



# CREATING A CULTURE OF CALLING

## Intergenerational Faith Formation Program *Living as a Disciple of Jesus*

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This program explores what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. At the heart of living as a disciple is shaping our lives on the pattern of Jesus' life. This is no simple process nor is there only one way of expressing the pattern of Christ's life in our own. This session guides people in reflecting on the teaching and example of Jesus from the Gospels and discovering practices to live their everyday lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

### **Design**

(90-120 minutes)

Opening Prayer

Part 1. All Ages Learning Experience: Opening Our Lives to Jesus and Discipleship (25 minutes)

Part 2. In Depth Learning Experience: Living as a Disciple Today (75-90 minutes)

1. Learning to Be a Disciple: Families with Children
2. Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ: Adolescents
3. Discipleship Today: Adults

Part 3. Sharing Learning Reflections (15 minutes)

Closing Prayer

## Group Formation

Organize people into intergenerational small groups of approximately eight people for the All Ages Learning Experience. Ask all members of the same family to sit together in these intergenerational groups. Each group should have as many of the following categories as possible: family (parents, children, teens), young adults, adults without children, and older adults. If members of the same family are intergenerational—children, teens, parents, and grandparents—keep them together in one group.

For the In Depth Learning Experience (Part 3) organize the participants into three types of table groups: family clusters of two or more families, groups of adolescents, and groups of adults.

## Opening Prayer

The Opening Prayer Service is integrated within the All Ages Learning Experience.

## Part 1. All Ages Learning Experience: Opening Our Lives to Jesus and Discipleship

(25 minutes)

The focus of the All Ages Learning Experience is developing an attitude of openness and overcoming the obstacles to living as disciples of Jesus Christ. The central Scripture reading for the prayer service is Parable of the Sower, which will be acted-out as part of the prayer service.

### Prayer Table Materials

Set-up a prayer table with tablecloth, Bible, large cross, and large white candle (lit). Display symbols of discipleship such as a walking stick to symbolize the sending forth of the twelve apostles and of the seventy disciples and a large plant (or plants) and seeds to symbolize the Parable of the Sower which is the focus of the opening prayer service. Consider displaying icons, paintings, and/or statues of Jesus teaching and Jesus with the disciples.

### Dramatizing the Parable

Create a dramatic enactment or role play to illustrate the Parable of the Sower. Use the Gospel reading as your “script.” Identify a narrator, the farmer (sower), and groups of people to represent the four types of seed and the other actors in the parable (birds, sun, thorns). Decorate the “stage” with a footpath, rocks, bushes, and good soil.

Use the following outline of actions as a guide:

- Sower throws seed (people) onto a footpath. Birds (other people) come along and carry them off.

- Sower throws seed (people) onto rocky ground. Seeds spring up quickly as plants, but the sun (other people with pictures of a large sun) beats down upon them, and they wither away.
- Sower throws seed (people) onto the bushes (thorns). The seeds and the bushes both grow up and the bushes “choke” the new plants and they die.
- Sower throws seed (people) onto good soil and they grow up healthy (smiling, waving).

### **Prayer Service**

Light a large candle to begin the prayer service.

### **Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:3-23**

The narrator reads Matthew 13:3-9 while the actors role play the actions.

The narrator reads Matthew 13:10-17.

### **Reflecting on the Gospel Reading**

Invite the participants to reflect on the Scripture passage using the questions such as:

- What do you think Jesus is trying to tell his listeners?
- Who am I in this Scripture? What do I see and hear? What do I think?
- What behavior and attitudes is he challenging?
- What is the parable challenging us to do as disciples?

Younger children can draw a picture of the parable.

### **Conclusion of the Parable**

The narrator reads Matthew 13:18-23. The groups of actors who play the four types of seed come back on stage and step forward as their verse is read, as the narrator points to them. After their verse is read each of the first three groups leaves the stage. In the end only the good seed are left.

## **Part 2. In Depth Learning Experience: Living as a Disciple Today**

(75-90 minutes)

### **1. Learning to Be a Disciple: Families with Children**

#### **Preparation**

- Using the handouts create four categories of card questions onto different colors of paper and cut them apart. Provide one set of cards for each family or family table group.

#### **Materials**

- Provide each family or family table with a set of the four cards.
- Provide each family with a sheet of cardstock paper so they can create a family table prayer.

Guide families through the following process. The activity can be conducted as a table group activity or within individual families. Write the instructions on newsprint or create a PowerPoint presentation with the instructions.

## Part 1. Discipleship Cards

Introduce the first activity, using the words below or your own words.

Our first activity involves the whole family in discovering the qualities of a disciple of Jesus Christ by exploring Gospel passages and discussing how to live as a disciple today. The format for the activity resembles a game show, where a family member selects a card and follows the instructions on the card.

There are four types of cards in our game show:

1. **Jesus Teaches:** Read a short Gospel passage of Jesus teaching us about following him and discuss as a family how you would live as a disciple today.
2. **Jesus Acts:** Read a short Gospel passage of Jesus living his mission and discuss as a family how you would act like Jesus today.
3. **Jesus Tells a Story:** Read a Gospel parable and discuss as a family what it teaches you about following Jesus.
4. **Did You Know?:** Test your knowledge of the people and events in the Gospels. Pick up a card and ask a family member to answer the question. If they get it wrong, invite the entire family to answer the question. If nobody knows the answer try a second card.

