### Prayer Service

##### Gather

Come, Lord Jesus,

startle us with your presence, life-sustaining as air,

to open our hearts to praise you,

to open our minds to attend you,

to open our spirits to worship you,

to open us to live our lives

as authentically and boldly

as you lived yours.

Come, Lord Jesus,

be with us in our longing;

come, stay with us in our needing;

come, go with us in our doing;

come, struggle with us in our searching;

come, rejoice with us in our loving.

Amen.

(Ted Loder. *Guerrillas of Grace.*)

##### Listen

Call of the Disciples: John 1:35-42 or Mark 1:16-20

##### Respond

Christ Jesus, you love us so much that you seek us out and personally call us to follow you.

Response: Give us the grace to follow you.

Christ Jesus, you call us to open our lives to God’s love and will.

Response: Give us the grace to follow you.

Christ Jesus, you call us to shape our lives on the pattern of your own life.

Response: Give us the grace to follow you.

Christ Jesus, you call us to love and forgive, to serve those in need,

and to proclaim your Good News.

Response: Give us the grace to follow you.

##### Go Forth

Gracious God, we ask you to open our hearts and minds to the call of Jesus. We want to follow him on the path of discipleship, but it is a hard journey. Give us the courage to accept Jesus’ invitation and to live our lives as he lived his. Inspire us to find ways to follow Jesus every day. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Handout #1.

### People Who Followed Jesus

##### Mary Magdalene (Matthew 27:55-61)

Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

##### Mary Magdalene (John 20:1-18)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 2and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” ’ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

#### Matthew (Levi) (Mark 2:13-17)

Jesus went out again beside the lake; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. As he was walking along, he saw Levi (Matthew) son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and followed him.

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.’

##### Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.’

##### Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42)

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

##### Thomas (John 20:24-29)

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

##### Peter (Matthew 4:18-22)

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

##### Peter (Matthew 14:22-33)

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, ‘Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.’

Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, ‘You of little faith, why did you doubt?’ When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’

##### Peter (Mark 14:32-41)

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’ He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

##### Peter (Mark 14:66-72)

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘I do not know or understand what you are talking about.’ And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, ‘This man is one of them.’ But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, ‘Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.’ But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, ‘I do not know this man you are talking about.’ At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.

##### Peter (John 13:3-20)

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’ Jesus answered, ‘You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’ Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.’ Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’ Jesus said to him, ‘One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean.’

##### Peter (John 21:15-19)

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.’ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’

##### Peter (Acts 2:14, 22-24, 32-33, 36, 37-42)

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

‘You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.’

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

##### Paul (Acts 9:1-30)

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ He asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The reply came, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ He answered, ‘Here I am, Lord.’ The Lord said to him, ‘Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.’ But Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.’ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’ All who heard him were amazed and said, ‘Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?’ Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He spoke and argued with the Hellenists; but they were attempting to kill him. When the believers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

##### Paul (Acts 26:2-23)

‘I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore I beg of you to listen to me patiently.

‘All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

‘Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

‘With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.” I asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The Lord answered, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

‘After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.

##### Paul (Acts 16.16-40)

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, ‘These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.’ She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market-place before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, ‘These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.’ The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, ‘Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.’ The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They answered, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

When morning came, the magistrates sent the police, saying, ‘Let those men go.’ And the jailer reported the message to Paul, saying, ‘The magistrates sent word to let you go; therefore come out now and go in peace.’ But Paul replied, ‘They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves.’ The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens; so they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. After leaving the prison they went to Lydia’s home; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.

##### Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9)

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.’ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.’ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.

##### Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stood still and said, ‘Call him here.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher, let me see again.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

##### The Samaritan Woman (John 4:5-30, 39-42)

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’ Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’ They left the city and were on their way to him.

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.’

##### Stephen (Acts 6:5-15)

What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’ They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. They set up false witnesses who said, ‘This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.’ And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

##### Stephen (Acts 7:54-60)

When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he died.

### Handout #2.

### People Who Followed Jesus: Who Am I?

New Testament Person #1 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #5 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #6 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #7 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #8 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #9 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #10 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

##### Reflection Questions

* Which person seemed the most interesting to you? Why?
* How were people changed when they met Jesus?
* What did it mean for them to follow Jesus?

### Handout #3

### People Who Followed Jesus: Who Am I?

### (Family Version)

New Testament Person #1 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #5 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #6 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #7 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #8 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #9 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New Testament Person #10 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Select a person to match with the Scripture reading:**

Mary Magdalene, Matthew (Levi), Nicodemus, Thomas, Peter, Paul, Zacchaeus, Samaritan Woman, Stephen, Bartimaeus.

