



A Life Guide for Intentional Discipleship

in the Anglican Communion

**A study in twelve parts
for groups or individuals**

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For further information on the availability of this study guide in other languages and other discipleship resources available from the Anglican Communion Office please contact mission@anglicancommunion.org



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Introduction

How many times have you looked in a mirror and wished you might see a body shaped like that of a famous athlete or film star? What if you looked in a mirror and saw a whole life shaped like Jesus? Every day what we do, what we think, what we desire, shapes our lives, like the bad food or regular exercise that shapes our body, but what shape are we becoming? This study series is for those who long for their lives to become Jesus-Shaped.

We have called this booklet a “life” guide rather than a study guide because discipleship is not something you study; it is about how you live. We are not offering you a course to complete but a life to live.

Hundreds of years ago theologians described the Church as apostolic because it is the apostle who carries the life of Jesus out into God’s world. In this booklet we have chosen to use the language of discipleship but we could equally have used language about being apostles, or citizens of the Kingdom of God, or members of the family of God. Whatever language you choose to use, the key challenge is to live a life which is constantly becoming more Jesus-Shaped.

Apostleship, discipleship, living within the family of God are contagious. Disciples make new disciples. Occasionally this happens through intentional evangelism but mostly it happens through intentional discipleship. People who set out each day to live a Jesus-Shaped life become so attractive that they naturally draw

The Anglican Season for Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making

In April 2016 Anglican leaders from around the world met in Zambia at the Anglican Consultative Council. The very first resolution they passed was to call for a nine-year Season of Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making. Responding to this call, Anglicans from Jamaica to Malaysia, Malawi to Canada are already seeking to intentionally live Jesus-Shaped lives. There have been diocesan consultations, youth gatherings, women’s meetings, the production of new resources, prayer festivals, and much more, all focused on living like Jesus. The season is supported by an international coordinating group led by the Archbishop of South East Asia and a small staff team who have sponsored the production of this study guide. You can also find more information and resources at: www.jesus-shaped.life

others towards Jesus and his Kingdom.

This life guide is being used by Anglicans in every part of the world. We hope you will feel free to translate it into other languages, adapt it for your local needs, and share with us your experiences of living Jesus-Shaped lives so that others can be encouraged by your story.

How to use this life guide

Most people will probably use this guide in a small group which meets regularly, perhaps weekly, to work through the material offered in each chapter. However, you might want to adapt the material so that you can use it as an individual, perhaps taking several weeks to reflect on each section, or for a parish retreat or youth camp.

We recommend that you allocate one session of at least 90 minutes to each of the ten main sections. You can also add the two optional sessions to give you a 12 session life guide. Each section adopts the same pattern of prayer, reading, reflection, discussion, etc.

Pay attention to the place where you will meet and choose a time which is good for the people you want to join you. Consider whether some form of refreshment would help your discussions, or simply be a distraction. Make sure people know when you will finish each session and try to keep to that time.

Each section of this guide offers an outline for your group sessions (or individual study) but please feel free to adapt these to your context and culture. Perhaps personal testimony is important in your culture, or a more liturgical setting – if so add these. You might also know of a good video which would help participants for one of the sessions, a short passage from a book you want to read or a traditional story from your culture that can be told.

This is not a course which you will finish in a few weeks – it is a change of life focus. To help you make this change, which will be an ongoing process over many years, a final section in this guide contains suggestions for moving on. We recommend that each group member is given a copy of this section to take away with them. You will also find additional prayers and resources at the back of the guide.

Study 1: Jewish Discipleship

Jesus was a Jew from birth to crucifixion. To live Jesus-Shaped lives today we need to understand what it meant for Jesus the Jew to live a life shaped by the Kingdom of God.



Opening Prayer

It is our duty to praise the Master of all.

To speak of the greatness of the Author of creation

We bow in worship and thank

The Supreme King of Kings

The Holy One, Blessed be the One

Who extends the heaven and established the earth

Whose throne of glory is in the heavens above

And whose power is present in the highest of heights

He is our God; there is no other

Truly He is our King, there is none else.

