



# CREATING A CULTURE OF CALLING

## Adolescent Faith Formation Program *Call to Discipleship*

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### Program Design

This program explores the dynamics of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ in four ways: 1) through the stories of New Testament disciples who accepted Jesus' call to follow him; 2) through what attracts people to Jesus, 3) through six ways to follow Jesus, and 4) through the creation of a "job description" for being a disciple today.

Each activity is designed as a one-hour experience. This program can be conducted as a series of individual sessions or combined into an extended program or as a one-day retreat experience. Add an opening and/or closing prayer experience to each session. If you offering all four sessions, the flow from Activity 1 through 4 is the best sequence of activities.

You can select a prayer from *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*. Laura Kelly Fanucci (Wipf & Stock, 2017) or a resource of your choosing. Also be sure to include a community building activity to open the sessions.

### Activity 1. People Who Followed Jesus

### Activity 2. Why Are People Attracted to Jesus?

### Activity 3. Six Ways of Following Jesus

### Activity 4. Being a Disciple Today

# Activity #1: People Who Followed Jesus

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## Preparation

You are organizing a quiz show with New Testament disciples who followed Jesus. You will need a moderator for the quiz show and ten disciples from the New Testament (could be teams of 2 or 3 people per disciple depending on the number of young people).

Give the disciples one New Testament person and the following Scripture passages to read. Participants should prepare using their own bibles. (See handout for passages)

1. Mary Magdalene: Matthew 27:55-61 and John 20:1-18
2. Matthew (Levi): Mark 2:13-17
3. Nicodemus: John 3:1-21 and John 19:38-42
4. Thomas: John 20:24-29
5. 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
6. Paul: Acts 9:1-30, Acts 26:2-23, and Acts 16:16-40
7. Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-9
8. The Samaritan Woman: John 4:5-30, 39-42
9. Stephen: Acts 6:5-15 and Acts 7:54-60
10. Bartimaeus: Mark 10:46-52

Ask each disciple to become familiar with the Scripture passages about their New Testament person. On the Quiz Show they are going to be interviewed by the moderator, who will ask them the following questions:

- How did Jesus call you? How did you meet? Why did you meet?
- How were you “changed” when you chose to follow Jesus?
- How did you follow Jesus after you met him? How did you live your decision to follow Jesus? (If the story does not include lots of details about this, suggest ways you think that person would have followed Jesus.)
- What feelings did you have toward Jesus?

If the New Testament stories do not include all of the answers to the above questions, disciples should prepare a response in keeping with the New Testament disciple’s story, e.g., the ways a person may have lived out their decision to follow Jesus. Each disciple must keep his or her identity a secret because the participants are going to identify each of the people.

## Conducting the Activity

The moderator guides the Quiz Show using the following process. Introduce the Quiz Show, using the words below or your own words.

Welcome to the “People Who Followed Jesus” Quiz Show. We are going to hear the moving stories of ten people who met Jesus and chose to follow him. We are going to hear about how they met Jesus and how he changed their lives. But, we are going to keep their identities a secret. Our studio audience is going to have to figure out the real identities of our ten New Testament disciples. So let’s begin.

Begin the Quiz Show with all of the New Testament disciples “on stage” (one representative from each work group). When each disciple is interviewed they should stand. Call them New Testament disciple #1, #2, and so forth. It is important to keep the person’s identity a secret. Keep the interviews moving. You should only spend about two minutes interviewing each person.

Interview each disciple using the following questions:

- How did Jesus call you? How did you meet? Why did you meet?
- How were you “changed” when you chose to follow Jesus?
- How did you follow Jesus after you met him? How did you live your decision to follow Jesus? (If the story does not include lots of details about this, suggest ways you think that person would have followed Jesus.)
- What feelings did you have toward Jesus?

Pause after each interview to give the group an opportunity to identify the New Testament disciple. Then reveal the New Testament disciple’s identity. Continue with each New Testament person in the same manner.

Conclude by asking the group to discuss the following 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?