Instruct the families to place the cards in four piles and read the cards in the following order:

1. Jesus Teaches
2. Did You Know?
3. Jesus Acts
4. Did You Know?
5. Jesus Teaches
6. Did You Know?
7. Jesus Tells a Story
8. Did You Know?
9. Jesus Acts
10. Did You Know?
11. Jesus Teaches
12. Did You Know?
13. Jesus Acts
14. Did You Know?
15. Jesus Tells a Story
16. Did You Know?
17. Jesus Teaches
18. Did You Know?

19. Jesus Acts
20. Did You Know?
21. Jesus Tells a Story
22. Did You Know?
23. Jesus Teaches
24. Did You Know?

## **Part 2. Our Family Discipleship Pledge**

Guide families in creating a family pledge to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Give them a piece of paper and pen or marker. This activity is designed to give involve each family in developing specific ways they can live as disciples of Jesus Christ today.

Begin by reading or asking the families to read Matthew 7:24-27, which is on the handout.

Introduce the activity, using the words below or your own words.

To live faithfully as a disciple of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to the take the teachings of Jesus and living them each day at home, at school, at work, and in our world. We seek to be the wise family that hears the world of Jesus and acts on them, building our lives on the solid rock of faith in Jesus Christ.

Take time now to summarize the teachings of Jesus you discovered in the first activity and write them in left column. (Ask them to divide the paper into two columns.) After you have finished this list, develop specific ways your family can put these teachings into practice in the right column.

After families have completed their pledge invite them to share several practical ways they will live as disciples with the other families at their table or at nearby tables.

## **Part 3. Family Prayer**

Provide each family with a sheet of cardstock paper that can use to create a table prayer. Tell them to fold the paper in half to make a table tent prayer card that can be placed on their table at home.

Ask the family to compose a prayer to Jesus to help them live as a disciple. Each family member can add one line to the prayer. Instruct them to write their pray on one-half of the table tent. Children can decorate the other half of the table tent with a picture or symbol.

## **2. Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ: Adolescents**

**Note:** For young adolescents (middle school ages) you may want to use the “Discipleship Cards” activity in Part 1 of the families with children learning plan. Modify the instructions for groups of young adolescents. Conclude by using the “Living the Challenge of Discipleship” activity on the handout from the adolescent learning plan.

## Materials

- A copy of the Discipleship Scripture Passages handout for each young person.
- Bibles for the young people
- Newsprint (easel paper), markers, masking tape, and pens or pencils

## Introduction

The adolescent learning plan is designed to help adolescents develop an understanding and practice of the Christian life. The activity is built around ten themes of discipleship as found in the teaching and example of Jesus in the Gospels.

Teaching 1—Love

Teaching 2—Forgiveness

Teaching 3—Prayer

Teaching 4—Service to the Poor

Teaching 5—Riches and Possessions

Teaching 6—Compassion for the Outcasts

Teaching 7—Servant Lifestyle

Teaching 8—Dignity of Life

Teaching 9—Trust in Jesus Overcomes Fears

Teaching 10—Humility

Through this activity we are seeking to offer young people a vision of discipleship that includes:

- trusting in God's unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness
- discovering a loving God in prayer
- finding meaning and purpose for their life in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ
- being peacemakers and promoting reconciliation—working for peace and healing in their relationships, community and world, resolving conflicts nonviolently
- being good stewards of God's creation—sharing their personal talents and possessions, as well as the resources of the earth
- living a life of simplicity freed from the pressures of materialism and consumerism
- respecting the human dignity, worth, and equality of *all* people—recognizing that all people are created in the image and likeness of God
- working for social justice to ensure that the essential human and material needs of all people are met; working toward a world freed of poverty and oppression of all kinds
- being compassionate and serving those in need—developing a special sensitivity to human suffering and fragility; engaging in actions to respond to those in need
- developing loving relationships built upon care, compassion, commitment, faithfulness, honesty, and a concern for the other person

Introduce the activity by explaining to the young people that they will have an opportunity to explore more what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ today through the teaching and example of Jesus and how it applies to life today.

Guide adolescents through the learning activities as outlined below and on the handout. Write the essential instructions on newsprint or create a PowerPoint presentation with the instructions.

### **Part 1. Exploring the Teaching and Example of Jesus**

Assign one group of Discipleship Teaching Scripture passages to the young people. Distribute all of the readings among the group members. If there are ten people at the table, each person can take one set of readings or two people can share the work for two sets of readings.

Each team should use the following process to read and reflect on their Gospel passages. Write the instructions on newsprint or a PowerPoint slide for all to see.

Part 1. Read and reflect on the Gospel passages.

Part 2. Answer the four questions on the handout with the Gospel passages and prepare a report for your table group.

- What is Jesus telling us about discipleship in these passages?
- What is Jesus asking us to do as disciples?
- Why would it be hard to live out Jesus' teaching today?
- What would it look like if people actually lived this way in today's world? What would it look like at home, at school, in your community, and in our nation and world?

Part 3. Share a summary of your report with your table group. Summarize highlights of the Gospel passages and share a summary of your responses to the four questions.

Part 4. After each report, the whole group develops one or two summary statements that complete the question: "Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ today means that we, as young people, are called to . . ." Ask the young people to write this heading at the top of the newsprint sheet.

Part 5. After the last report review the list and add any other items that group thinks are important to include about living as a disciple today. Then post the newsprint sheets on the wall so that everyone can read the report.