(Jewish Prayer: Aleinu Ieshabei'ach)



Our Story

One beautiful bright sunny day a young girl was walking with her father. They came to a shallow river which they needed to cross. "I'll go first," her father said, "and you can follow". As her father set off across the river she noticed that there were stepping stones and he moved gracefully from one to the other without getting his feet wet. Very cautiously the girl took her first few steps but time and time again she slipped off the stones and splashed into the water. Her father turned round and shouted out, "Just do like I do." The girl stood and watched. She noticed the way her father bent his knees, how he held out his arms for balance. His head was held high and his body was straight – not bending over to look at each stone. Step by step her confidence grew as she crossed the river. Not only were her feet now dry on the stones but she began to look like her father, to gain the confidence he had and even to gently sing the same happy song.



Getting Started

Jewish discipleship is a family matter. Most Jewish worship, teaching and spiritual nurture takes place in the home. Jewish parents provide the example for their children of faithful observance of the Torah (the law of God).

Each person has three cards. Write on separate cards three people who have helped you to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. [Write 'teacher' or 'friend' or 'grandmother' not personal names.] Now collect all the cards and put them on the wall (or a table) grouped under the three categories "family", "church leader", or "other". How might the experience of your group be different from the Jewish community?



Reading

Deuteronomy 6 : 1-9 and 20-25

You may find it useful to use the following method to read this passage:

- Ask one person to read the passage
- Allow for a period of silence while everyone reflects on one word or phrase which struck them
- The group can then share the words and phrases they noticed but without discussion
- A different person reads the passage again. It might be useful to read from a different translation of the Bible.



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large. An ideal discussion group has about 8 members.

1. A central focus of Jewish discipleship seems to be about obeying the law of God – how much is this part of Christian discipleship?

2. How could family life be more central in Christian discipleship? What might this mean for people who live alone or for whom family life has been a difficult or painful experience?

3. Read 2 Kings 2 : 9-14. Mentoring (one person training another like an apprentice) seems to be a strong part of discipleship in the Old Testament. Do you have people you are training in Christian discipleship? Are there others you could 'walk beside'?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of around 5 minutes for quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learnt about discipleship in the Old Testament. As a focus for reflection you could light a candle, provide a relevant picture, or play some suitable music. At the end everyone joins together in praying the disciples' prayer.



The disciples' prayer

said together

***Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.***



Going Deeper

In the report *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*, Dr. Chris Wright says, "The importance of the reading and dissemination of the written Torah [the first 5 books of the Bible] is noted early on. The whole community was to

be disciplined by hearing and responding to the Word of God, at whatever stage they happened to be engaging with it (Deuteronomy 31.9–13). The Psalms celebrate this life-giving, life-enriching, life-shaping force of the Word of God ('law' being an inadequate word for the richness of the Torah; Psalms 1, 19 and 119). The poet of Psalm 119 celebrates the power of God's Word, in itself, to keep a person on the right path and off the wrong ones.

Nehemiah 8 is a remarkable occasion of community discipling, as the whole law is read through in a week, and trained Levites are on hand to translate, explain, and make clear the meaning of the words read, after which the heads of the families pass it on to their families – perhaps the first example of theological education by extension. The chapter happily points out that the people had abundant joy both when they *understood* the word of Scripture and when they *obeyed* it – which is rather close to what discipling involves (Neh 8.12, 17)."



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. What place does the Bible have in Christian discipleship in your community today? Do you think people understand what the Bible is saying? How can we help each other to understand better?
2. Dr. Wright reminds us that the people found joy not only in understanding but also in obeying the scriptures which they read. Do you normally associate joy with obedience? How can you communicate to your community that obedience to God's Word brings joy?



Life

As you prepare to leave, take a few minutes to write down one action you can take in this coming week to bring discipleship into your family context. It might be something like displaying a new Bible verse each day in your home, or using less non-recyclable plastic, or giving children more space to share their ideas for family life. What would Jesus do if he lived in your home?



Closing Prayer

The following prayer can be read by one person or said by the group together

God of Abraham, Moses, Elijah
and Elisha,
source of mercy and compassion,
Remove the scales from our eyes
and lift the indifference from
our hearts,
so that we may see
your vision
for a new reign of justice
and compassion
that will renew the earth.
Transform our lives, our families,
our communities,
so that we may
accomplish your purpose.

Give us strength to live in
obedience to your Word.
Anoint us with your spirit of love
that we might bring good news
to the oppressed,
bind up the brokenhearted,
and proclaim release
to the captive.
Surround us with your love,
fill us with your grace,
and empower with
Jesus-Shaped lives.
Lord, make us your disciples.
Amen

Study 2: Jesus and His Disciples

*While our Lord Jesus spent a lot of his time teaching,
preaching, healing the sick and casting out demons,
the discipling of his twelve disciples was always his priority.
The Gospels take us inside the classrooms of Jesus' 'discipleship school'.*



Opening Prayer

In Matthew 6, our Lord Jesus taught his disciples a special prayer. Let us pray it together.

