

PREPARATION: Use a dictionary, Bible Concordance or other reference material and have group members look up the meaning of the word "disciple". Share with one another what the reference materials says. Have people share, from their own understanding, what being a disciple of Jesus means to them.

Date _____

Notes: _____

PURPOSES:

1. In this lesson we will try to remember what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
2. We will spend a lot of time on the question of the impact of discipling others to walk the ways of Jesus.

DIGGING DEEPER: Acts chapters 1 and 2

REACHING OUT TO OUR WORLD (some more ideas to help you)

Home groups should not only be nurturing, but also evangelistic. The group should have a strategy for reaching people living in their neighborhood and community. In this way, they expand their scope and vision, and the lost are brought into God's kingdom.

Join the Parade!

A few home groups join together to construct a float to participate in their community's local parade. Decorate the float with "Jesus banners" and balloons. Proclaim the good news in a straightforward, easy-to-understand way.

Picnic Evangelism

Home group members invite unsaved friends and relatives for a day of games, snacks and entertainment at a local park. Entertainment can be provided from the talent right in the home group. (concert, soloist performance, a short drama with a spiritual message, etc.)

Serve Hurting People

Research which organizations in your area need volunteers (teen centers, hospitals, jails, homeless shelters) and go as a home group to help when needed. It is guaranteed that God will break your heart, and keep it broken before Him, when you begin to see life through His eyes of compassion.

Exotic Ethnic Outreach

Plan an ethnic meal (pick an ethnic background of a member—German, Puerto Rican, African American, Ecuadorian, Korean, Japanese) and invite the neighborhood or people you are reaching out to.

Serve your Community

Clean up your local playground or park. Paint swing-sets or buildings in the park. Plant flowers in the springtime. The township or park may even provide the supplies you would need. Just picking up trash is a simple way to say, "We care."

Children's Story Hour

In the summertime, have a children's story hour for the neighborhood kids. Put together a flyer advertising its location and time. You could do it for a few weeks or a few months. Don't feel you need an elaborate program. Simply read a Bible story with lots of colorful pictures and offer a small snack. Jesus' love is shared!

Botanical Gift Invitation

Take a potted plant to every new person moving into your home group's neighborhood. Attach a note and/or photo of your group, inviting the newcomers to visit your home group.

OPENING PRAYER/WORSHIP (10 minutes)"Our Heavenly Father: You have been teaching us Your ways of reaching other people for Your Kingdom. We receive this teaching Lord; so much, we don't understand! Lord, we need Your Holy Spirit, Your guidance, Your hand over us!"

You said that You would write Your law in our hearts! Today, write Your calling of making disciples in our hearts, so that we would be able to fulfill Your purposes in our lives! (Special prayer requests and/or thanksgivings may be added here.)

_____ In Jesus' name. Amen."

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPECIAL OFFERINGS (5 minutes)

LEARNING: Jesus began His mission with a personal ministry of three years. One of the key aspects during that time was His training of the twelve disciples. That training was the foundation of His whole ministry. He knew that in order for His mission to succeed, much would depend on the dedication, loyalty, courage, and faith of the men whom He had chosen and trained.

READ Matthew 28:16-20

What did Jesus command his disciples to do? Are we under the same commandment?

It must have crossed the disciples minds that this was a big job. There is a big world with many people and many different languages. But Jesus had a plan that would begin to unfold in Jerusalem after the "gift of the Father" had come to them. We know what happened on the Day of Pentecost after the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Peter responded to the mockers with scripture. It was something he had watched Jesus do many times to those who came and mocked Him. Peter then got right into the crux of the issue and preached the message of the Gospel. The results - 3,000 added to the Church. (The test of any message is not whether it is good or bad, but whether God uses it.) Then follows one of the most interesting statements in scripture, they (the converts) were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

So what were the disciples to do with the new converts? Peter knew from his occasion with Jesus after His resurrection. Peter knew that the responsibility was to feed the lambs and the sheep. Acts 2:44-47 reveals the apostles took emergency measures to house and fed those who stayed in Jerusalem to be discipled. These converts must have been like young children in a family, watching everything, hearing everything, and soon imitating everything. Thousands were being added to the Kingdom. These converts were watching the apostles being beaten, threatened, and hauled off to jail for their testimony for Christ. They observed the apostles as they preached the Gospel at every opportunity. They saw the apostles responded with joy about the persecution. (Acts 5:41) They listened carefully as the apostles taught them the things of the Lord. (Acts 5:42) The hour of testing for these disciples was coming. After the death of Stephen, a tremendous persecution came against the believers and they were scattered. It was a fulfillment of Acts 1:8.

What did these disciples do? Because they were raised in an atmosphere of witnessing, they assumed that it was the normal thing to do. They had been taught this and had been shown in example.

This is a very important point that we need to remember in our ministry of making disciples today. If we want to see a certain performance, or certain attitude developed, in those with whom **we are working, we must remember the immense power of personal example.**

Why do we see so few fruitful, dedicated, mature disciples? The biggest reason is that we have ***relied on programs or materials, or some other thing to do the job.*** The ministry is to be carried out by people, not programs. It is to be carried out by *someone* and not by *something*.

Disciples cannot be mass produced.

1. It takes time to make disciples.
2. It takes individual, personal attention.
3. It takes hours of prayer for them.
4. It takes patience and understanding to teach them to get into God's Word for themselves, how to feed and nurture their souls, and by the power of the Holy Spirit how to apply the Word to their lives.
5. It takes being an example to them in all the above.

SHARING PRAYER CONCERNS/ANSWERS (5 minutes)

GROUP PRAYER (15 minutes)