



DISCIPLE

**A SIX WEEK COURSE EXPLORING
A GOSPEL CENTERED LIFE**

COMMUNITY GROUPS

DISCIPLE

A life centered on the Gospel

In the *Acts of the Apostles* we discover that the word “Christianity” was coined many years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the city of Antioch. Before it was a separate religion, Christians were known as a Jewish sect called “Followers of the Way of the Lord Jesus” or just “Followers of the Way”.

In the Apostolic Church, to become a follower of Jesus meant persecution, disinheritance, and alienation. Most of the converts were adult Jewish men and women whose decision to follow Christ broke many, if not all, of their connections to their family circles and the wider Jewish society, leading to their eventual excommunication from Temple and synagogue worship.

I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them. (John 16:1-4)

Converts risked literally everything to join the fellowship as their families were torn in half and many became economically devastated. And yet, in the middle of all this risk and loss, thousands upon thousands joined the Church and became Followers of the Way. We today are left speechless in the face of such dedication. They gave their entire lives to Jesus as the world devoured them, while we find it difficult to even mention Jesus, Church, or God in mixed company or to remember to pray, read Scripture or go to Mass.

What was it? What did they have that we didn't? And how can we recover this beautiful, radical, and complete faith in God that they thought it was entirely worth it. We are going to explore the love and the logic of the Followers of the Way so that we too can follow Christ with a living faith, a confident hope, and a radical love for God and neighbor.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

ONE: The Gospel

[What God Did]

HOST SHEET

This is the first session of Community Groups and it lays the foundation for all of the other sessions. In this we want to do two things, both taken from the First Epistle of St. Peter.

Without having seen him, you love him; though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter. 1: 8-9

Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace... -1 Peter 4:9-10

In this we will accomplish two things for tonight: place our hope in the grace of Jesus Christ, our salvation, and practice hospitality to one another. The talk and discussion that follows will present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a simple and memorable manner. The fellowship and introduction questions will create the warm and inviting atmosphere we are building in our community groups.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

All sessions are divided into four parts: Introduction, Talk, Discussion, and Prayer.

- In the beginning we apportion more time for fellowship in the *Introduction* and less time for *Prayer* in the conclusion.
- The *Talk* is always 15 minutes, keeping it short and direct.
- The *Discussion* is always the longest part of the four.
- I frame everything around a minimum of 90 minutes, but your group can go longer and invest more time in *Fellowship*, *Discussion*, or *Prayer*, as needed!
- In the end of the six weeks together, we will spend more time in *Prayer* and less time in the *Introduction* portion of the sessions.

TALKING POINTS FOR SESSION ONE

The gospel is not our response to the gospel- our good deeds, our longing to be healed, our thirst for peace and justice, our overcoming immorality, or even a way of life.

The gospel is what Jesus Christ did for you, specifically his death and resurrection. Only this is broad enough to the source of our good deeds, our healing, our works of peace and justice in the world and our moral growth and development.

When we make the results of the gospel **the** gospel we over-emphasize one aspect, de-emphasize the others, and end up minimizing what God did by focusing on what we are doing. This shifts the focus off Christ, off God, and onto us as the primary agents.

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ONE: The Gospel

[What God Did]

session
sheet

Introduction 30 minutes

Welcome guests as they enter your home, greeting them with a smile
Serve drinks (and/or food) at this time
Have everyone facing each other when you go through these questions

// quick answers // Get to Know Me Fellowship Questions

These are a series of light and easy questions designed to be QUICK ANSWERS and not need a lot of background. Have everyone answer these together, rather than run through the list.

How many siblings do you have and what is your birth order?
What is your favorite nickname and what is your least favorite?
Everybody raises their hands:
Keep it or Toss it? Greeting Cards
Keep or Toss? Coupons
Keep or Toss? Fancy gift wrapping/bags
Hugger or Not a Hugger?
Are you more of a joker or more serious?
On a scale from 1 to 10, how competitive are you?
Who is the most famous person you have ever met?

// longer answers // Get to Know Me Questions

These are a series of personal questions meant to be more reflective a little bit more revealing, but nothing too personal!

What is one thing about you that you hope will never change?
In one sentence, describe your mom. In another, describe your dad.
Share one experience from growing up that significantly shaped your life.

Talk – 15 minutes

Host leads a simple prayer of blessing for the group.
Turn on the Video: *The Gospel [What God Did]*

Discussion – 40 minutes

1. Why is the distinction between What God Did vs. What We Do in Response so crucial to understanding the gospel? Is this a necessary distinction?
2. Most philosophies and religions are defined in terms of Man's search for God. Christianity is defined as God coming to man. How does this make Christianity different?
3. Often Churches, groups, and/or individuals get defined as "Left" or "Right" depending on how they emphasize social justice vs personal morality. How is this related to the way we distinguish the gospel from our response to the gospel? How is this damaging to the practice of the Christian faith?
4. Which of the "Four Chapters" of the gospel is most important to you? Why?
5. How does your relationship to God change when you realize the meaning of the cross of Christ, that he died in your place as your substitute, so that you could have eternal life?

Prayer – 5 minutes

Have everyone in the group state one thing they need prayers for in the coming week. Make sure it is SPECIFIC and CONCRETE, and not vague or general. Go in a circle and offer the intentions, and close with a short prayer and an Our Father.

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