that manifests in deeper loving obedience to Jesus Christ. To this end, a high value is placed on you responding to the Word of God and not simply reading to retain it.

**"BUT PROVE YOURSELVES DOERS OF THE WORD AND
NOT MERELY HEARERS WHO DELUDE THEMSELVES."**

JAMES 1:22

We believe that obedience-based discipleship stems from love (John 14:21) and that authentic encounters with God enable obedience from the heart. Students who approach CDS **academically** or with **rote discipline** will miss the entire point of CDS. The passion in our hearts is to see your life completely conformed to Christ with the fruit of loving obedience to Jesus Christ blooming in every area of our lives.

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"I have hidden your word in my heart...(Psalm 119:11)." Scripture memory is a vital discipline to hear God clearly as well as to fight the temptations and lies of the devil. Our desire in CDS is to challenge you to memorize Scriptures that will be useful to you in prayer, ministry, and spiritual warfare. You will memorize Scripture in categories such as the character of God, gospel-sharing, and life-calling.

BOOK READING

Throughout the year, you will be required to read ten books on a range of relevant topics. It is important that you keep up with the reading schedule and have each book completed by the designated deadline date so that it adds to your learning. The reading will complement and develop a number of the themes taught in class.

PLEASE READ OUR DISCLAIMER: The required book reading list is for wider reading. It is designed to **sharpen your thinking** on topics and issues that the school will touch on but not have a lot of time to delve deeper into. As you read, it is important to **critically engage** with the reading. Think about the authors' arguments and use of evidence, and whether you agree or disagree. Is the author using **Scripture accurately?**

You'll learn many things during the CDS and will always be exhorted to **compare it to Scripture**, assessing arguments and weighing the evidence of any author, as well as those who teach in the CDS. **Everything you read will not necessarily represent CrossBridge's theological beliefs, teachings, practices, or interpretations of any passages cited.** This is ON PURPOSE. We learn and grow our convictions by interacting with others' beliefs and developing a deeper "this is why I believe this" conviction.

We believe that the body of Christ is diverse and that all truth stands. What does this mean? It means that if it is "TRUTH" with all caps, it can stand up under scrutiny. We need not fear or be worried about **anything** we read, only what we do with what we read. The phrase, "**Chew the meat and spit out the bones**" is a great perspective when reading what others say about the Bible, it's theology or its application to our life.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Spiritual Disciplines

Spend focused time with God each day

Attend CrossBridge Community Church Sunday service

Serve at least one time per month in a church ministry or on a ministry team

Attend a Lifegroup regularly

Meet regularly for discipleship with Lifegroup leader or another appropriate individual

Honor the Sabbath weekly

CDS Focus

Be attentive in class

Complete any additional requirements in a timely fashion

Complete outreach/evangelism assignments as assigned (e.g. Offer to pray for a stranger this week)

Begin to disciple at least one person this school year

ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe that **accountability** is the key that unlocks our potential. If you think of any time in your life that you have excelled, had a breakthrough, or experienced a growth spurt in some area then we are sure that some type of "accountability" was present in the form of a coach, mentor, exercise partner, peer trainer, or the like. For most of us, left to ourselves, we let off the gas and coast a while. This is the human experience. But, pair you with someone and boom, learning increases, breakthroughs you never thought possible happen, and you are psyched!

This year is like a marathon. It is **not** a sprint. The key will be to implement new habits bit by bit and add in new spiritual disciplines one day at a time. As you do, they will pay out a lifetime of dividends for you, and for the Lord's glory.

Built into the CDS process is accountability, but not like you think. Accountability for us is a three-way promise, not a list of checkboxes or to-dos to accomplish. Accountability is a promise you are making to God first, yourself second, and another person third. It is all about relationships and being faithful to them. Accountability is not a destination, it is a process of growth, development, and learning to be faithful to what you say and believe; being true to yourself. You have to want it or it will work against you in underlying emotions of bitterness, nit-picking, performance, drivenness, and pride. Left to checkboxes without relationships, it will feel like "death" and "legalism" and worst of all, "religiosity!"

How do we know? Because as the CDS staff, we have experienced first hand the demotivating death of checkboxes. So, we spent time praying and seeking the Lord in how to do accountability in a better way. By making a paradigm shift from to-dos to promises, from checklists to being faithful in relationships, we have discovered the power of accountability in fresh ways.