Our Father in heaven:

May your holy name be honoured;

may your Kingdom come;

may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need.

Forgive us the wrongs we have done,

as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.

Do not bring us to hard testing,

but keep us safe from the Evil One.

GNT, Matthew 6:9-13



Our Story

One day, a farmer went to clear his garden. In the bushes, he found an abandoned eagle's nest, in which were two eggs. He took the eggs home and laid them in the nest of one of his hens. The eggs hatched and the baby eagles grew up with the other chickens. The two baby eagles pecked about the farmyard, scrabbling for grain like the other chickens. They spent their life within the yard and rarely looked up.

One day, when they were much older, they lifted up their heads. They saw above them a magnificent sight - an eagle soaring high above in the sky. They both sighed and said to each other, "If only we had been born an eagle".



Getting Started

Jesus' discipleship plan was not about programs to reach the multitudes but focused on those who could bear witness to His life and carry on His work after He returned to the Father. He chose twelve men as his disciples (and a number of women too) to instruct and train. They were Jesus' master plan for reproducing disciples. Share briefly how you came to be a Christian.



Reading

Matthew 24 : 1-13

You may either have one person to read the whole passage or get everyone to read one verse each.

Have a short period of silence after the reading, for everyone to reflect on one word or phrase (or idea) which struck them.

Get another person to read the passage a second time.



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others as suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large. An ideal discussion group has about 8 members.

1. Jesus taught his disciples both publicly and privately. In what ways can you see this in the passage?
2. Why do you think it is important for Jesus to spent "private time" with the disciples?
3. Can you identify some false prophets of today? Who are they?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of 5 minutes quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learnt from Jesus' method of discipleship. As a focus for reflection you could light a candle, and invite everyone to place a stone near the candle to receive its light and warmth.



The disciples' prayer

said together

***Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.***



Going Deeper

Jesus was intimately involved in the lives of his disciples. His training method was spending time with them.

The report *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making* (page 11-12) reminds us that in gathering disciples around him throughout his ministry, Jesus was doing two main things which would become high significant for his followers in generations to come: (1) He was giving us a model in his own actions of how to be a disciple-maker; (2) He was allowing his first disciples in their responses towards him to become, for us, a model of how we should respond to Jesus' call and follow him too, revealing the primary hallmark of Christian discipleship (that is, being a learner in Jesus' school, a follower of Jesus). These two interrelated themes are seen in all the Gospels (though perhaps especially in Mark), which therefore serve as vital and enduring 'manuals of discipleship' for the Christian Church.



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. The disciples left everything and followed Jesus. They stayed with him.
How do we follow Jesus today?

2. Jesus spent a lot of time with his disciples. Discuss how important is it for Christian disciples to come together for a time of learning and fellowship.
3. We are meant to be eagles and not chickens. What do you think this means?



Life

As you prepare to leave, begin to think about who is your favourite of the twelve disciples. Why are they your favourite disciple? Spend some time in the next few days to find out more about them, their character, their strength and their weakness.



Closing Prayer

Let us conclude by saying part of a prayer said by the early disciples in Acts 4.

Sovereign Lord,
you made the heavens and the earth and the sea,
and everything in them.
You spoke by the Holy Spirit
through the mouth of your servant, our father David:
Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together against the Lord
and against his anointed one.
Now, Lord, consider their threats
and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.
Stretch out your hand to heal
and perform signs and wonders
through the name of your holy servant Jesus. Amen.

Study 3: Discipleship in the early Church

Human Jesus went to heaven and he is now the Risen Lord. He left his followers with promises and instructions, but Jesus Christ was no longer physically there for his disciples to see, to walk with, to follow as Master. What would discipleship be like in the days that stretched out beyond them? Could they bring Jesus alive in the hearts and lives of those around them?



Opening Prayer

Prayer to the Master Disciple

Be kind to Your little children, Lord; that is what we ask of You as their Tutor, You the Father, Israel's guide; Son, yes, but Father as well. Grant that by doing what You told us to do, we may achieve a faithful likeness to the Image and, as far as is possible for us, may find in You a good God and a lenient Judge.