### **Part 2. Living the Challenge of Discipleship**

Conclude by asking the young people to take several minutes of quiet time to complete the "Living the Challenge of Discipleship" handout. Explain that we are using this time to reflect on how they can live as disciples in their daily lives and what they need to do to following Jesus more fully.

First, ask the young people to complete the "Discipleship in My Life" reflection and share one strength and one area for growth with their group.

Second, ask them to complete the sentence: "One or two ways I am going to grow as a disciple by eliminating something in my life that is getting in the way of following Jesus or by starting a new practice for living my faith." They will do this individually without group sharing.

Third, ask young people to compose a prayer to Jesus, asking him to help them live as a disciple.

### **Part 3. Concluding Discussion**

After the adolescents have completed their prayers, invite them to discuss in their table groups what they learned about discipleship using questions such as:

- What struck you as significant or even new about the message of Jesus that you discovered by exploring Jesus teaching and example?
- The wisdom of Jesus often contrasts with the “wisdom of the world.” Consider Jesus’ teachings on love, reconciliation, poverty and riches, and justice (to name a few): How do Jesus’ teachings compare to what we hear and see in our world?
- What is one way you will take Jesus’ message more seriously in your life?

## **3. Discipleship Today: Adults**

The adult learning plan has been created as a self-directed small group activity. Facilitators can guide the adults through the learning activities as outlined below and on the handout.

### **Part 1. Discipleship in My Life Today**

*Discipleship involves imitating the pattern of Jesus’ life by openness to God’s will in the service of others. This gets at the heart of the matter. The intrinsic meaning of discipleship is the notion of “following;” the disciple shapes his or her life on that of the master or mentor. “Follow me”—those two words distill the essence of Christian life.*

*Obviously “following” or “imitating” Jesus does not mean simply copying the surface details of his life, such as wearing first century garb or becoming an itinerant preacher. Imitating Jesus means that Christians are to shape their own lives in the pattern of Jesus. This is no simple process nor is there only one way of expressing the pattern of Christ’s life in our own. Here is where the authentic disciple becomes a true learner by constantly reflecting on the teaching and example of Jesus and by trying to see their meaning in our everyday lives. (Donald Senior, “Following Jesus: Discipleship Today”)*

### **Personal Reflection**

Take a moment to reflect on your understanding and practice of discipleship by using the following questions.

- What does being a disciple of Jesus Christ mean to you?
- How do you practice discipleship in your daily life?

### **Group Sharing**

Share your reflections on the two questions with your group. This is a storytelling experience so be sure to give each person time to share his or her story without interruptions or discussion.

## **Part 2. Jesus' Vision of Discipleship: His Teaching and Example**

Throughout the Gospels Jesus is presenting us the vision and practices of discipleship. His teaching and example point the way to life lived in relationship with him.

### **Read and Reflect**

To explore Jesus' vision and practices of discipleship distribute the Discipleship Teaching Scripture passages among the group members. If there are ten people at the table, each person takes one set of readings. If there are less than ten people, ask individuals to take an additional set of readings.

Read and reflect on the Gospel passages individually. Answer the four questions on the handout with the Gospel passages and prepare your reflections to share with the group.

- What is Jesus telling us about discipleship in these passages?
- What is Jesus asking us to do as disciples?
- Why would it be hard to live out Jesus' teaching today?
- What would it look like if people actually lived this way in today's world? What would it look like at home, at work, in your community, and in our nation and world?

### **Group Sharing**

Share a summary of your reflections with your table group. Summarize highlights of the Gospel passages and share a summary of your responses to the four questions.

### **Discussion**

Together as a group discuss the following questions:

- What struck you as significant or even new about discipleship from reading the Gospel passages?
- What do you think is unique about the teaching and insight of Jesus that we find in these Gospel readings?
- The wisdom of Jesus often contrasts with the "wisdom of the world." Consider Jesus' teaching on discipleship—love, reconciliation, poverty and riches, and justice (to name a few): How do Jesus' teachings compare to what we hear and see in our world? What are the biggest challenges in living faithfully as a disciple today?

### **Reflections on Discipleship**

In the Gospel passages you explored, we gain insight into what Jesus is asking of us as his disciples. While no summary of Jesus' teaching on discipleship is complete, here are several summary insights from the Gospel passages.

- Jesus calls us to love one another as a sign by which others will know that we are his disciples. He calls us to love others as we love ourselves and to remember that we are always loved by God. Jesus challenges us to love all people including our enemies.
- Jesus calls us forgive one another and always to seek reconciliation with one another. Jesus said that we cannot ask forgiveness for our own sins unless we are also ready to forgive those who sin against us; and that we should not presume to offer sacrifice to God unless and until we have been reconciled with our brother or sister.
- Jesus calls to renounce revenge and to avoid judging and condemning others.
- Jesus calls us to avoid self-righteousness, presumption, and resentment toward others. Jesus repudiated the proud Pharisee and the resentful elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son. He condemned those who try to shut the doors of the kingdom of God so that others could not enter it and said the publicans and prostitutes would enter the kingdom before their detractors would.
- Jesus calls to befriend those whom society looks down upon. Jesus made himself the friend of the outcasts and did not avoid their company.
- Jesus calls to serve one another, humbly and unselfishly. Jesus gave us an example when he washed the feet of his disciples and challenged us to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind to the banquet.
- Jesus calls us to serve the poor. Jesus singled out the poor in the beatitudes, insisting that the reign of God will be theirs, as did Mary in her Magnificat: “He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty” (Luke 1:52-53). Jesus’ parable of Lazarus and the rich man is particularly compelling. Indeed, Pope John Paul II frequently cites it in summoning the Church to the service of the poor and powerless.
- Jesus calls us to beware of riches and the attachment to possessions. Jesus said it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God. He said that those who would be his disciples should be ready to sell all that they have and give to the poor
- Jesus calls us to pray always and with complete trust in God. Jesus said that we should pray in complete confidence to God.