Jesus never said, "Have your quiet time daily." He said, "Seek me and you'll find me when you search for me with all your heart." WOW! What a difference. One is about doing. The other is about a focus on heart relationships; being someone with someone else. One gives death, the other gives life. We want you to choose life.

Do you want to grow? Keep the promises you make to yourself and obey what God asked of you. Do you want a spiritual breakthrough in some area of your life? Keep your promises to be faithful to what God has put on your heart to reach that goal and then don't give up, but let God and others spur you on.

We will never try to make you accountable to some external standard. That is a fruitless endeavor for us and a very frustrating experience for you! What we will do is serve you by asking you what you want out of your spiritual life and then share with you what Jesus says you'll need to be or become to experience what you seek. We'll also offer assistance in coaching, mentoring, and being available to help you achieve that transformation of heart, soul, and mind that you desire. We can't want it more than you want it. It is your life and we respect you.

We've designed a Reflection Accountability Tool to help you find your center each week, to see where you've been, where you are, and ask you to decide what you want to do about it. This Reflection Tool will help you chart your course and gives you the opportunity to include others to help and assist you so that we can experience Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 where Solomon says,

**"TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE BECAUSE THEY HAVE
A GOOD RETURN FOR THEIR LABOR. IF EITHER OF
THEM FALLS DOWN, ONE CAN HELP THE OTHER UP.
BUT PITY ANYONE WHO FALLS AND HAS NO ONE
TO HELP HIM UP."**

We feel privileged to play whatever part God calls us to in helping you find his best and highest calling for your life. We will be your prayer partner, spiritual cheerleader, coach, mentor, and discipler. We'll be a listener, encourager, and challenger of your paradigms. And we'll be your fellow companion on the adventure with you for this year's journey with the Lord. You get to tell us the part you want us to play and we will be there for you with all that we have and all that God has given us.

3

SPOUSE TRACK

VISION

We want spouses to have a shared experience through the CrossBridge Discipleship School. We realize that other time commitments can make it too difficult for both spouses to participate fully due to children, work, or medical reasons. Our desire is for one spouse to be committed full-time and the other to participate part-time. We believe this will allow for an incredible shared experience without putting too much strain on the home.

REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE

We would encourage each spouse to attend as many classes as possible. However, we ask spouses to attend 20 classes to be considered having completed the school.

CHILDCARE REIMBURSEMENT

The CDS will not provide childcare for class sessions but will provide a subsidy for childcare. Spouses attending the school are required to make their own arrangements in finding childcare. The rate of the subsidy is \$10 per hour barring special exceptions for very large families. To receive reimbursement for childcare, please fill out the child care subsidization form and turn it into the administrator before or after class. Your child care subsidization check will be provided within two weeks.

4

POLICIES

"NO DISCIPLINE SEEMS PLEASANT AT THE TIME, BUT PAINFUL. LATER ON, HOWEVER, IT PRODUCES A HARVEST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE FOR THOSE WHO ARE TRAINED BY IT." HEBREWS 12:11

HEART OF THE POLICIES

Our desire through the CDS is to encourage every student in their journey with Christ. Our policies and regulations exist to create an environment within which the Holy Spirit can change students' lives.

This is a special time for you. **It is a time of consecration before God.** In Joshua 3:5, Joshua commanded the people **"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you."** To consecrate means to "make or declare something sacred, or to dedicate formally to a divine purpose".

We believe that God desires to do amazing things for each one of you through this time of dedication to his divine purpose. In light of this, we ask CDS students to be faithful to honor the school requirements. Not all of them will be something that God will call you to **as a lifelong commitment**, but we are asking you to **commit to these policies for this special time of consecration**.

In regard to any infraction of policies, we will work with students individually to determine the most appropriate course of action. The following is a general guideline outlining the procedure most commonly followed in regard to policy infractions.

General guidelines of procedure for policy infraction:

1. The first instance results in a warning.
2. The second results in a meeting with the director to discuss a plan of action.
3. The third may result in dismissal from the school.

HONOR CODE

We are instructed in 1 Peter 2:17 to “honor everyone.” The following are some of the specific ways we do this in the CDS:

Initiate conversations with guests visiting the class.

