

# Living as Disciples

## Session Focus

This session on following Jesus 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.

## Learning Objectives

The session on Living as a Disciple guides learners of all ages to . . .

- identify the qualities and characteristics of Christian discipleship as presented by Jesus in the Gospel and discover practices for living as disciples today
- value and appreciate Jesus' way of living as a model for their own lives and strengthen their own faith relationship with Jesus Christ
- apply Jesus' teachings and example to living each day as a disciple

## Session Overview

**Part 1. (5 minutes)                      Gathering and Opening Prayer Service**

**Part 2. (25 minutes)                    All Ages Learning Experience**

**Part 3. (75-90 minutes)            In Depth Learning Experience: Living as a Disciple**

- Option 1. Whole Group Format - all participants remain in the same room.
- Option 2. Age Groups Format - participants go to separate rooms for parallel learning: families with children, adolescents, adults.

**Part 4. (15 minutes)                    Sharing Learning Experiences**

**Part 5. (15 minutes)                    Closing Prayer Service**

## Design Options for In-Depth Learning

### Option 1. Whole Group Format

This format guides the entire assembly through each of the learning experiences. You might choose this format if you have:

- a large physical space with good acoustics/sound system and furniture to comfortably accommodate the learners
- a competent large group facilitator/master of ceremonies able to provide clear directions and to manage the dynamics and energy of a large group

- a group of leaders who feel comfortable moving through the assembly offering assistance, or a large enough team of table leaders to have one leader work with each table group
- a learning topic that lends itself to everyone learning the same thing at the same time, but in different ways, in the same space

**Facilitation Tips for this Format:**

Guide small groups through each of the activities at the same time.

- Organize people into table groups based on age groupings: families with children (grades 1-5), middle school adolescents, high school adolescents, young adults, and adults.
- The lead facilitator guides the entire group through each of the learning experiences. All presentations and activity instructions are given to the whole group.
- The age-appropriate learning activities within each learning experience are conducted in table groups.
- Where needed, small group leaders facilitate the work of the table groups.

**Option 2. Age Group Format**

This format provides for three separate parallel learning programs. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic. You might choose this format if you have:

- an adequate number of meeting spaces for the various groups to gather
- an adequate number of competent facilitators to work with each group
- a topic that is best explored through age-specific learning

**Facilitation Tips for This Format**

- Organize participants into three or more parallel learning groups: families with children (grades 1-5), adolescents (grades 6-12), and adults.
- If there are a large number of adolescents, divide them into two groups: middle school and high school.

Organize separate groups for young adults, adults, and older adults. Or you can give the adults their own choice for forming small groups.

- Direct the adolescents and adults into small groups. Give them all the handouts and learning materials needed for the learning experiences
- Guide the families with children into table groups of two or more families. Give each table all the handouts and learning materials necessary for the learning experiences.
- A facilitator must guide all the of the families through each learning experience, while small group leaders move from table to table assisting.

**Materials Needed**

Gathering

- Name tags
- Community building activities
- Bible

#### All Ages Opening Learning Experience

- Opening Prayer Service Handout
- Handout #1
- Bible
- Seeds
- Props for the role play: large rocks, masking tape to outline the footpath, large posters of the sun, bushes, soil.

#### In-Depth Learning Experience

- Handouts #2-#8
- For family learning plan: Using Handout #4, reproduce the 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. Provide each family with a sheet of cardstock paper, pen, and colored markers so they can create a family table prayer.
- For the adolescent learning plan: You will need large sheets of newsprint, markers, masking tape, and pens or pencils for each person. Create one set of "Discipleship Scripture Passages" for each table group using Handout #6. Copy each teaching theme on one sheet of paper.

#### Closing

- Closing Prayer Service

# Session Plan

## Part 1. Gathering (5 minutes)

### Preparation

Prepare a newsprint sheet or handout that lists the order of the activities or create a PowerPoint presentation that guides people through the session.

### Registration and Hospitality

- Welcome people and ask them to sign in for the program.
- Provide name tags or invite people to make their own.
- Distribute the handouts participants will need for the session. (You can also distribute handouts for the In-Depth Learning program at the beginning of the activity.)
- Invite people to share a meal; depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal instead.

Welcome the participants to the program and introduce the theme of the session, using the words below or your own words.

This session on following Jesus 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. We will reflect on the teaching and example of Jesus by exploring a variety of Gospel passages. We will also discover practices to live our everyday lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. Our goal is to strengthen our faith relationship with Jesus Christ so that the person of Jesus and his way of life guide our lives.

Present an overview and the schedule of the program.

## 1. 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.

## 2. Opening Prayer Service

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

## Part 2. 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 the Parable of the Sower, which will be acted out as part of the prayer service.

