## October 17, 2018 GIFT Night *Called to Follow Jesus*

### Being a Disciple =Following Jesus- intro

 *“Follow me”— those two words from the Gospel story are 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 as Christians we try to shape our lives using Jesus’ example.*

*Jesus example is one of caring for creation; where human beings are treated as children of God, where oppression and injustice are brought down, 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 violence is replaced with love. What Jesus proclaims by word, he enacts in his ministry.*

*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. Following the will of Jesus, without fail, leads to the hard realities of social, economic, and political justice.*

**Intro: Tonight we are going to get a closer look at some of the people in the New Testament that Jesus called to follow Him; we are going to get “inside the shoes” of real people who were called by Jesus. Then we will look at how each of us, young or old, are called to follow Jesus.**

**But first, let’s do a little activity to get to know each other. US Weekly magazine does a section called “25 things you don’t know about me” where celebrities write things that you would never know about them. Unless we walk in someone else’s shoes, we many times don’t know things about them, their family, the unique things about them, their favorite places, inspirations, famous people they have met, talents, likes and dislikes.**

**You will have 2 minutes to write down 1 thing all of us might not know about you (adults help younger children) on an index card; then place it face down in the center of your table. When everyone is done, mix up the cards, then take turns lifting one card, reading it and everyone at the table guesses who it refers to!**

### “People Who Followed Jesus” Intergenerational Group Quiz Show need Bibles

There are ten New Testament disciples included in this activity. You can use all ten passages with families, but certain Scripture passages have been recommended for families. These are shorter passages that will make it easier for children to read or for parents to read to their children.

1. Mary Magdalene (recommend for families)
2. Matthew (Levi) (recommend for families)
3. Nicodemus
4. Thomas (recommend for families)
5. Peter (select 2-3 readings for families)
6. Paul
7. Zacchaeus (recommend for families)
8. The Samaritan Woman
9. Stephen
10. Bartimaeus (recommend for families)

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

**Our first activity gets us “inside the shoes” of real people who were called by Jesus to follow him. We are going to encounter Jesus through the lives of ten people in the New Testament who chose to follow him and then find out how their lives were changed because of their acceptance of his invitation to follow him.**

Large group presentations: each group presents their New Testament disciple, using their responses to the four questions or sharing their drawing. Participants should not reveal the identity of the person. Encourage people to speak in the first person, literally becoming the character. After each presentation, the whole group should try to determine who the New Testament disciple is.

Conclude the activity be inviting the table groups to discuss the following questions as a group. Each person should share an answer to the first question before the participants discuss the second and third questions.

Write these questions on easel with the questions.

* Which New Testament disciple seemed the most interesting to you? Why?
* How were people changed when they met (encountered) Jesus and chose to follow him?
* What did it mean for them to follow Jesus?

**GAME: Now we are going to play a little game that has to do with filling big shoes; just like we have big shoes to fill as we try to follow Jesus in our every day lives.**

**Big feet game**- divide into two groups and each group splits into two and lines up with about 30 feet in between. Each group is given a set of large feet slippers. One at a time, they put them on, walk fast (no running) to their teammate across from them, pass off the slippers, and head back. Sometimes it’s hard to walk in someone else’s shoes! **Jesus certainly had big shoes to fill and it can be a challenge for us to follow Him and walk in His footsteps; but it actually can also be easier than we think; if we just think of others; think of the Golden Rule; to treat others the way we want to be treated… (hold up Poster). I bet each of us could think of at least one way we could follow Jesus by just thinking of ways we could help others..**

**Here is an example of one boy and how he used a pair of shoes to help someone else.**

**Read “Those Shoes” (story of empathy)- discuss in small or large group**

### Part 2. Following Jesus Today - have various shoes on cardstock and shoe laces, markers

**Introduction**

**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 or on your own to think about what it means to follow Jesus today by looking at what the early disciples believed, felt and acted. Now think of your own ideas for what a follower of Jesus today believes, feels or does (acts).** **You can select the “shoe” cut out that represents you; and then in each shoe you and/or the children are going to write at least one thing you as followers of Jesus could do/act/believe/feel to show the world you follow Jesus.**

**You can decorate your shoe; add shoe laces, etc. We will be putting these on a bulletin board.**

Think of what you have learned about following Jesus from the stories of the New Testament disciples.

WRITE ON EASEL; If you need some idea starters check out these Bible passages:

* Believe: What did those who were healed by Jesus believe about him? (See John 9:1-7, 35-38)
* Believe: What was important for Jesus and those who followed him? (See Luke 4:16-21)
* Feel: What did the disciples feel during times of trouble? (See Matthew 8:23-27)
* Act: What did Jesus send out the twelve apostles 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)

**Concluding Reflections**

When you have finished your creative projects and shared it with the people 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 shoe about following Jesus, where does your family feel affirmed and where is your family challenged to grow?
* What can you/your family start doing now to follow Jesus more faithfully?

### Closing Prayer

**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.

**Closing Prayer**

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.

Optional Game: have 3 footprints for each group, they have to get from one side to the other by stepping on each footprint, then taking up the one behind them and putting it in front of them until their reach their teammates on the other side. Break into teams of 4. Have two members on one side of the room and the other two on the opposite side. Lay three feet in a row in front of one member of each team. On the word "go" one person from each team walks across the room by placing his feet on the paper feet and then picking up the paper foot behind him and placing it in front of himself. He then places his back foot on the paper foot he just placed in front of himself and picks up the one behind him and places it in front. When the first team member gets to the other side of the room his team mate does the same thing to get back to the "finish/start" line. The first team to make it to the finish line wins.