



INTRODUCTION

One of the great requests that Jesus made to His Father in the Lord's Prayer was that, "Your [God's] will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Wouldn't it be great if God's will were accomplished in every youth group in America with complete abandonment to Christ and His purposes? One reason many youth groups never accomplish anything for God stems from a basic distrust of leadership.

If we are going to be leaders, we must develop positive relationships with students. As Christian youth leaders, the primary thing we have to offer young people is a journey into the world of spiritual truth and understanding. If youth leaders are going to attract students, it should be with something the world could not offer. For too long, we've tried to compete with the world.

So often youth leaders try to incorporate all the world-centered activities into their youth ministries. There's nothing wrong with good activities and fun for teenagers; however, students today are looking for something more than just a good time. It's been said that today's teenagers are "overpreached and underchallenged." They want someone to follow who has something that will make a difference in their life. Thus, the reason for FIRE Institute.

FIRE Institute was birthed in the heart of Rich Wilkerson after two years of praying for students. The four concepts—FOUNDATION, INSPIRATION, RESPONSIBILITY, and EVANGELISM—build upon the previous one resulting in a group of students deeply committed to serving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The FIRE Institute was first implemented in Fort Worth, Texas. While ministering there, Rich developed a lasting relationship with Bob Towell, a man equally committed to youth ministry. Bob began to implement the same concepts of FIRE into the fabric of his youth ministry. Shortly thereafter, the Lord led Rich and his wife to Sacramento, California. By this time, the principles and concepts for the FIRE Institute were fully developed. Within five years, Rich saw this life-changing discipling program as the key ingredient to growing his youth ministry from thirty to three hundred. Rich and his wife personally disciplined more than sixty young people using the FIRE Institute. Many of those students are in full-time ministry today.

This Leader Manual is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the philosophy of FIRE, and the second deals with the practical side of FIRE. We hope the FIRE Institute will help you develop one of the key steps in the lifetime process of making disciples.

FIRE is laid out with daily and weekly assignments. Keep this in mind as you lead your students. FIRE was not designed to be a set of rules, nor a list of tasks to be completed by your students. FIRE is meant to help students learn to be lifelong disciples who have learned to discipline themselves. Jesus not only grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52), but He learned obedience even though He is God's Son (Hebrews 5:8).