##### Reflection Questions

* Which person seemed the most interesting to you? Why?
* How were people changed when they met Jesus?
* What did it mean for them to follow Jesus?

### Handout #4

### We Follow Jesus

Jesus calls us personally to follow him. We have experienced the stories of New Testament disciples who were called by Jesus and followed him. In this activity you will work together as a family to explore what it means to follow Jesus today by describing what a disciple believes, what a disciple feels, and how a disciple acts. For example:

* Believes: A disciple believes Jesus is the Son of God.
* Feels: A disciple experiences Jesus’ love and forgiveness.
* Acts: A disciple serves people in need.

Together with your children you are going to create a “We Follow Jesus” poster with footprints of family members. In each footprint you and the children are going to write one thing a disciple believes, feels, and does (acts). Each person in your family will take off his or her shoes and socks and outline the shape of both feet on individual sheets of paper that you can cut out and glue on the poster or by outlining your feet right on the poster. Make sure that you have 12 footprints on the poster.

**Step 1.**

As a family develop your own ideas for what a disciple believes, feels or does (acts). Record your answers on the worksheet.

**Step 2.**

Think of what you have learned about following Jesus from the stories of the New Testament disciples. Try to identify what they believed, what they felt, or how they acted. You might want to read several stories from the opening activity of the session. Record your answers on the worksheet.

* Mary Magdalene: Matthew 27:55-61 and John 20:1-18
* Matthew (Levi): Mark 2:13-17
* Nicodemus: John 3:1-21 and John 19:38-42
* Thomas: John 20:24-29
* Peter: Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 14:32-41, Mark 14:66-72, John 13:3-20, John 21:15-19, and Acts 2:14, 22-24, 32-33, 36, 37-42
* Paul: Acts 9:1-30, Acts 26:2-23, and Acts 16.16-40
* Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-9
* The Samaritan Woman: John 4:5-30, 39-42
* Stephen: Acts 6:5-15 and Acts 7:54-60
* Bartimaeus: Mark 10:46-52

**Step 3.**

Read the following Scripture passage from the Gospel of Luke in which announces Jesus’ mission. It provides insights into what was important for Jesus and those who follow him. Using this passage discuss as a family what you would add to the ideas on your worksheet.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ (Luke 4:16-21)

**Step 4.**

Review your list of what disciples believe, what they feel, or how they act. Is there anything missing? Discuss the following questions to see if there is anything you would add to your list. The Scripture passages are only examples. You may want to read one or two stories together as family.

* If you saw Jesus in action and heard him teach, what would you believe about Jesus? (Example: Matthew 15:13-17)
* If you were healed or forgiven by Jesus, what would you believe about him? (Example: John 9:1-7, 35-38 or John 8:1-11)
* If you were healed or forgiven by Jesus, what would you feel?
* If you saw Jesus serving people in need, what would he say to you about serving others? (Example: Matthew 25: 34-40 and John 13:12-16)
* If you heard Jesus telling people about relying on God, what would he say? (Example: Luke 1-13)

**Step 5.**

Create your twelve footprints by selecting four things disciples believe about Jesus, four things disciples feel about Jesus, and four things that disciples do (act). Write or draw one characteristic in each footprint. (For small feet you can write the characteristic around the foot.) On the top or in the center of the poster, write, “We Follow Jesus,” in large print.

**Step 6.**

Share your “We Follow Jesus” poster with other families at your table or at nearby tables. Take your poster home and hang it on a wall to remind everyone of how you are following Jesus.

**Concluding Reflections**

When you have finished your creative projects and shared it with the families at your table, discuss the following questions as a table group:

* What did you learn about following Jesus from this activity?
* When you think about what you wrote on your poster about following Jesus, where does your family feel affirmed and where is your family challenged to grow?
* What can your family start doing now to follow Jesus more faithfully?

### We Follow Jesus Worksheet

##### A Disciple Believes. . .

##### A Disciple Feels. . .

##### A Disciple Acts. . .

### Handout #5

### Being a Disciple Today

Jesus calls us personally to follow him. We have experienced the stories of New Testament disciples who were called by Jesus and followed him. In this activity you will explore what it means to follow Jesus today by creating a job description for a disciple. Use what you already know and what you are learning in this session to develop the job description.