# People Who Followed Jesus

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## **Andrew**

Matthew 4:18-20 and 10:1-5, Mark 13:3ff, John 1:35-42, 6:1-15, and 12:20-26

## **Mary Magdalene**

Matthew 27:55-61 and 28:1-10, Mark 15:42-47 and 16:1-8, Luke 8:1-3, John 19:38-42 and 20:1-18

## **Matthew**

Matthew 9:9-13 and 10:1-15, Mark 2:13-17, Luke 5:27-32

## **Nicodemus**

John 3:1-21, 7:45-52, and 19:38-42

## **Thomas**

Matthew 10:1-15, John 11:1-6, 14:1-14 and 20:24-29

## **Mary - Mother of Jesus**

Matthew 1:18-24, Luke 2:1-20, John 2:1-5; 19:25-27

## **Peter**

Matthew 4:18-22 and 14:21-28, Mark 14:32-41 and 14:66-72, John 1:35-42, 21:15-19, and 13:3-20

## **Paul**

Acts 9:1-31 and 26:2-23

## **Zacchaeus**

Luke 19:1-9

## **The Samaritan Woman**

John 4:1-42

# People Who Followed Jesus: Who Am I?

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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?

# Activity #2. Why Are People Attracted to Jesus?

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## Introduction

Explain to the group that. . .

People in the Gospels and throughout history have been fascinated by Jesus of Nazareth. They have found him and his message so attractive that they have been willing to change their lives and follow him. In the next activity they will have an opportunity to explore what Jesus said and did that people found so fascinating and attractive.

## Qualities of Jesus

Ask the adolescents to identify the qualities of Jesus that they think attract people to him and lead them to accept his call to follow him. As the young people share these qualities, list them on newsprint. Combine duplicates as you record the qualities on newsprint.

## Presentation

Use the **Leader Handout: *What Fascinates People About Jesus of Nazareth*** to present several of the key qualities that attracted people to Jesus. As you present each quality note the similarities between the qualities generated by the young people (already on newsprint) and the qualities found on the **Leader Handout**. Briefly describe each quality and give a scriptural example. You may choose to read or summarize each story from the Gospels.

- Jesus comes at life with energy and purpose.
- Jesus demonstrates great care and compassion.
- Jesus' care moves him to heal.
- Jesus' compassion moves him to forgive.
- Jesus offers and lives freedom.
- Jesus' love and compassion include everyone.

## Project: A Jesus Marketing Campaign

Organize the young people into groups of four-six people. Explain that they work for a marketing agency that has been asked to develop a **proposal** for a marketing campaign which invites teenagers to follow Jesus. They are to use what they have learned from the people of the New Testament activity and the qualities of Jesus that fascinated and attracted people to create a marketing approach that will work with teenagers. Their task is to develop a proposal and present it.

Guide the work of the young people by using the following process.

### **Step One: Describe the Benefits of Following Jesus** (5 minutes)

Explain that the first step in creating a marketing proposal is to describe the benefits of following Jesus. In a paragraph or in short phrases ask each small group to answer the following two questions:

- What would today's teenagers find attractive about Jesus?
- What are the benefits of following Jesus for young people today?

Give each group paper or index cards to write their responses. Ask one person in the group to serve as recorder for the group.

### **Step Two: Select Your Marketing Approach** (5 minutes)

Explain that the second step in creating a marketing proposal is to select an approach or method. Here are several marketing methods to consider. Write the following methods on newsprint for all to see, and then review the list with the young people. Invite the young people to add other approaches or methods that are used to get the attention of youth. Add these to the list.

- A website page
- A photo collection on Instagram
- A 30 second TV or radio ad
- A song
- An ad in a magazine teenagers read
- Poster advertisement
- A billboard
- A calendar
- Writing pads: phone message pad, memo pads, school pad
- Magnet for the refrigerator
- Clothing: T-Shirt, Caps, etc.
- Coffee mugs or glasses
- Buttons
- Canvas Bags

Now, ask the groups to select their marketing approach. Try to get some variety of approaches among the groups.

### **Step Three: Design Your Marketing Idea**

Explain that the third step in creating a marketing proposal is to describe the actual marketing idea. They do not have to create the actual product. They need to give enough information so that they can create a proposal.

Tell the small groups to combine their benefits (Step One) with their marketing method (Step Two) to create their unique idea. They should develop their idea by:

1. writing the content for their marketing approach (e.g. script for a commercial or magazine ad, text for the cap or T-shirt, etc.)

2. identifying artwork, symbol, images, photos, etc. to accompany the content and developing a rough sketch of the actual product, if possible (e.g. drawing a symbol or logo for a cap or tote bag, developing ideas/images for a poster, TV ad, or video footage, etc.)

Give each group supplies to use: a sheet of newsprint, paper, colored markers, etc. If you collected samples of marketing promotions, set them out on a table for the young people to view and use.

#### **Step Four: Share Your Approach with the Group**

Invite each small group to share their results with the large group.