A disciples we are challenged to . .

- trust in God's unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness
- discover a loving God in prayer
- find meaning and purpose for our lives in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ
- be peacemakers and promote reconciliation—working for peace and healing in their relationships, community and world, and resolving conflicts nonviolently
- be good stewards of God's creation—sharing our personal talents and possessions, as well as the resources of the earth
- live a life of simplicity freed from the pressures of materialism and consumerism
- respect the human dignity, worth, and equality of *all* people—recognizing that all people are created in the image and likeness of God
- work for social justice to ensure that the essential human and material needs of all people are met; work toward a world freed of poverty and oppression of all kinds

- be compassionate and serving those in need—developing a special sensitivity to human suffering and fragility; engage in actions to respond to those in need
- develop loving relationships built upon care, compassion, commitment, faithfulness, honesty, and a concern for the other person

Consider this: What if by some miracle we all began to live this way. Would not our lives be the solution to so many of the problems that beset us in our families, communities, nation, and world?

### **Part 3. Living as a Disciple of Jesus Today**

#### **Personal Reflection**

Take several minutes to examine your life as a disciple using the “Living the Challenge of Discipleship” worksheet. Begin with the Part 1 reflection tool to examine how are you living the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus today. Then move to Part 2 and identify specific practices that you can begin now to grow as a disciple, as well as the obstacles to implementing your practices and the supports and resources you have for overcoming these obstacles.

#### **Group Sharing**

Share several ideas for growth with your group. Give each person time to share his or her ideas without interruptions or discussion.

#### **Prayer**

Conclude by writing a prayer: “Jesus help me to live as your disciple by...”

### **Part 4. Going Deeper**

Use the following activities in the coming weeks to learn more are discipleship and how you can grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

#### **Exploring the Teaching and Example of Jesus**

Take some time this week to read all of the Gospel passages used in this session:

Teaching 1—Love: John 13:34-35, Matthew 22:34-40, Luke 6:27, 32-33, 6

Teaching 2—Forgiveness: Matthew 6:12-15, Matthew 5:9, Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 5:21-24

Teaching 3—Prayer: Matthew 7:7-8, 11; Matthew 6:5-15

Teaching 4—Service to the Poor: Matthew 25:34-36, 40; Luke 16:19-31

Teaching 5—Riches and Possessions: Mark 10:17-31, Luke 12: 16-21

Teaching 6—Compassion for the Outcasts: Mark 2:15-17, Luke 5:12-13, Luke 14:12-14

Teaching 7—Servant Lifestyle: John 13:3-5, 12-15; Luke 10:29-37

Teaching 8—Dignity of Life: Luke 8:40-42, 49-55; John 8:2-11

Teaching 9—Trust in Jesus Overcomes Fears: Matthew 4:35-41, Luke 24:36-49

### **Reading Jesus' Sermons on Discipleship**

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew, Chapters 4-6) and The Great Sermon (Luke 6:20-49) reflect the heart and mind of Jesus. They should have a privileged place in our lives as disciples. The Sermon makes four points with utter simplicity. Love everyone, especially those you would ordinarily consider enemies. Claim nothing as your own, but use all you are and all that you have to meet the needs of others. Forgive everyone everything. Judge no one but yourself.

Find a quiet place this week to pray, read the Scriptures, and reflect on how you can live the message of Jesus more fully today. Read the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel Matthew, Chapters 5-7 and the Great Sermon in Luke 6:20-49.

### **Jesus' Mission – My Mission**

Find time this week to reflect on your mission in life. Use the following questions to discover your personal mission. Then shape your responses into a short paragraph or two.

- What do I feel are my greatest strengths? What strengths have others noticed in me?
- What do I deeply enjoy doing?
- Who are the one or two people that have made the greatest positive impact on my life? Why have they made such a significant impact?
- What have been the happiest moments of my life? Why were they happy?
- If I had unlimited time and resources for a full week, what would I choose to do?
- What do I enjoy doing for others?
- What are my most important goals in life? What do I hope to accomplish in my life?
- What inspires me? What brings out my passion and my commitment?

Now reflect on Jesus' mission as found in Luke 4:16-21 and Luke 7:18-22. Can you see the mission of Jesus in your mission? How can you strengthen your mission to reflect the challenge of living as a disciple today?

## **Part 3. Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application**

(15 minutes)

### **1. Whole Group Sharing and Reflection**

The whole group sharing experience provides an opportunity for each age group to share something they have learned with the entire group. Ask the participants to rejoin their intergenerational groups from the All Ages Learning Experience.

First, ask each age group to share what they learned in their activity. For example, the family can share ideas from their family pledge, adolescents can share ideas from the discipleship charts they created and posted around the room, and adults can share new practices they want to start living.

Second, present the following information using the words below or your own words:

Think of everything we have done in this session to understand the teaching and example of Jesus on discipleship and its significance for living as disciples today. To help us take our learning from this session and live in our lives and homes reflect on the following questions and share your thoughts with your group.