May we all live in the peace that comes from You. May we journey towards Your city, sailing through the waters of sin untouched by the waves, borne tranquilly along by the Holy Spirit, Your Wisdom beyond all telling. Night and day until the last day of all, may our praises give You thanks, our thanksgiving praise You: You who alone are both Father and Son, Son and Father, the Son who is our Tutor and our Teacher, together with the Holy Spirit. Amen

(St Clement of Alexandria, 150–215 AD)



Our Story

Once upon a time there was a fire in a small town. The fire brigade rushed to the scene, but the firemen were unable to get through to the burning building. The problem was the crowd of people who had gathered not to watch but to help put out the fire. They all knew the fire chief well – their children had climbed over his fire engines during excursions to the fire station, and the friendliness of the fire chief was legendary. So, when a fire broke out the people rushed out to help their beloved fire chief.

Unfortunately, the townsfolk were seeking to extinguish this raging inferno with water pistols! They'd all stand there, from time to time squirting their pistol into the fire while making casual conversation. The fire chief couldn't contain himself. He started screaming at the townsfolk. "What do you think

you're doing? What on earth do you think you're going to achieve with those water pistols?!"

The people realised the urgency of the situation. How they wanted to help the fire chief. So, they started squirting more. "Come on" they encouraged each other, "We can all do better, can't we?" Squirt, squirt, squirt, squirt.

Exasperated the fire chief yelled again. "Get out of here. You're achieving nothing except hindering us from doing what needs to be done. We need firemen who are ready to give everything they've got to put out this fire, people willing even to lay their lives on the line. This is not the place for token contributions.

(Søren Kierkegaard)



Getting Started

Pressing Jesus' footsteps

Give everyone in the group a blank sheet of paper and a pen or marker. Have them draw the outline of one of their feet . This may be done with or without footwear, depending on your context.

Now ask all members of the group to write within the silhouette of their own foot what they think the profile of a mature and equipped follower of Christ is. "What are the biblical characteristics of a good disciple of Jesus?" You may suggest thinking of: two things a disciple must know, two things they must be able to do, and two attitudes that are necessary, according to the Bible.

Divide the group into pairs or triplets. In each sub-group everyone reads out their list. Each sub-group is to decide which three characteristics it thinks are best; they need not be ranked in order. So far as possible the decisions are to be unanimous.

Bring the larger group together and ask one person from each sub-group to report their findings. If time allows, open it up to a general discussion, focussing on the biblical profile of a mature and equipped follower of Christ.



Reading

In New Testament times the Christian movement was referred to as "The Way" (Acts 9:2, 19:9 and 19:23). This label was based upon the well-known statement by Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6).

With Jesus being the Way, many New Testament writers compare discipleship with moving forward on a road. The opposite movement is described in Hebrews 2:1 as “drifting away”.

- In turn, each member of the group reads aloud one of the following Bible verses: (a) **2 Corinthians 5:7**; (b) **Ephesians 1:2**; (c) **Galatians 5:16**; (d) **1 Peter 2:21**; (e) **1 John 1:6**; (f) **Romans 13:13-14**; (g) **Ephesians 2:10**; (h) **1 John 2:6**.
- After each reading allow for a period of silence. Everyone reflects on what this verse adds to the metaphor of life as a journey. Ask the group to share briefly what they learned.



Discussion

1. At several points the New Testament “traveller” metaphor is subtly changed into that of a marathon (e.g. Galatians 2:2; 2 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 12:1-2). This image stresses the importance of discipline in the disciple’s life, and joining others who have already run their course, while encouraging others to keep going. What does the discipline of an athlete look like in your life? Who are you encouraging in their race? In what ways?
2. In *The Christian Life and Hope* (SPCK, 2015), Alistair McGrath comments: *“Christian discipleship is shaped on the road of life as we grow into our faith and test it against the challenges and opportunities that come our way. That’s why it is so important that we journey in hope!”* Does the image of traveling from “the city of this world” to “the heavenly city” provide you with hope? And does the image of completing the race fill you with joy?
3. If anyone has heard of or read the book *“Pilgrim’s Progress”* by John Bunyan, let him/her comment to the group on the allegory of journeying to the heavenly city and the discipleship process.