### **Discuss What You've Learned**

Invite the adolescents to discuss as a large group their reflections on what they learned about being fascinated with Jesus from the initial activity, the presentation, and the marketing projects. Use the questions below. If you have a large group (over 20+ people), you may want to conduct the discussion in small groups.

- How do you feel about your marketing project and the ones you heard presented? Would they attract young people to Jesus? Why?
- What qualities of Jesus were emphasized in the marketing projects? Why would these qualities be engaging or attractive or fascinating to young people today?
- Name several new reasons to follow Jesus because of exploring what people find so attractive in Jesus and creating your marketing project?

Conclude with the following questions. Give the young people several minutes to reflect quietly on these questions.

- What do you, personally, find fascinating about Jesus?
- What new reasons to follow Jesus have you personally identified because of your participation in this session.

# What Fascinates People about Jesus of Nazareth

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## Jesus comes at life with energy and purpose.

This active quality means that Jesus influences the course of events more than the course of events influences him. He is proactive, rather than reactive. We see this in his focus on his mission in life (see Luke 4:16-21) and in the way he shapes situations according to his perspectives and values. Jesus moves out of an inner energy and fullness. His assertiveness can be seen in how he called the disciples to follow him (Mark 1:16; John 15:16).

Jesus finds himself in many different situations which he must quickly evaluate and respond to. Yet his responses never seem to be mere reaction. Circumstances (the disciples not understanding, the crowd-blocking petitioners, hungry people with nowhere to go, etc.) may be pushing events in a certain direction, or people sent to trap and test Jesus may be manipulating the situation for their own ends. But once Jesus intervenes, the situation is reshaped according to his will.

The stories about people “coming at” Jesus often end with Jesus “coming at” them. Tables turn with remarkable regularity; would-be challengers find themselves challenged. The ability of Jesus to reverse challenge is a part of his active rather than reactive style. Even during Jesus’ arrest, trial, passion, and crucifixion he is portrayed as the predominant influence in the events he is undertaking.

The outcome of this powerful “inner to outer” way of living, is that Jesus is an explosive power that must be reckoned with. He is a force because the Kingdom he proclaimed and served is a force. People who live out of this spiritual energy go with the flow and invent their talents rather than bury themselves.

### Gospel Examples of Energy and Purpose

Mission of Jesus: Luke 4:16-21

Woman Caught in Sin: John. 8:3-11

Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37

## Jesus demonstrates great care and compassion.

Jesus is a man of care and compassion. His care makes him hyper-attentive to what people say and do, fuels an unrelenting passion to heal, urges him to compassionately share the blessings and curses of being human, promotes the courage of unlimited forgiveness, and engenders an anger which is not righteous but the way great love grieves. These qualities comprise Jesus’ capacity to care.

Jesus is attentive to the people around him. He notices short people in tall trees (See Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-10), the humble, furtive hand of a widow by the coffers (Mark 12:41), the hunger of a twelve year old girl come back from the dead (Mark 5:43), unimportant street children shoved away (Mark 9:13), a cry for pity from the perimeter of the crown (Mark 10:46-52), and a touch on his cloak that is different from all the rest, a touch which communicates a little more panic, a little more pleading, a touch of twelve years’ bleeding (Mark 5:31).

Jesus embraces both the joy and the pain of life. He celebrates and cries; he rejoices and is angry. His care makes him receive each moment as if it were the only moment. He does not suffer from world-weariness. This sensitivity to everything as new was part of Jesus' make-up. Every time he breathed in, he was conscious that God had breathed out. At every moment everything came from the love of God.

Compassion is the experience of feeling the other's life as one's own. Three of Jesus' most powerful stories turn on the experience of compassion. The Samaritan looks on the man in the ditch with compassion and an action occurs that changes the world of the story and the world of the listeners to the story (Luke 10:25-37). The Father looks at his son with compassion and an action occurs that changes the world of the story and the world of the listeners to the story (Luke 15:11-31). The king looks on the servant with compassion and an action occurs that changes the world of the story and the world of the listeners to the story (Matthew 18:21-35).

Compassion is the feeling-perception which emerges from the empathic center where God, the self, and the neighbor join. It is so great that it does not stop at the feeling of solidarity but galvanizes the person into works of solidarity. Jesus feels and acts out of compassion when he sees the sick (Matthew 14:14), meets hungry people (Matthew 15:32; Mk 8:11), when a leper petitions him (Mark 1:41), and when he sees a widow walking in the funeral procession of her son (Luke 7:13).