- What is the most important “lesson” you have learned about discipleship?
- What one new practice will you begin living as a result of this session?

Invite participants to take several minutes for small group sharing.

## **Closing Prayer**

# Learning to Be a Disciple Scripture Passages

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## Jesus Teaches

Read John 13:34-35.

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Read Luke 6:27, 32.

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you . . . If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.”

Read Matthew 6:12-15 and Matthew 5:9

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Read Matthew 7:7-8, 11.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. . . .your Father in heaven gives good things to those who ask him!

Read Matthew 25:34-36, 40.

“Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ . . . ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

## Jesus Acts

Read Mark 2:15-17

And as he sat at dinner in Levi’s house, many tax-collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax-collectors, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does he eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard this, he said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’

Read Luke 5:12-13.

Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, 'I do choose. Be made clean.' Immediately the leprosy left him.

Read John 13:3-5, 12-15.

And during supper Jesus . . . took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.'

Read Luke 8:40-42, 49-55.

Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.

While he was still speaking, someone came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer.' When Jesus heard this, he replied, 'Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved.' When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother. They were all weeping and wailing for her; but he said, 'Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and called out, 'Child, get up!' Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat.

Read Mark 4:35-41.

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

## Jesus Tells a Story

### A Story of a Rich Man

Read Luke 12:16-21.

Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

### A Story of a Good Samaritan

Read Luke 10:29-37.

... (The Lawyer) asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

### A Story of a Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Read Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income." But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.'

# Learning to Be a Disciple Cards

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*Note: Please format these items as cards that can be copied and cut-out.*

## Jesus Teaches Card 1

What did Jesus teach us about love?

Read John 13:34-35.

Share: Jesus taught us to love one another and ourselves. Jesus said that our love for one another is sign by which others will know that we are his disciples. Jesus said that we need to love others as we love ourselves and to remember that we are always loved by God.

Discuss: How do we love others the way Jesus taught us?

## Jesus Teaches Card 2

What did Jesus teach us about how to treat our enemies or people we don't like?

Read Luke 6:27, 32.

Share: Jesus taught us to love all people, even our enemies, because God loves everyone. We are not to strike back or seek revenge, but to wish the good for our enemy. Jesus taught us how to love our enemies when he forgave those who crucified him.

Discuss: How hard is it love people you don't like or people who don't like you?

## Jesus Teaches Card 3

What did Jesus teach us about forgiveness and resolving arguments and disagreements?

Read Matthew 6:12-15 and Matthew 5:9

Share: In the Our Father, Jesus teaches us to forgive one another always. We cannot ask for forgiveness for our own sins unless we are also ready to forgive those who sin against us. In the Beatitudes, Jesus teaches us that disciples are peacemakers.

Discuss: Why is it hard to forgive other people when they hurt us? How does it feel when you do you forgive others? How can you be a peacemaker?

## **Jesus Teaches Card 4**

What did Jesus teach us about praying?

Read Matthew 7:7-8, 11.

Share: Jesus taught us to pray always and with complete trust in God. Prayer draws us close to the loving, gracious God that Jesus called “abba” (Dad or Daddy).

Discuss: When do we pray as a family? How do we give thanks to God and ask God for what we need?

## **Jesus Teaches Card 5**

What did Jesus teach us about serving people in need?

Read Matthew 25:34-36, 40.

Share: Jesus taught us to look around us to see people who are in need and then serve them by our actions, such as providing food, clothing, and housing to the poor, visiting those who are sick in hospitals and nursing homes, and similar actions. When we do these things we meet Jesus in those we serve and draw closer to him.

Discuss: Who do we need to care for and serve in our community? How can we as a family take action?

## **Jesus Acts Card 1**

How did Jesus treat people who were badly treated by other people? Can you recall a story where Jesus treated people with respect?

Read Mark 2:15-17 and Luke 5:12-13.

Share: Jesus calls us to treat all people with respect and dignity, even sinners, tax collectors who cheated people, lepers, and the sick. Jesus ate with sinners and forgave them. Jesus cured lepers who were separated from healthy people. Jesus healed the sick whose sickness was viewed as God’s punishment for their sinfulness.

Discuss: What’s hard about treating all people with respect? Who especially needs our respect in our community or world?

## **Jesus Acts Card 2**

How did Jesus show us to serve each other? Can you recall a story where Jesus showed us how to serve?

Read John 13:3-5, 12-15.

Share: Jesus calls us to serve one another, humbly and unselfishly. Jesus gave us an example when he washed the feet of his disciples and told them to wash the feet of others.

Discuss: What did Jesus teach his disciples about serving others? How do you “wash the feet” of others every day?

## **Jesus Acts Card 3**

How did Jesus teach us to value and respect human life? Can you recall a story where Jesus showed us how important life is?

Read Luke 8:40-42, 49-55.

Share: Jesus call us to respect all human life. When he raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead, healed the sick, and cured the lepers, Jesus demonstrated the importance of all life.

Discuss: How can we show our respect for human life from before birth (conception) through old age?

## **Jesus Acts Card 4**

How did Jesus teach us to not be afraid and to trust him? Can you recall a story where Jesus taught the disciples to overcome their fear?

Read Mark 4:35-41.

Share: Jesus calmed the storm to teach his disciples that, if they have trust in him, they have no reason to be afraid. Having faith in Jesus, means trusting in his teachings and recognizing his presence in our lives. When we know this, we have no reason to be afraid to follow him.

