

# FIRE INSTITUTE



LEADER MANUAL  
FOUNDATION  
& INSPIRATION  
For our "God is a consuming fire."  
—Hebrews 12:29



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FIRE BIBLE: STUDENT EDITION (FBSE)



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by Carey Huffman

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## FOREWORD

In your hand is one of the most intentional resources a youth leader can use in making lifelong followers of Jesus Christ.

As youth pastors in the early 1970s, Rich and Robin Wilkerson shared the call of the Lord to take students in their youth ministry into the deeper truths of walking with God. Then, in 1983, Rich Wilkerson published the first edition of the FIRE Institute. Now, twenty-five years later, we have a fresh new update of the FIRE Institute for twenty-first century disciple-making in youth ministry. Most importantly, the FIRE BIBLE: Student Edition is the perfect Bible text companion with this updated version of the FIRE Institute.

The FIRE Institute is a leadership development school in Christian faith. Most of the youth who successfully journey through FIRE will be ready for a leadership role in the Church. With the trust and blessing of Rich Wilkerson, we are launching another generation of youth through this newest version of the FIRE Institute. The goal is to move beyond youth ministry to youth in ministry.

As young youth pastors in 1988, the passion of leading students into a deeper walk with the Lord also struck my wife Laura and me. A fellow youth pastor friend shared the FIRE Institute with us. It catapulted our total understanding of ministry to a new level. Nothing we endeavored in local youth ministry produced more lasting fruit than the FIRE Institute. It helped us identify, disciple, and deploy a generation of bold leaders for Jesus Christ. And to cap it off, we grew in our own walk with Jesus Christ! Get ready; you are about to encounter the purifying power of the Holy Spirit through the FIRE Institute yourself.

Why is it called the “FIRE Institute”? FIRE is actually an acronym that stands for Foundation, Inspiration, Responsibility, and Evangelism. The Institute is comprised of four different eight-week segments that forge these elements of Christian faith. Through each of these sessions, students will learn to pray, live, tell, serve, and give. These five core values put feet to the Christian faith.

Jesus taught that disciples should love God first and love others as themselves. (Matthew 22:37,39)

- Pray regularly
- Live the Word of God
- Tell the story (God’s story and your story of faith in Him)
- Serve people
- Give graciously

They do not guarantee that someone will have an authentic faith in Jesus Christ. However, Jesus modeled these characteristics among the first disciples. And He calls us to follow Him too.

In session 1—FOUNDATION, the FIRE Institute concentrates on building a foundation in students to pray, live, tell, serve, and give. In session 2—INSPIRATION, students will be inspired in these five disciplines. In session 3—RESPONSIBILITY, students will discover the responsibility these characteristics bring to a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ. And in session 4—EVANGELISM, students will recognize that a relationship with Jesus Christ is a naturally evangelistic lifestyle.

As a youth leader, you are the pacesetter. You must do more than point the way to Jesus. You must do more than challenge the students to go after Jesus Christ. You must lead the way. You should be able to say, "Follow me as I follow Jesus."

Get ready to take students through God's renewing fire. There will be challenging and championship moments. All of them work together to forge a maturing faith that says, "I am ready to follow Jesus Christ anywhere He leads me."

Keep this truth in mind: Discipleship is a process. That process should mature a believer to lead another into a like relationship with Jesus Christ. Disciples of Jesus make disciples of Jesus.

A final word from Rich Wilkerson,

Without prayer, the FIRE Institute will be just another program. You will have intellectual information, but lack spiritual understanding. Nothing of a positive eternal value ever happens separated from prayer. Prayer will put you in the place where you can be transformed and changed forever in the presence of the Almighty God. It is the power of the Holy Spirit, released through fervent intercessory prayer, that makes this discipleship concept come alive and prove effective.

Lead the way!

Jay Mooney



## 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 discipled 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).



## FIRE STRATEGY—PRAY, LIVE, TELL, SERVE, GIVE

The purpose of FIRE Institute is threefold:

1. Grow in your love for and knowledge of Christ
2. Grow in spiritual disciplines as His disciple
3. Grow through the experiences encountered

These goals are for both you the leader and the students you lead through FIRE. Remember, some things are better caught than taught. As you grow and experience more of Christ in your life, your students will catch the passion of your heart. It's our job as leaders to set the temperature rather than just display the temperature.

There are four, eight-week FIRE Institute sessions.

Session 1—FOUNDATION

Session 2—INSPIRATION

Session 3—RESPONSIBILITY

Session 4—EVANGELISM

This Leader Manual will guide you through the first two sessions of the FIRE Institute. Once your students have completed FOUNDATION and INSPIRATION, you'll need the second Leader Manual for the RESPONSIBILITY and EVANGELISM sessions. During RESPONSIBILITY and EVANGELISM, your students will work through the Old Testament and be challenged to grow through embracing servanthood, responsibility, and an evangelistic lifestyle. Your students will receive a new manual for each of the four sessions, as there is course work to complete for each of the four levels.