Stay awake (stand if you must), be attentive, and maintain good posture during the teaching.

Respond quickly and cheerfully when asked to do something, e.g. come in from break on time.

Honor guests, especially those who labor at preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17).

Speak the truth in love. Honesty is highly valued.

ABSENCE POLICY FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS

Because of the brevity of this school, we ask that every effort be made to attend each class period. In light of this, we have developed the following policies:

APPROVED ABSENCE

Each student may have up to three pre-approved class absences per semester. Students who exceed three absences in a semester will be in jeopardy of being dismissed from school.

If a student is involved in a church-related ministry that may require an absence from the CDS, an email must be sent to the CDS administrator outlining the details of the time conflict. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It should not be assumed that the CDS can be missed because of another ministry (Examples: Worship band, retreats, youth ministry, etc).

Any materials missed due to an absence must be made up within two weeks of return from the absence. This will include watching the video or listening to the audio teaching as well as making up any additional assignments. It is the responsibility of the students to indicate on the Accountability Chart when the teaching and assignments have been made up.

EMERGENCY/SICK ABSENCE

If an emergency or unavoidable delay happens, students should text the CDS Administrator as soon as possible.

If a student is ill, they must text the CDS staff by 5 p.m. Students will be allowed two sick days. Following the first two sick days, any additional days will be counted toward the student's three absences, unless a doctor's note can be provided.

TARDY POLICY FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS

Students are expected to be at the class before class starts and ready to start on time.

Anyone who misses more than one hour of class will be counted absent for the day.

Three tardies equal one absence.

Please communicate when you will be tardy as far in advance as possible, preferably before 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays.

ABSENCE AND TARDY POLICY FOR PART-TIME SPOUSES

Part-time spouses are asked to attend twenty classes.

Every effort should be made to regularly be on time for class but tardies will not be monitored for part-time spouses.

Please communicate when you will be absent or tardy as far in advance as possible, preferably before 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays.

DRESS CODE

In order to create an undistracted atmosphere we will abide by the following code:

Men must wear shirts with sleeves, e.g. no tank tops.

Women may wear sleeveless shirts but no tank tops or spaghetti strap shirts. Please keep this on the conservative side; no low-cut shirts.

Shorts, dresses or skirts must be beyond the fingertips at least, preferably to the knees.

All clothing must be appropriate for multiple situations, e.g. covering stomach and backside during worship and ministry times

All students: If you wear printed t-shirts, printed sweatshirts, sweat pants, or hats, they must be Christ-honoring to be allowed during class

****CDS Staff will ask any student who is deemed to be inappropriately dressed to go home and change. This could result in a tardy for the student if they cannot be back to class by the time we begin.**

DATING

We desire for each student to receive the most they possibly can from this unique time of being in the CDS. We obviously support people getting to know each other, dating, and getting married. However, the emotional energy needed to begin a new

relationship is very demanding and usually distracts people from the time and energy needed to receive the full benefits of the CDS.

Single students who are in a dating relationship when they begin the CDS program may continue that dating relationship during the program. In order to free you (to some degree) from wondering what other people in the program are thinking about you and whether someone is interested in you, single students who are not dating when they begin the program are asked to refrain from starting a new exclusive dating relationship.

ALCOHOL/TOBACCO

We encourage all CDS students to refrain from the consumption of any alcoholic beverages and tobacco products throughout the duration of the school year. Students are permitted to submit a request for exceptions. This encouragement is not mandatory for the completion of the school, but we would like to talk about it if you choose not to do this. We desire that these elements not be a distraction or a struggle during the CDS experience.

Many people have struggled with these substances in the past. We do not believe that drinking is sin. It is clear in Scripture that it is not. The only things explicitly forbidden in Scripture concerning alcohol are 1) getting drunk, 2) disobeying governing authorities (under 21), or 3) causing someone else to stumble. Tobacco is not clearly addressed in any portion of Scripture. It may be extrapolated from various Scriptures that it is sin to harm the body, but one could make a case that Coke and Twinkies do the same!

The main point is that these substances have proven to be addictive in nature for most people. When talking about what is permissible versus what is beneficial, Paul concludes that he will not be mastered by anything. Peter states, "A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him." This is a heart issue at the core and extends well beyond alcohol and tobacco. Paul spends most of Romans 14 and 15 instructing the church to do nothing that causes a brother or sister to stumble. The CDS community is an intimate community and we want to make every effort to ensure it is a safe one for those who have suffered from past addictions, whatever they may be.