## **Jesus Tells a Story Card 1**

A Story of a Rich Man

Read Luke 12:16-21.

Discuss:

- What is Jesus telling us in this story?
- What is Jesus asking us to do as disciples?

Share: Jesus challenges us to be grateful for what God gives us and to share our wealth with others. For what are we grateful? What is the wealth that we have to share with others?

## **Jesus Tells a Story Card 2**

A Story of a Good Samaritan

Read Luke 10:29-37.

Discuss:

- What is Jesus telling us in this story?
- What is Jesus asking us to do as disciples?

Share: Jesus challenges us to open our hearts to everyone, especially people in need. Jesus teaches us that everyone is our neighbor. How does our family serve people in need?

## **Jesus Tells a Story Card 3**

A Story of a Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Read Luke 18:9-14

Discuss:

- What is Jesus telling us in this story?
- What is Jesus asking us to do as disciples?

Share: Jesus challenges us to be honest with God and each other and to trust in God. The Pharisee was so filled with his own self-importance, he had no room for God. The tax collector was humble, asking God for forgiveness and trusting in God's mercy.

**Did You Know? Card 1**

What city was Jesus born in?

Answer: Bethlehem

**Did You Know? Card 2**

Who prepared the way for Jesus and baptized people?

Answer: John the Baptist

**Did You Know? Card 3**

What did Jesus do at the wedding feast of Cana?

Answer: Turned water in wine

**Did You Know? Card 4**

What were the two sisters that were disciples of Jesus?

Answer: Mary and Martha

**Did You Know? Card 5**

Who did Jesus raise from the dead?

Answer: Lazarus

**Did You Know? Card 6**

Who was the disciple who said that he didn't know Jesus?

Answer: Peter

**Did You Know? Card 7**

Who doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead and needed to see Jesus for himself?

Answer: Thomas

**Did You Know? Card 8**

Who was the man who climbed a tree to see Jesus better?

Answer: Zacchaeus

**Did You Know? Card 9**

Who was the first to see the Risen Lord?

Answer: Mary Magdalene

**Did You Know? Card 10**

What prayer did Jesus teach his disciples?

Answer: The Our Father

**Did You Know? Card 11**

When Jesus fed the 5000 people, who gave him five loaves and two fish to help?

Answer: A boy

**Did You Know? Card 12**

Who was the disciple who betrayed Jesus?

Answer: Judas

**Did You Know? Card 13**

Who sentenced Jesus to death?

Answer: Pilate, the Roman Governor

**Did You Know? Card 14**

What city was Jesus crucified in?

Answer: Jerusalem

**Did You Know? Card 15**

What city did Jesus grow up in?

Answer: Nazareth

# Discipleship Scripture Passages

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## Teaching 1

John 13:34-35  
Matthew 22:34-40  
Luke 6:27, 32-33, 36

## Teaching 2

Matthew 6:12-15  
Matthew 5:9  
Matthew 18:21-22  
Matthew 5:21-24

## Teaching 3

Matthew 7:7-8, 11.  
Matthew 6:5-15

## Teaching 4

Matthew 25:34-36, 40  
Luke 16:19-31

## Teaching 5

Mark 10:17-31  
Luke 12:16-21

## Teaching 6

Mark 2:15-17  
Luke 5:12-13  
Luke 14:12-14

## Teaching 7

John 13:3-5, 12-15  
Luke 10:29-37

## Teaching 8

Luke 8:40-42, 49-55  
John 8:2-11

## Teaching 9

Mark 4:35-41  
Luke 24:36-49

## Teaching 10

Luke 18:9-14  
Mark 10:35-45

## Insights

- What is Jesus telling us about discipleship in these passages?
- What is Jesus asking us to do as disciples?
- Why would it be hard to live out Jesus' teaching today?
- What would it look like if people actually lived this way in today's world? What would it look like at home, at school or work, in your community, and in our nation and world?

# Living the Challenge of Discipleship

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*How are you living the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus today? Take a moment to reflect on each of these key teachings and rate yourself. Place an asterisk (\*) next to the qualities of discipleship that you need want to improve. Conclude by identifying things you can do to grow as a disciple.*

- ❶ This is too hard to do.
- ❷ I've got a lot of work to do if I'm going to live this.
- ❸ I'm working to live this.
- ❹ This is one of my strengths as a disciple.

to love God with all my heart, soul, and mind	❶	❷	❸	❹
to love other people as much as I love myself	❶	❷	❸	❹
to love even my enemies	❶	❷	❸	❹
to forgive others and always to seek reconciliation with them	❶	❷	❸	❹
to renounce revenge	❶	❷	❸	❹
to avoid judging and condemning others	❶	❷	❸	❹
to befriend those whom society looks down upon	❶	❷	❸	❹
to serve the needs of others, humbly and unselfishly	❶	❷	❸	❹
to serve the poor and those in need	❶	❷	❸	❹
to beware of riches and attachment to possessions	❶	❷	❸	❹
to be just in my dealings with others	❶	❷	❸	❹
to respect the dignity of all human life	❶	❷	❸	❹
to pray always and trust in God	❶	❷	❸	❹
to trust in Jesus whenever I have doubts and fears	❶	❷	❸	❹

**One or two ways I am going to grow as a disciple by eliminating something in my life that is getting in the way of following Jesus or by starting a new practice for living my faith.**

## A Disciple's Prayer

*Jesus help me to live as your disciple by....*

(Name one or two ways you want Jesus to help you grow as his disciple.)