### **Gospel Examples of Care and Compassion**

A Widow's Son: Luke 7:11-16

Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37

Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-31

A King Who Forgives: Matthew 18:21-35

## **Jesus' care moves him to heal.**

A leper says to Jesus, "If you will to do it, you can cure me." Jesus responds, "Of course, I will it!" Everything rides on his "Of course." The leper and Jesus share the same concern – his well being. The overflow of care into the desire to heal suffuses the portrait of Jesus. He is pictured as a man seeking out the sick and possessed. But, once word gets out, they seek him out. Often someone comes to him with a request to come and heal or exorcise someone he or she loves. In the end, Jesus is waiting for people to heal them. While they were looking for him, he was seeking them.

### **Gospel Examples of Healing**

Blind Man: John 9:1-7, 35-38

Sick Man: John 5:1-8

Official's Son: John 4:43-53; Luke 7:1-10

Crippled Man: Luke 5:17-25

Two Blind Men: Matthew 20:29-34

A Dying Girl and a Sick Woman: Luke 8:40-55; Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43

## **Jesus' compassion moves him to forgive.**

In the stories of Jesus there is a very close link between compassion and forgiveness. In the three stories where compassion is the inner experience of the characters, the outer expression is forgiveness. Once the prodigal father and the king experience compassion, they are moved to forgive the son and the servant; and the lawyer who heard the story of the compassionate Samaritan construes his action not merely in terms of help but in terms of mercy. Since it is assumed that the man in the ditch is a Jew, and more precisely, is the listening lawyer himself, the Samaritan has to overcome the history of hostility between them. His care flows from his ability to forgive and to get beyond racial hatred. It must be stressed that the father, the king, and the Samaritan have been wronged by the people they forgive and help. There is something in the experience of compassion that facilitates the most difficult and yet the most creative of all human actions – heartfelt forgiveness.

In the Gospel portrait Jesus' stories and teaching about forgiveness are matched by his actions. He forgives his disciples and those who crucified him. His major emphasis is to offer divine forgiveness to all who have sinned. It is this experience of divine compassion and forgiveness mediated through Jesus which is the energy of inter-human forgiveness (see Luke 6:36-38). Jesus hoped to initiate a spirit of forgiveness just as self-perpetuating as the spiral of violence.

### **Gospel Examples of Forgiveness**

Woman Caught in Sin: John 8:3-11

Healing a Crippled Man: Luke 5:17-25

A Man with Demons: Luke 8:26-39, Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20

## **Jesus offers and lives freedom.**

Jesus' words and deeds offered freedom *from* the power of Satan, from crippling disease, from debilitating worry, from ego-centered striving, from burdensome religious obligations, from imprisonment in social categories, from economic hardship. The reverse side was a freedom *for* obedience to God's rule, for bodily health, for a life of trust, for other-centered concerns, for true worship, for genuine encounters with people, and for a more just economic order. Jesus' presence was liberating in the physical, interpersonal, social, and spiritual realms.

Jesus lived freedom. His life demonstrated a detachment from all the trappings of worldly status or power. He did not "cling" to his life, but gave it freely in service to others, even to death on the cross. He was faithful to his mission and identity right to the end. This detachment and faithfulness makes Jesus "dangerous," for as every ruler knows, the person with nothing to lose is free to speak the truth. Jesus died as he lived, the free person.

## **Jesus' love and compassion include everyone.**

Jesus' compassion and inclusiveness challenged the prevailing social order of his day. Jesus interacts with all levels of Jewish society, from religious leader to social outcast. No one seems automatically excluded from his concern or company. Those whom the societal leaders spurned, Jesus embraced.

Jesus ate and drank with “tax collectors and sinners,” an umbrella category for the religiously unclean and the socially unacceptable. The leaders saw this table fellowship as blurring the boundaries between the righteous and the sinner.

Jesus also reached out to the poor. He counted himself among them because he “has nowhere to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). He preached to them that they had a dignity which no societal estimation could compromise. The opening line of the Beatitudes is as startling today as in Jesus’ time. “Blessed are you poor” (Luke 6:20). He challenged the leaders of the day because they neglected the plight of the poor. Jesus afflicted the comfortable and comforted the afflicted.

Women were also severely constricted by society. Jesus’ relationship with women broke many of the customs and conventions of his day. He talked to women in public; he had close women friends and some of his disciples were women.