Your job description will have three components: what a disciple believes, what a disciple feels, and how a disciple acts. For example:

* Believes: A disciple believes Jesus is the Son of God.
* Feels: A disciple experiences Jesus’ love and forgiveness.
* Acts: A disciple serves people in need.

Divide your group into three teams, one for each component: believes, feels, and acts. Each group will focus on only one aspect of the job description. Use the following steps to develop your job description. Record your answers on the worksheet.

#### Develop a Job Description for a Disciple Today

**Step 1.**

Begin by developing your own ideas, as a group, for your part of the disciple’s job description: believes, feels or acts. Record your answers on the worksheet.

**Step 2.**

Think of what you have learned about following Jesus from the stories of the New Testament disciples. Try to identify what they believed, what they felt, or how they acted. Record your answers on the worksheet.

* Mary Magdalene: Matthew 27:55-61 and John 20:1-18
* Matthew (Levi): Mark 2:13-17
* Nicodemus: John 3:1-21 and John 19:38-42
* Thomas: John 20:24-29
* Peter: Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 14:32-41, Mark 14:66-72, John 13:3-20, John 21:15-19, and Acts 2:14, 22-24, 32-33, 36, 37-42
* Paul: Acts 9:1-30, Acts 26:2-23, and Acts 16.16-40
* Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-9
* The Samaritan Woman: John 4:5-30, 39-42
* Stephen: Acts 6:5-15 and Acts 7:54-60
* Bartimaeus: Mark 10:46-52

**Step 3.**

Read the following Scripture passage from the Gospel of Luke in which Jesus announces his mission. It provides insights into what was important for Jesus and those who follow him. Using this passage, what would you add to the ideas on your worksheet.

*When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,*

*because he has anointed me*

*to bring good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim release to captives*

*and recovery of sight to the blind,*

*to let the oppressed go free,*

*to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’*

*And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’* (Luke 4:16-21)

**Step 4.**

Review your list of what disciples believe, what they feel, or how they act. Is there anything missing? Think about the following questions to see if there is anything you would add to your list. The Scripture passages are only examples.

* Believe: What did the disciples believe about Jesus? (See Matthew 15:13-17)
* Believe: What did those who were healed by Jesus believe about him? (See John 9:1-7, 35-38)
* Believe: What did those who were forgiven by Jesus believe about him? (See John 8:1-11)
* Feel: What did those who were forgiven or healed by Jesus feel?
* Feel: What were the disciples feeling after Jesus died? after Jesus appeared to them?
* Feel: What did the disciples feel during times of trouble? (See Matthew 8:23-27)
* Act: What did Jesus send the twelve apostles out to do? (See Matthew 10:1-15)
* Act: What did Jesus say about serving others? (See Matthew 25: 34-40 and John 13:12-16)
* Act: What did Jesus say about relying on God? (See Luke 1-13)

**Step 5.**

Compile all of the results by having each team share their report. Invite other group members to add to the list. Create a newsprint sheet with three columns—Believes, Feels, Acts—and write the results from all of the group work on this one newsprint sheet.

**Step 6.**

Using your job description for a disciple, develop a creative project that “recruits” people to follow Jesus today. Select an audience for your presentation. You can recruit an all ages audience or target families with children, teenagers, young adults, or adults. Develop a “recruitment campaign” that will get people’s attention and invite them to follow Jesus today.

Here are several ways that your group can create a presentation:

* Write your job description in the form of a song. Write an original song, such as rap song, or take a popular song and re-write it with new lyrics. Create a radio advertisement
* Create a visual advertisement to recruit people to follow Jesus. Think of the type of media that people you are targeting read or view: magazines, posters, billboards, radio, TV, web sites, and so on.
* Create a “Help Wanted” ad for the newspaper.
* Create artwork that illustrates the job description of a disciple today. Artwork can take many forms, such as drawing pictures or symbols or using magazine photos to represent what a disciple today believes and feels and how a disciple acts.

**Concluding Reflections**

When you have finished your creative projects, discuss the following questions:

* + What did you emphasize in your job description?
  + Would your creative project get people’s attention and invite them to follow Jesus? Why?
  + What did you learn about following Jesus from this activity?
  + When you think about the “job description” for a disciple today, where do you feel affirmed and where are you challenged to grow?

### Being a Disciple Today Worksheet

##### A Disciple Believes. . .

##### A Disciple Feels. . .

##### A Disciple Acts. . .

### Handout #6

### Following Jesus Today

#### Our Experiences of Being Called

Throughout our lives each of us has experiences of being called – into a new relationship, to a new job, to a new project or activity. Take a moment to reflect personally on one experience of being called.