# Discipleship Today: Adults

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*Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall! (Matthew 7:24-27)*

## Part 1. Discipleship in My Life Today

*Discipleship involves imitating the pattern of Jesus' life by openness to God's will in the service of others. This gets at the heart of the matter. The intrinsic meaning of discipleship is the notion of "following;" the disciple shapes his or her life on that of the master or mentor. "Follow me"—those two words distill the essence of Christian life.*

*Obviously "following" or "imitating" Jesus does not mean simply copying the surface details of his life, such as wearing first century garb or becoming an itinerant preacher. Imitating Jesus means that Christians are to shape their own lives in the pattern of Jesus. This is no simple process nor is there only one way of expressing the pattern of Christ's life in our own. Here is where the authentic disciple becomes a true learner by constantly reflecting on the teaching and example of Jesus and by trying to see their meaning in our everyday lives.*

*(Donald Senior, "Following Jesus: Discipleship Today")*

### Personal Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on your understanding and practice of discipleship by using the following questions.

- What does being a disciple of Jesus Christ mean to you?
- How do you practice discipleship in your daily life?

### Reflections

## Group Sharing

Share your reflections on the two questions with your group. This is a storytelling experience so be sure to give each person time to share his or her story without interruptions or discussion.

## Part 2. Jesus' Vision of Discipleship: His Teaching and Example

Throughout the Gospels Jesus is presenting us the vision and practices of discipleship. His teaching and example point the way to life lived in relationship with him.

### Read and Reflect

To explore Jesus' vision and practices of discipleship distribute the Discipleship Teaching Scripture passages among the group members. If there are ten people at the table, each person takes one set of readings. If there are less than ten people, ask individuals to take an additional set of readings.

Read and reflect on the Gospel passages individually. Answer the four questions on the handout with the Gospel passages and prepare your reflections to share with the group.

- What is Jesus telling us about discipleship in these passages?
- What is Jesus asking us to do as disciples?
- Why would it be hard to live out Jesus' teaching today?
- What would it look like if people actually lived this way in today's world? What would it look like at home, at work, in your community, and in our nation and world?

## Group Sharing

Share a summary of your reflections with your table group. Summarize highlights of the Gospel passages and share a summary of your responses to the four questions.

### Discussion

Together as a group discuss the following questions:

- What struck you as significant or even new about discipleship from reading the Gospel passages?
- What do you think is unique about the teaching and insight of Jesus that we find in these Gospel readings?
- The wisdom of Jesus often contrasts with the "wisdom of the world." Consider Jesus' teaching on discipleship—love, reconciliation, poverty and riches, and justice (to name a few): How do Jesus' teachings compare to what we hear and see in our world? What are the biggest challenges in living faithfully as a disciple today?

## Reflections on Discipleship

In the Gospel passages you explored, we gain insight into what Jesus is asking of us as his disciples. While no summary of Jesus' teaching on discipleship is complete, here are several summary insights from the Gospel passages.

- Jesus calls us to love one another as a sign by which others will know that we are his disciples. He calls us to love others as we love ourselves and to remember that we are always loved by God. Jesus challenges us to love all people including our enemies.
- Jesus calls us forgive one another and always to seek reconciliation with one another. Jesus said that we cannot ask forgiveness for our own sins unless we are also ready to forgive those who sin against us; and that we should not presume to offer sacrifice to God unless and until we have been reconciled with our brother or sister.
- Jesus calls to renounce revenge and to avoid judging and condemning others.
- Jesus calls us to avoid self-righteousness, presumption, and resentment toward others. Jesus repudiated the proud Pharisee and the resentful elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son. He condemned those who try to shut the doors of the kingdom of God so that others could not enter it and said the publicans and prostitutes would enter the kingdom before their detractors would.
- Jesus calls to befriend those whom society looks down upon. Jesus made himself the friend of the outcasts and did not avoid their company.
- Jesus calls to serve one another, humbly and unselfishly. Jesus gave us an example when he washed the feet of his disciples and challenged us to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind to the banquet.
- Jesus calls us to serve the poor. Jesus singled out the poor in the beatitudes, insisting that the reign of God will be theirs, as did Mary in her Magnificat: "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1:52-53). Jesus' parable of Lazarus and the rich man is particularly compelling. Indeed, Pope John Paul II frequently cites it in summoning the Church to the service of the poor and powerless.
- Jesus calls us to beware of riches and the attachment to possessions. Jesus said it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God. He said that those who would be his disciples should be ready to sell all that they have and give to the poor
- Jesus calls us to pray always and with complete trust in God. Jesus said that we should pray in complete confidence to God.

A disciples we are challenged to . . .

- trust in God's unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness
- discover a loving God in prayer
- find meaning and purpose for our lives in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ
- be peacemakers and promote reconciliation—working for peace and healing in their relationships, community and world, and resolving conflicts nonviolently
- be good stewards of God's creation—sharing our personal talents and possessions, as well as the resources of the earth

- live a life of simplicity freed from the pressures of materialism and consumerism
- respect the human dignity, worth, and equality of *all* people—recognizing that all people are created in the image and likeness of God
- work for social justice to ensure that the essential human and material needs of all people are met; work toward a world freed of poverty and oppression of all kinds
- be compassionate and serving those in need—developing a special sensitivity to human suffering and fragility; engage in actions to respond to those in need
- develop loving relationships built upon care, compassion, commitment, faithfulness, honesty, and a concern for the other person

Consider this: What if by some miracle we all began to live this way. Would not our lives be the solution to so many of the problems that beset us in our families, communities, nation, and world?