The overall picture is that whatever society had dismissed, devalued, or forgotten, Jesus pursued. Jesus did not exclude anybody on the basis of group affiliation or on the unchosen givens of the human condition. Jesus is not prejudiced; he takes each person on his or her merits. What is fascinating and liberating about Jesus is that he encountered the next person met as precisely that, the next person met – unique with a dignity given by God.

### **Gospel Examples of Inclusion**

The Great Banquet: Luke 14:15-23 and Matthew 22:1-10

(This material is adapted and excerpted from Chapter Three in *Spirit Master* by John Shea, Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1987)

# Activity #3. Called to be Followers of Christ

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## Background

- *The Stories We Live*. Kathleen Cahalan. Eerdmans, 2017.
- *Living Your Discipleship: Seven Ways to Express Your Deepest Calling*. Kathleen Cahalan and Laura

## Introduction

Introduce the concept of *called to follow Jesus* using this information from Kathleen Cahalan:

Jesus called his disciples to follow him rather than the disciples choosing to follow him. Jesus's "way" was radical, requiring disciples to give up loyalty to job, family, friends, and nation in order to embrace Jesus' way of life. As disciples of Jesus today, we are called in the following ways: to be a follower, a worshipper, a witness, a neighbor, a forgiver, a prophet, and a steward.

## Present: Called to Be a Follower

Read the story: "Jesus Calls the First Disciples" in Matthew 4:18-5:2:

*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 sea—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. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying. . . .*

Share with the group:

The opening scene of Jesus' ministry after his baptism is all action—he walks, calls, teaches, proclaims, cures, hikes, sits down, and speaks. If you are going to follow, you have to get and get going even if you are in the middle of something. If you don't follow immediately, you are going to miss it: you won't hear his teaching or witness him cure the sick or see the great crowds coming or finally sit at his feet to listen.

## Explore: Six Ways of Following Jesus

Assign one of six ways we follow Jesus—worshipper, witness, neighbor, forgiver, prophet, and steward—to each group (if you have at least six groups) OR divide the large group into six groups of

4-6 people. For very large groups, you can have multiple small groups for each of the six ways. Keep group size to 4-6 people.

Using the handout as a resource, ask each group to reflect on the focusing question and commentary. They might also want to read the suggested Scripture passage (or another one of your choosing). Ask each prepare a brief summary of their reflections with the whole group.

After groups have finished their work, ask each group to share their summary reflections with the whole group.

The commentary for each question is adapted from *Living Your Discipleship: Seven Ways to Express Your Deepest Calling* by Kathleen Cahalan and Laura Fanucci.

1. How can people follow Jesus as a **worshipper**—one whose heart is filled with adoration and love for the source of life, the One on whom we depend?

- Suggested Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13

Traditionally, Christians have worshipped God through different types of prayer: praising God in adoration, seeking God’s forgiveness through confession, thanking God for blessings, and petitioning God for our needs and those of others (ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication).

2. How can people follow Jesus as a **witness** to what God has done for us?

- Suggested Scripture: Luke 24:36-49

To be a witness means to give testimony, to proclaim, or to announce a message. Witness is to give testimony to the truth about what God has done for us, in and through Jesus Christ.

When we live our call to follow Jesus, when we tell each other how God has called us, or when we admit how hard it can be to figure out what to do and what God wants—that is be a witness. It is tell a truth about our lives , about our certainties, and our doubts, our fears, and our joys.

3. How can people follow Jesus as a **neighbor** to those around you?

- Suggested Scripture: Luke 14:12-14, Luke 10:25-37

Jesus neighbor ethic is built on the Great Commandment that unites love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus expands his teaching on neighbor to the point of embracing love for one’s enemies. Jesus tackles the question of who is the neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Neighbors are neighbors (people we know), strangers (whether near or far), and enemies (critics and opponents). By stretching our instincts past our comfort zone to include these widening circles of neighbors, strangers, and enemies, we enter into discipleship’s view of “neighbor-hood” as a state of being in which all are drawn together in the household of God.

4. How can people follow Jesus as a *forgiver*—to forgive those who harm us and seek forgiveness when we harm others.
  - Suggested Scripture: Luke 7:36-50,

Learning to be a forgiver begins with first recognizing that I am a sinner and that my actions hurt other people. I have to start with seeking forgiveness. When I am forgiven, then I know love and I can learn to practice forgiving others. Forgiving others for their sins against me requires great love.