Pause for thought

During a time of quiet meditation, invite the members of the group to reflect on what has been learned about discipleship in the second half of the New Testament. Some may be helped in this by focussing on a lit candle, a picture of the two different roads (Matthew 7:13-14), or a sandal and/or trainer on the

table. You may choose to play some suitable music. At the end everyone joins in praying the disciple's prayer.



The disciples' prayer

said together

***Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.***



Going Deeper

Just as childrearing has to be an intentional process of transformation, discipleship growth is not automatic. The New Testament uses childhood as a fitting image for spiritual immaturity. In his three letters, John repeatedly addresses the believers as “[little] children”, suggesting a parent/child and teacher/pupil relationships when it comes to disciple-making.

In their diets, infants and children progress predictably from milk to solid food. Some authors use this development to indicate the incremental stages of faith (1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:13). Peter, in comparing believers to babies, stresses the quality and source of the spiritual milk, which likely refers to God's word (1 Peter 2:2).

Infants grow into adulthood and pass from elementary levels into maturity (1 Corinthians 14:20; Hebrews 6:1). Thus, youthful fickleness turns into stability (Ephesians 4:14), pupils can become teachers and the untrained become trained (Hebrews 5:12,14).

In a Christian family two strands merge: parents are responsible for the upbringing of the children, but they are also expected to nurture them spiritually. They are to teach them the ways of the Lord and exercise a disciple-making role in the home (Ephesians 6:4).

Despite all efforts and good intentions, some adults remain childish. If all disciples are Christians, are all Christians disciples?



Discussion

1. One of the primary goals of the discipleship process is maturing “to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). If the imitation of Christ is our objective, we must do it in a context and in the way that is appropriate to that end. How much does our surrounding culture affect the process of disciple-making? Is a “distance-learning” course sufficient? What is the role of the local congregation in this training process?
2. The Apostle Paul claimed to be an imitator of the real historical Jesus Christ and on this account, did not hesitate to urge others to imitate him. This audacious idea of imitation comes up again and again in passages like 1 Corinthians 4:15-17; 1 Corinthians 10:32-11:1; Philippians 3:17; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; 2 Timothy 3:10-11. Paul was just doing what he saw Jesus doing: giving his life as something to be imitated. Select one of the passages above and note how Paul dares to appeal to his own example, which is in turn patterned on Christ’s. Do the people you are shaping have easy access to your life? Does your walk with the Lord invite imitation? Who set you an example or modelled Christian conduct? How can we avoid the danger of a personality cult?
3. Paul encourages Timothy, his apprentice: "What you have heard from me... entrust to others, so that they may be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2). Apparently, discipleship also involves teaching: it is passed on from one human being to another. Disciples are to obey everything Jesus commanded us. Can you identify in this verse the four links of a “chain of instruction”? Who instructed you and who are you instructing? Is there a place for “Catechism” (from a Greek verb meaning “to instruct”) in your church?
4. Read Titus 2 and underline (or write down) all the words and phrases related to teaching, growth, training and modelling. According to Paul, what is the basis for the lifestyle described in the first ten verses?



Life

At the close of this session, give each member a set of six cards with the following texts:

- MONDAY: 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12
- TUESDAY: Philemon 4-7
- WEDNESDAY: Colossians 1:3-20
- THURSDAY: Philippians 1:9-11
- FRIDAY: Ephesians 1:1-23
- SATURDAY: Romans 15:14-33

What we most frequently give thanks for betrays what we most highly value. In his prayers, Paul very often concentrates on developments in a discipleship process. Sometimes he commends the believers for progress made. Ask each member of the group to read the Bible-passage referenced on the corresponding card each day this week. Ask yourself “What signs of increased maturity does Paul highlight among the Christians whom he is addressing?” Take one of these signs and seek to apply it to your own life and witness for that day.



Closing Prayer

Seated in a circle, repeat as a group Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian disciples. In your mind, though, pray it for the person sitting to your left.

*I get down on my knees before the Father,
this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth.
I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit,
not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength,
that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in.
And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love,
you’ll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus
the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love.
Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths!
Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God. Amen*

(Ephesians 3:14-19 The Message)

Study 4: Discipleship or Christian Culture

To be a Christian is also to belong to a community shaped by Christ. This community is held together by a way of life, a culture, that encompasses certain traditions, social habits, behaviours, beliefs, symbols and values, which shapes us as disciples



Opening Prayer

We come in these moments of quiet to God
Full of all our thoughts and emotions of the day.
We come to still ourselves in God's presence
To reflect and listen and sift through our many ideas.
We come with some faith, and many doubts
We come with our longings and fears and hopes
We come just as we are
Knowing that God loves us unreservedly
We are here together as people of God
To be shaped by the Spirit in the way of Jesus.