### **Part 3. Living as a Disciple of Jesus Today**

#### **Personal Reflection**

Take several minutes to examine your life as a disciple using the “Living the Challenge of Discipleship” worksheet. Begin with the Part 1 reflection tool to examine how are you living the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus today. Then move to Part 2 and identify specific practices that you can begin now to grow as a disciple, as well as the obstacles to implementing your practices and the supports and resources you have for overcoming these obstacles.

#### **Group Sharing**

Share several ideas for growth with your group. Give each person time to share his or her ideas without interruptions or discussion.

#### **Prayer**

Conclude by writing a prayer: “Jesus help me to live as your disciple by...”

### **Part 4. Going Deeper**

Use the following activities in the coming weeks to learn more are discipleship and how you can grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

#### **Exploring the Teaching and Example of Jesus**

Take some time this week to read all of the Gospel passages used in this session:

Teaching 1—Love: John 13:34-35, Matthew 22:34-40, Luke 6:27, 32-33, 6

Teaching 2—Forgiveness: Matthew 6:12-15, Matthew 5:9, Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 5:21-24

Teaching 3—Prayer: Matthew 7:7-8, 11; Matthew 6:5-15

Teaching 4—Service to the Poor: Matthew 25:34-36, 40; Luke 16:19-31

Teaching 5—Riches and Possessions: Mark 10:17-31, Luke 12: 16-21

Teaching 6—Compassion for the Outcasts: Mark 2:15-17, Luke 5:12-13, Luke 14:12-14

Teaching 7—Servant Lifestyle: John 13:3-5, 12-15; Luke 10:29-37

Teaching 8—Dignity of Life: Luke 8:40-42, 49-55; John 8:2-11

Teaching 9—Trust in Jesus Overcomes Fears: Matthew 4:35-41, Luke 24:36-49

Teaching 10—Humility: Luke 18:9-14, Mark 10:35-45

### **Reading Jesus' Sermons on Discipleship**

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew, Chapters 4-6) and The Great Sermon (Luke 6:20-49) reflect the heart and mind of Jesus. They should have a privileged place in our lives as disciples. The Sermon makes four points with utter simplicity. Love everyone, especially those you would ordinarily consider enemies. Claim nothing as your own, but use all you are and all that you have to meet the needs of others. Forgive everyone everything. Judge no one but yourself.

Find a quiet place this week to pray, read the Scriptures, and reflect on how you can live the message of Jesus more fully today. Read the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel Matthew, Chapters 5-7 and the Great Sermon in Luke 6:20-49.

### **Jesus' Mission – My Mission**

Find time this week to reflect on your mission in life. Use the following questions to discover your personal mission. Then shape your responses into a short paragraph or two.

- What do I feel are my greatest strengths? What strengths have others noticed in me?
- What do I deeply enjoy doing?
- Who are the one or two people that have made the greatest positive impact on my life? Why have they made such a significant impact?
- What have been the happiest moments of my life? Why were they happy?
- If I had unlimited time and resources for a full week, what would I choose to do?
- What do I enjoy doing for others?
- What are my most important goals in life? What do I hope to accomplish in my life?
- What inspires me? What brings out my passion and my commitment?

Now reflect on Jesus' mission as found in Luke 4:16-21 and Luke 7:18-22. Can you see the mission of Jesus in your mission? How can you strengthen your mission to reflect the challenge of living as a disciple today?

# Living the Challenge of Discipleship

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*How are you living the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus today? Take a moment to reflect on each of these key teachings and rate yourself. Place an asterisk (\*) next to the qualities of discipleship that you need want to improve. Conclude by identifying things you can do to grow as a disciple.*

- ❶ This is too hard to do.
- ❷ I've got a lot of work to do if I'm going to live this.
- ❸ I'm working to live this.
- ❹ This is one of my strengths as a disciple.

to love God with all my heart, soul, and mind	❶	❷	❸	❹
to love other people as much as I love myself	❶	❷	❸	❹
to love even my enemies	❶	❷	❸	❹
to forgive others and always to seek reconciliation with them	❶	❷	❸	❹
to renounce revenge	❶	❷	❸	❹
to avoid judging and condemning others	❶	❷	❸	❹
to befriend those whom society looks down upon	❶	❷	❸	❹
to serve the needs of others, humbly and unselfishly	❶	❷	❸	❹
to serve the poor and those in need	❶	❷	❸	❹
to beware of riches and attachment to possessions	❶	❷	❸	❹
to be just in my dealings with others	❶	❷	❸	❹
to respect the dignity of all human life	❶	❷	❸	❹
to pray always and trust in God	❶	❷	❸	❹
to trust in Jesus whenever I have doubts and fears	❶	❷	❸	❹

## Plan for Growing as a Disciple

*Identify specific practices that you can begin now to grow as a disciple, such as examining your attitudes about money and materialism, reconciling with someone who has hurt you, getting involved in service to those in need, thinking about your career goals, etc. Identify the obstacles to implementing your practices, as well as the supports and resources you have for overcoming these obstacles.*

**Practices I Want to Adopt**

**Obstacles to Overcome**

**Supports and Resources**

## A Disciple's Prayer

*Jesus help me to live as your disciple by....*

(Name one or two ways you want Jesus to help you grow as his disciple.)