### Materials Needed

- A packet of seeds per household to plant at home
- Prayer table materials noted above
- Footpath with rocks, bushes, etc. for the dramatic reading of Scripture

### Preparation

Set up a prayer table with a 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.

You will need a number of volunteers to dramatize the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23) as described below. Arrange for these volunteers in advance of the Prayer Service.

Light the paschal candle or a large candle to begin the prayer service.

### Gather

Lord, Jesus we gather again to hear your Word.  
Inspire us to live your Good News each day.  
Open our minds to know you.  
Open our hearts to hear your voice.  
Open our lives to embrace your way of life.  
We pray now that you will give us the grace and courage to follow you faithfully.  
Amen.

### Listen

Matthew 13:3-23 (Gospel of the Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time-A)

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.

While the narrator reads 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).

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

The narrator reads Matthew 13:10-17.

### **Respond**

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

- What do you think Jesus is trying to tell his listeners?
- Which “seeds” have you experienced in your life: footpath, rocky ground, thorns, and good soil? Have you ever felt like the seed on the footpath, rocky ground, thorns, and good soil?
- How can you help the seed of faith grow in good soil?
- What is Jesus challenging us to do as disciples?

The narrator then reads Matthew 13:18-23. The group of actors who play the four types of seed come back on stage and step forward as their verse is read and 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 seeds are left.

### **Go Forth**

Christ Jesus, you sow the Word of life in our lives. May the seed grow and flourish as we follow you each day. Sustain and support us, your disciples, O Lord. Amen.

## **Part 3. In Depth Learning Experience: Living as a Disciple Today (75-90 minutes)**

### **Families with Children Learning Experience: Learning to Be a Disciple of Jesus**

#### **Materials Needed**

- Handouts #2 and #3, one per family
- Handout #4, cut out as specified above
- Cardstock paper, pen, and colored markers for each family

#### **Preparation**

Using Handout #4, reproduce the 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.

Provide each family with a sheet of cardstock paper so they can create a family table prayer.

Write the instructions on newsprint or create a PowerPoint presentation with the instructions.

Guide families through the following process. The activity can be conducted as a table group activity or within individual families. Introduce the first activity, using the words below or your own words.

## 1. Discipleship Cards

Introduce the activity with these words or your own:

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 disciples 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:

- **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.
- **Jesus Acts:** Read a short Gospel passage of Jesus living his mission and discuss as a family how you would act like Jesus today.
- **Jesus Tells a Story:** Read a Gospel parable and discuss as a family what it teaches you about following Jesus.
- **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.

Handout #3 provides the Gospel passages about Jesus for you to read when the card directs you to do so.

Instruct the families to place the cards in four piles and read the cards in the following order. Begin with the youngest member in the family or at the table. (Parents can assist younger children by reading the card and the Scripture passage.)

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Jesus Teaches       | 13. Jesus Acts          |
| 2. Did You Know?       | 14. Did You Know?       |
| 3. Jesus Acts          | 15. Jesus Tells a Story |
| 4. Did You Know?       | 16. Did You Know?       |
| 5. Jesus Teaches       | 17. Jesus Teaches       |
| 6. Did You Know?       | 18. Did You Know?       |
| 7. Jesus Tells a Story | 19. Jesus Acts          |
| 8. Did You Know?       | 20. Did You Know?       |
| 9. Jesus Acts          | 21. Jesus Tells a Story |
| 10. Did You Know?      | 22. Did You Know?       |
| 11. Jesus Teaches      | 23. Jesus Teaches       |
| 12. Did You Know?      | 24. Did You Know?       |

Allow time for families to complete the activity.

## 2. Our Family Discipleship Pledge

Guide families through creating a family pledge to live as disciples of Jesus Christ by using the worksheet, "Living as Disciple Today: Our Family Pledge" found on Handout #2. (The activity can be conducted as a table group activity or within individual families.)

Now you are going to develop specific ways your family will live as disciples of Jesus Christ today. Begin by reading Matthew 7:24-27 and the reflection which is on the worksheet, "Living as Disciple Today: Our Family Pledge" on Handout #2.

"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)

*To live faithfully as a disciple of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to take the teachings of Jesus and live them each day at home, at school, at work, and in our world. We seek to be the wise family that hears the words of Jesus and acts on them, building our lives on the solid rock of faith in Jesus Christ. (Post your pledge on the refrigerator, table, or wall to remind you of your commitments.)*

After family groups have read the Scripture and reflection, continue:

Take time now to summarize the teachings of Jesus you discovered in the first activity and write them in left column. After you have finished this list, develop specific ways your family can put these teachings into practice and live as disciples of Jesus Christ today.

