

## IDENTIFY YOUR APPRENTICE

For our small groups to be a place where people can connect to life in Christ and encourage one another to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent, it's important to raise up new leaders. *Apprentices are the key to consistently starting healthy new groups and connecting more people to biblical community at Rock Bridge!* An apprentice is a future small group leader mentored by the current leader.

The apprentice model is consistent with the way Jesus developed leaders. In Matthew 4:10, Jesus says, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." Because this is part of the discipleship process, we take our first cue from Jesus. Before he selected his disciples, Jesus spent time in prayer. That's where we should begin too! Ask God to make it clear who you should invite to be your apprentice. *Before, during, and after you spend time in prayer, here are questions to consider about your potential apprentice.*

- Is the potential apprentice committed to the mission, values, and theology of Rock Bridge?
- Is God's Word their main guide for life? Are they a person of integrity?
- Does the potential apprentice have an established personal relationship with Jesus?
- Do they know and understand the gospel? Can they explain it clearly?
- Do they recognize the small group leader's role as a facilitator, not teacher or counselor?
- Do they have the heart of a shepherd? Will they nurture and protect a small group?
- Do other group members listen attentively when they speak?
- Do they have the relational skills to effectively lead a group in the future?
- Have they shared openly and honestly about God's Word and their personal faith journey?
- Are they currently a member of Rock Bridge or will they pursue membership?
- Are they willing to fall under the authority of Rock Bridge leadership, be held accountable, and attend training gatherings that are offered?

Once you've prayed and reflected on these, *there are three characteristics that we desire small group leaders to display and grow in.* You are looking for someone who has a clear desire to learn and grow!

**Faithful:** Is this person faithful in following Jesus at whatever stage of life they are currently in? A faithful person is dedicated, trustworthy, and committed. Consider a potential apprentice's faithfulness by observing areas of their spiritual life, such as small group involvement, encouragement of others, and service in the church or community. *Faithfulness is determined by a commitment to spiritual things.*

**Available:** Is this person available to fulfill the time commitment of an apprentice? Discern someone's availability by their willingness to meet with and invest in others. Does this person carve out time to listen, study, and learn from others? Are they accessible when called upon? Do they have a regular time with God, reading the Word and praying? *Availability is measured by a willingness to serve God.*

**Teachable:** Does this person display a humble desire to learn from those around him or her? A teachable person has a desire to learn and apply what is taught. One who is teachable is open to correction. A teachable person not only listens to what is taught, but also applies it to his or her life. *Teachability is measured by observing one's response to God's Word.*

***Once you've identified who your apprentice could be, it's time to have an "ICNU" conversation!***