Think of a time in your life when you experienced being called:

* What were you called to?
* What was involved?
* What did it require of you?

Share your reflections with your group. This is a storytelling experience, so give each person an opportunity to share without discussion or comment.

#### Personal Call to Follow Jesus

Read and consider the following:

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-22)

“This Gospel story of the calling of the disciples makes it clear that being a disciple of Jesus is not a career choice. It is a personal call. As in the case of the fishermen of Galilee, it can come unexpectedly into our lives and completely disrupt what we normally do. For others it can be a more gradual process, a slow awakening to the meaning of the Gospel for our lives. In every instance the call to follow Jesus is a gift of God, a ‘grace’ in the full sense of the term. It is meant to reach down into the very depths of our being and affect every aspect of our life.

“When we are called by someone we can either fall silent and turn away, or we can respond. The personal categories of call and response are important when considering the implications of Christian discipleship. Following Jesus does not entail only one aspect of our life; being a disciple touches everything about us—our values, our choices, our resources, our dreams. Therefore, we can expect changes and challenges once the call to be a disciple of Jesus has been heard and if we choose to respond to it.”

(Donald Senior, “Following Jesus: Discipleship Today”)

Think about your call to follow Jesus:

* How were you called to follow Jesus? Was it a gradual process, a slow awakening, or an unexpected, almost sudden, discovery that you were being called?

Share several reflections about being called by Jesus with your group.

#### Becoming a Disciple

Read and consider the following:

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
   because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
   and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,   
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ (Luke 4:14-21)

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 from the Gospel story 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.

“Jesus announced the nearness of God’s reign in which the gifts of creation are not exploited but reverenced and shared, where human beings are treated as children of God, where oppression and injustice are expunged, where the sick are healed, where the disabled are not excluded but have full access to the community, where those pushed to the margins are drawn into the heart of the community, where enmity and violence are replaced by reconciliation and love. The Gospels illustrate that the reign of God was not some romantic utopian ideal for Jesus or beautiful words spoken without cost but rather something he embodied in his own life and mission. “What Jesus proclaims by word, he enacts in his ministry” (*Economic Pastoral* #42).

“Each of the evangelists portrays a Jesus consumed with compassion, a tireless healer who was willing to break social and religious taboos to carry out his mission. The sick and dispossessed were drawn to him like a magnet and several times the Gospels describe compelling scenes as scores of the sick stream toward Jesus seeking to be healed. Jesus was not afraid to risk his own reputation—and ultimately his own safety—in order to affirm the dignity of the marginalized and to draw them into the center of his community. He invited the hated tax collector Levi to be a disciple and welcomed the bold affection of a public sinner in Simon’s house. The detested Samaritans become the heroes of his stories. He included women among his disciples in an age and culture when women had no public status. Nor did Jesus fear to meet and even praise Gentiles who were regarded as enemies of his people.

“In what he said and what he did Jesus embodied the values of God’s Reign. “Following Jesus” means absorbing that same inclusive, compassionate, and just vision of the human family. It would surely be empty religious rhetoric if the ministry of Jesus were construed solely in private, personal terms. Following the will of Jesus, without fail, leads to the hard realities of social, economic, and political justice.

“Consider the Gospel of Luke. Jesus is portrayed as a prophet who challenges the community of Israel, particularly the rich and powerful, to remember their covenant with God, a covenant calling for the sharing of resources with the poor and defenseless. Like the great prophets before him, Jesus’ challenge was disturbing and met fierce, death-dealing opposition. Jesus’ death on the cross is the ultimate sign of his message: a life poured out in love for others. It is also the sign that looms ahead in every disciple’s journey: following Jesus is not without cost. The way of discipleship can become the way of the cross.” (Donald Senior, “Following Jesus: Discipleship Today”)

##### Reflection and Discussion

If you had to develop a “job description” for a disciple of Jesus Christ today, what would you include in this job description? Complete the sentence: “A disciple is someone who . . .”

As a group, share your reflections on discipleship today and then create a summary report that reflects what your group believes it means to be a disciple today.