5. How can people follow Jesus as a *prophet*—to declare what is wrong with our communities and world, and call people back to right relationship through justice and mercy.
  - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 21:10-14

To be a prophet is to see what is wrong, broken, missing, or unjust in our society and to speak a word of truth that shines light on the situation. Prophets see the world as God sees the world and seek to share their vision with others.

Acting prophetically is at the heart of what it means to follow Christ. To be a prophet can be an uncomfortable part of the call to discipleship. But it is also what I cannot *not* do as a follower of Christ. What is unjust about our time and place? How are we complicit in systems that contribute to the oppression of others? Where do we need to help call people back to God’s ways of mercy, forgiveness, justice, and peace?

6. How can people follow Jesus as a *steward*—caring for God’s creation and the goods of the household.
  - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 25:14-29

The call to stewardship means receiving gifts gratefully, nurturing their growth, and sharing them with others. The call to stewardship is the call to take care—of people, of places, and of talents and skills we have been given to share. Like the stewards in Jesus’ parable, we have been entrusted with God’s gifts in the expectation that we will allow them to grow over time. So we are called to be steward with our whole lives: stewards of our work and of our world around us.

## Conclusion

Conclude by engaging young people to share what they learned from exploring the six ways to follow Jesus. You can do this in small groups or the large group

- What did you discover about following Jesus from this activity?
- Which of the six ways of following Jesus are easier for you to live? Why?
- Which of the six ways of following Jesus are harder to live? Why?
- Which of the six ways of following Jesus do you want to start (or do better) living today?

# Following Jesus Today

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1. How can people follow Jesus as a *worshipper*—one whose heart is filled with adoration and love for the source of life, the One on whom we depend?
  - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13

Traditionally, Christians have worshipped God through different types of prayer: praising God in adoration, seeking God’s forgiveness through confession, thanking God for blessings, and petitioning God for our needs and those of others (ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication).

2. How can people follow Jesus as a *witness* to what God has done for us?
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To be a witness means to give testimony, to proclaim, or to announce a message. Witness is to give testimony to the truth about what God has done for us, in and through Jesus Christ.

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Acting prophetically is at the heart of what it means to follow Christ. To be a prophet can be an uncomfortable part of the call to discipleship. But it is also what I cannot *not* do as a follower of Christ. What is unjust about our time and place? How are we complicit in systems that contribute to the oppression of others? Where do we need to help call people back to God’s ways of mercy, forgiveness, justice, and peace?

6. How can people follow Jesus as a *steward*—caring for God’s creation and the goods of the household.
  - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 25:14-29

The call to stewardship means receiving gifts gratefully, nurturing their growth, and sharing them with others. The call to stewardship is the call to take care—of people, of places, and of talents and skills we have been given to share. Like the stewards in Jesus’ parable, we have been entrusted with God’s gifts in the expectation that we will allow them to grow over time. So we are called to be steward with our whole lives: stewards of our work and of our world around us.

# Activity #4. Being a Disciple Today

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## Introduction

Explain to the group that:

Jesus call 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. Your mission will be to develop a job description for disciples today using what you already know and what you are learning in this session.

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 work groups, 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.

## Develop a Job Description for a Disciple Today

**Step 1.** Ask the young people to develop their own your own ideas, as a group, for what it means to be a disciple today. Have them focus on their part of the disciples job description: **believes**, **feels** or **acts**. Have each group record the answers on a sheet of newsprint or individual post-it notes.

**Optional.** 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 2.** Read the following Scripture passage from the Gospel of Luke in which announces his mission to the group. It provides insights into what was important for Jesus and those who follow him. You may want to make a copy of the passage (or put it on a PowerPoint slide or have Bibles available for the group).

Ask each group to review their ideas for the discipleship job description and add new ideas from the Scripture reading.

*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 3.** Introduce the questions and Scripture passages below and have the young people read the passages and determine if there are new ideas they want to add to what disciples believe, what they feel, or how they act. You may want to make a copy of the passage (or put it on a PowerPoint slide or have Bibles available for the group). The Scripture passages are only examples; you may want to add other passages.

- 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 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)
- Act: What did Jesus say about relying on God? (See Luke 1-13)

**Step 4.** Have each group compile all of the results into one report that they are going to present to the whole group. As each group presents their report, create a newsprint sheet with three columns—Believes, Feels, Acts—and write the results from each group work on this one newsprint sheet. After all of the groups have presented, invite the whole group to add other ideas to the list.

### **Optional Activity**

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. Ask the group to identify other formats for the advertisement.

- 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 Facebook or Google ad.
- 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 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?
- 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?