Jesus teaches us how to live.	As family members we will put these teachings into practice by . . .

Invite families to share several practical ways they will live as disciples with the other families at their table or at nearby tables.

### **3. Family Prayer**

Provide each family with a sheet of cardstock paper that they 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 prayer on one half of the table tent. Children can decorate the other half of the table tent with a picture or symbol.

## **Adolescent Learning Experience: Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ**

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 the life of Jesus in the Gospels.

### **Materials Needed**

- Handouts #5, #6, and #7
- Large sheets of newsprint
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Pens or pencils

### **Preparation**

Create one set of “Discipleship Scripture Passages” for each table group using Handout #6. Copy each teaching theme on one sheet of paper.

Write the instructions on newsprint or a PowerPoint slide for all to see.

Introduce the activity by explaining to the young people that they will have an opportunity to explore 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 Handout #5.

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

Give each group one set of the Discipleship Teaching Scripture passages (Handout #6). Distribute 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.

Step 1. Read and reflect on the Gospel passages.

Step 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?

Step 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.

Step 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 . . ." Write this heading at the top of the newsprint sheet.

Step 5. After the last report review the list and add any other items that your 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.

Have participants go to the wall to review each other's reports.

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

Ask the young people to take several minutes of quiet time to complete Handout #7: Living the Challenge of Discipleship. Explain that we are using this time to reflect on how to live as disciples in our daily lives and what we need to do to follow Jesus more fully.

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

Instruct 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.

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

## **3. Concluding Discussion**

Ask the adolescents 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?

# Adult Learning Experience: Discipleship Today

## Materials Needed

- Handouts #6, #7, and #8

## Preparation

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 Handout #8.

Write the essential instructions on newsprint or create a PowerPoint presentation with the instructions.

## 1. Discipleship in My Life Today

Pass out Handout #8 and tell participants this will be their guide for the activity.

Introduce the process using the words below or your own words.

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")

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?

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.

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

Guide participants through the following process using the words below or your own words.

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

To explore Jesus' vision and practices of discipleship distribute Handout #6 on 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?

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.

Discuss the following questions as a table group:

- 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?

Use the following words below or your own words to go deeper.

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; we should not presume to offer sacrifice to God unless and until we have been reconciled with our brother or sister.
- Jesus calls us 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 us to befriend those whom society looks down upon. Jesus made himself the friend of the outcasts and did not avoid their company.
- Jesus calls us 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.
- 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 the kingdom of God. He said that those who would be his disciples should be ready to sell all that they have and give it 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.

As 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 our 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?

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

Guide participants through the following process using the words below or your own words.

Take several minutes to examine your life as a disciple using Handout #7: Living the Challenge of Discipleship. Examine how you are living the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus today. Then 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.

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

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

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

Guide participants through the following process using the words below or your own words.

Turn to Part 4 on Handout #8. I invite you to engage in the following activities in the coming weeks to learn more about discipleship and how you can grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

#### **Week One: Exploring the Teaching and Example of Jesus**

Take some time this week to read all 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

#### **Week Two: 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 of Matthew, Chapters 5-7, and the Great Sermon in Luke 6:20-49.

#### **Week Three: 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 who 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 4. Sharing Learning Reflections (15 minutes)

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 it 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.

## Part Five. Closing Prayer Service (15 minutes)

### Preparation

Select or invite several families, adolescents, and adults to share their prayers for discipleship as part of the prayer to close the session.

Prepare bowls of olive oil for each table. Place one small bowl on each table for the anointing.

Have reflective music ready for the anointing service.

**Gather**

Invite several families, adolescents, and adults to offer their prayers on discipleship.

**Listen**

Choose one of the following readings:

The Mission of the Twelve: Mark 6:7-13 (Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time-B)

OR

Mission of the Seventy: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20 (Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time-C)

**Respond**

Introduce the anointing using the words below or your own words:

At our Baptism we were anointed as disciples of Jesus Christ—to follow Jesus all the days of lives. In the sacrament of Baptism, oil is a sign of being “anointed” by the Holy Spirit, our spiritual source of strength, protection, and healing. Today, we renew our commitment to follow Jesus. Each person will be anointed with oil as a remembrance of our Baptism.

Ask one person in the group to pick up the bowl of oil and anoint the person to his or her right by making the sign of the cross on his or her forehead. Then pass the bowl to the person who has just been anointed and continue in the same fashion around the group.

Play reflective, instrumental music during the anointing.

**Go Forth**

“How does Jesus send you? He promises neither sword, nor money, nor any of the things which the means of social communications make attractive to people today. He gives you instead grace and truth. He sends you out with the powerful message of his paschal mystery, with the truth of the cross and resurrection. That is all he gives you, and that is all you need.”

(Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 1996)