##### Change of Heart

Read and consider the following:

“The compelling beauty of the reign of God and the challenge it poses for many of our values and assumptions lead to another crucial dimension of discipleship. We are told that the disciples left everything—family members, hired hands, home, boats, livelihood—and followed Jesus. Jesus himself declared, “The reign of God is at hand! Reform your lives and believe in the Gospel” (Mk 1:15). The Gospel assumes that becoming a disciple of Jesus and attempting to live by the values of God’s reign will mean changes in the way we think and act. It will mean “repentance.” The Greek term used for this in the Gospel is *metanoia*. Literally it means a “change of mind” or “change of perspective.” That is an apt description of what has to happen if the Gospel is to take root in our lives. We need to change our perspective. Not “perspective” in a superficial sense but a change in our entire view of things, looking at reality through the values and vision of human life expressed in the Gospel.” (Donald Senior, “Following Jesus: Discipleship Today”)

##### Reflection and Discussion

When you think about the “job description” for a disciple today, how do you feel affirmed and how are you challenged to grow, i.e., to “change your heart”?

Share several reflections about the challenges you face to grow as a disciple.

### Prayer Service

##### Gather

Lord Jesus,

at your own baptism

the heavens were opened

and you received the Holy Spirit

to empower you to proclaim the Good News to the poor

and restore sight to the blind.

Pour out that same Holy Spirit on us.

Give us the grace to follow you faithfully

and bring your Good News to the world.

Amen.

##### Listen

Leader:

The story of Jesus’ baptism is found in all four Gospels—signaling what an important event it was. Although Jesus, being sinless, has no need of repentance, and therefore no need of baptism, he acts as humanity’s representative. He identifies himself with sinners. His baptism is an acceptance of the human condition. Jesus goes down into the water. When he comes up, God declares him “my beloved Son.” In the Sacrament of Baptism we, too, are claimed as sons and daughters of God.

**Gospel Reading:**

Baptism of Jesus: Matthew 3:13-17 or Mark 1:9-11 or Luke 3:21-22 or John 1:29-34

##### Respond

Leader:

In Baptism, we are immersed in water as a sign of our dying with Christ, and then rising out of the water into new life with Christ. Christ becomes our source of living water, and we are called to become “living water for a thirsty world.”

Father,

you give us grace through sacramental signs,

which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power.

In baptism we use your gift of water,

which you have made a rich symbol of the grace

you give us in this sacrament.

At the very dawn of creation

your Spirit breathed on the waters,

making them the wellspring of all holiness.

The waters of the great flood

you made a sign of the waters of baptism,

which make an end of sin

and a new beginning of goodness.

Through the waters of the Red Sea

you led Israel out of slavery,

to be an image of God’s holy people,

set free from sin by baptism.

In the waters of the Jordan

your Son was baptized by John

and anointed with the Spirit.

Your Son willed that water and blood should flow from his side

as he hung upon the cross.

After his resurrection he told his disciples:

“Go out and teach all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Father,

look now with love upon your church,

and unseal for her the fountain of baptism.

By the power of the Holy Spirit

give to the water the grace of your Son,

so that in the sacrament of baptism

all those whom you have created in your likeness

may be cleansed from sin

and rise to a new birth of innocence

by water and the Holy Spirit.

We ask you, Father, with your Son

to send the Holy Spirit upon the waters of this font.

May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism

rise also with him to newness of life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(From the *Rite of Baptism* #54)

##### Blessing

The prayer leaders now bless the community with water.

Leader:

The signing of the senses represents our commitment to give ourselves totally to Jesus and following as disciples. As I proclaim each signing, make the sign of the cross on your body, and respond: “Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.”

Receive the sign of the cross on your *forehead*. It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of his love.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Receive the sign of the cross on your ears, that you may hear the voice of the Lord.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes, that you may see the glory of God.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Receive the sign of the cross on your lips, that you may respond to the word of God.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Receive the sign of the cross over your heart, that Christ may dwell there by faith.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders, that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Receive the sign of the cross on your hands, that Christ may be known in the work which you do.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Receive the sign of the cross on your feet, that you may walk in the way of Christ.

Response: Lord Jesus, we will be a sign of your love.

Final Blessing

I place you entirely under the sign of Christ’s cross in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Response: Amen.

##### Go Forth

Jesus, you call to our hearts: “Leave anything that holds you back from deeper love. Come follow me, again and again.” Grant us the courage to leave behind whatever keeps us from you and to trust you with our lives. May our heart’s connection with you be so strong and true that we will daily risk the road of following in your footsteps. Keep us open to the adventure of life where we meet you day by day. Remind us often of our inner goodness. Help us to believe that you look upon us with love. Thank you for the call to be you disciple. Amen. (Joyce Rupp. *Out of the Ordinary*)