MEDIA

The purpose of the CDS and the desire of the staff is to provide each student with an opportunity to experience the fullness of what the Lord has for them personally and for us corporately. To cultivate this environment, we feel it is imperative that we set a standard for the viewing of media.

Media affects our culture and our hearts probably more than any of us realize. Paul encourages the church to dwell on that which is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise. We strongly advise students to seek the Holy Spirit's discretion concerning all media influences. This is due to the fact that some media may not have any "bad" material according to the MPAA, but may nevertheless have content that grieves the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Wow! May it be said of us that we didn't see how close we could get to the line or how much we could get away with and still be okay. But rather, we forsake fleshly impulses to gain a deeper revelation of the nature and the character of the God who created and possesses all beauty, adventure, excitement, and joy - the very things most people seek in the media.

We understand this may be a difficult/challenging journey for some, yet we as the CDS leadership team can assure you, this will provide a more fruitful experience of abiding in Christ.

Seek God in prayer and please form a conviction before him of what he thinks for you personally. Then review all TV programs, music, internet sites, and printed materials that you usually view and draw your boundary lines accordingly for your sake and for the sake of the class as a whole. Use Philippians 4:8 as your litmus test.

GAMBLING

We are asking all CDS students to refrain from all forms of gambling throughout the school year. Why? Like alcohol and tobacco, gambling is often easily addictive, and Scripture admonishes us not to be mastered by anything. Additionally, the Bible upholds the values of stewardship and hard work, both of which can be compromised through gambling.

TUITION

Single Participant = \$1,050

Spouse = \$650 (for a couple the total is \$1,700)

INCLUDES

Kickoff CDS Retreat

Student Materials (notebooks, printed materials, etc.)

Speaker Honorariums

Accommodations for off-site training, outreaches, and special events

Class time and special event childcare subsidy for families

Small operating costs of school

DOES NOT INCLUDE

Books - This expense has been deducted from tuition. Books will be sourced individually. Students can purchase a paper copy, electronic copy, or audible version of each required reading. There will be approximately seven books throughout the year, costs will vary.

World Mandate registration - This \$50 fee has been deducted from the cost of tuition. Each student will need to register for World Mandate on their own.

Overseas Outreach - An additional estimated cost for the outreach trip in the summer is \$3,000 - \$3,500 and must be supplied in full before you can go on the trip. We will support-raise as a class for this outreach. Donations made by family and friends are tax-deductible. Support-raising will require that you write prayer/support raising newsletters throughout the year. These may not be e-mailed. Please account for printing and shipping accordingly.

TUITION FUNDS

Payments for tuition are not tax-deductible, no matter who gives them. Because you are receiving a benefit (training), the IRS has determined that tuition payments are not considered tax-deductible contributions.

The only exception to this rule is if someone makes a general donation to the training school fund. This donation cannot be designated for the benefit of a particular student, in writing, or in “an understanding.” All tax-deductible donations must be for the general benefit of the school.

REFUND POLICY

In the event that a student withdraws from school within the first semester prior to the fall outreach and has previously paid at least 50% of their tuition, they may receive a refund of up to 50% of tuition paid. Tuition is non-refundable after November 2.

ACCREDITATION

CrossBridge Discipleship School is not an accredited school with the State of Texas; therefore students are not eligible for financial aid, student loans, or grants.

MISSION FUNDS

Donations for mission trips are considered tax-deductible contributions as long as the giver has not received a benefit. The donor needs to know that they are giving toward the trip, not an individual. As such, all communication by the student needs to contain the following statement:

“Your gift to CrossBridge Community Church is tax-deductible. Donations are solicited with the understanding that CrossBridge Community Church has complete discretion and control over all donated funds. In practice, CrossBridge Community Church implements donor instruction wherever possible. If for any reason I am unable to go on this trip, funds raised will be used to meet the team’s needs. Donations are a gift to CrossBridge Community Church and are not refundable.”

Checks made out directly to a student are **not tax-deductible donations**. If the donor wants the deduction, he must re-write the check to CrossBridge Community Church. If we receive a check made out to a student it will be returned to the student.