Our Story

When John was a teenager he distanced himself from the Church and got involved in political activism. He hadn't lost his faith in God and he believed he would keep his faith alive and even flourish in it on his own. When he was in university, in spite of all his good efforts, he found that his faith had become shallow and he was struggling to connect with God. He came across a wise Christian who suggested that he was a self-righteous soul in isolation searching for something in the dark and it would be foolish for him not to join others who were travelling in the same direction. The gentleman took John to a group of Christians who embraced him with open arms. Together they grew in understanding and reflecting on their story, the story of God and his world. John realized that there were social habits, practices, symbols, values and a unique lifestyle that bound everyone together as people of God. It was like learning a new language and growing in a new culture.



Getting Started

A culture is a way of life of a group of people that they accept, generally without thinking about it, and that is passed along from one generation to the next.

What do you think are the elements of a culture? Give each person three cards. Write on separate cards what you would consider to be three aspects or elements of your culture. Bring your cards together on a table or a wall. You might like to organise them under categories like traditions, social habits, beliefs, values, objects and symbols. Now repeat the exercise, but this time write on cards what elements hold us together and shape us as Christians. How does this exercise help your group to understand Christian discipleship as a culture?



Reading

Acts 2: 41-47

You may find it useful to use the following method to read this passage:

- One person reads the passage
- A period of silence while everyone reflects on one word or phrase which struck them.
- In pairs, listen to each other, sharing the words and phrases that struck them.
- Each one shares to the whole group what the other person in the pair said.
- A different person reads the passage again (perhaps from a different Bible version).



Discussion

You may use these or other questions for discussion in the whole group or in smaller sub-groups.

1. In this passage that talks about the life of the first Christians, what are the elements you notice that shape and mark them as disciples? How do these form us as disciples today?

2. In spite of being different in teaching and practices from mainstream society, the followers of Christ were “having the goodwill of all the people” (v.46). What do you find in the passage that would have helped them gain this goodwill? How did this goodwill help them in their mission?

3. Apart from religious habits and sacraments, the first generation Christians established themselves as a caring and hospitable community. What is their example challenging us to do in today’s world?



Pause for thought

Take five minutes for quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learnt about the Christian culture that shapes us. As a focus for reflection you might like to look at a relevant picture or play some suitable music. At the end everyone joins in praying the disciples’ prayer.



The disciples’ prayer

said together

***Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.***



Going Deeper

Graham Cray is quoted in the report *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making* as saying that as disciples we are called to become “a community modelling and ministering an imperfect foretaste of the new heaven and the new earth” (page 83). Anglicans are exploring what this means in different contexts.

The same report mentions a campaign for vitality in the Anglican Church in Hong Kong which it calls 'Be a 3 Stars Anglican'. "The scope of this programme", the report says, "includes the following features:

- (a) Bible study: read the Bible at least five times a week and write a reflection about the message from God;
- (b) Prayer: pray every day and create a prayer;
- (c) Worship: attend Sunday services every week;
- (d) Study: join a study group for at least ten hours;
- (e) Care and concern: care for a friend intensively;
- (f) Evangelism: share the Gospel to at least one person;
- (g) Offering: increase the amount of money offering by 8 per cent;
- (h) Serving: take part in at least one volunteer work;
- (i) Fellowship: join a church group/fellowship regularly." (Pages 89-90)

Christian communities that faithfully embrace this culture of sacraments, study, prayer, care, service, evangelism, fellowship will become fertile ground for making and nurturing disciples.



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. What makes Christian culture unique and different? How does this culture of Christian discipleship interact with the cultures it encounters? How does it assimilate or reject aspects of our contemporary cultures? Have you noticed tensions in these encounters?
2. If you were to make a *Rule of Life* that intentionally incorporates various elements of our Christian culture for your normal life in this world, what would it look like?



Life

Take a few minutes to write down a *Rule of Life* or a *Plan of Action* where you will integrate various aspects of Christian culture, as you have perceived it, in order that you can follow this in your day to day life. Then identify those elements/aspects of discipleship you are not paying adequate attention to at the moment. If some of the actions you include need time set apart for them, please try to include the daily/weekly/monthly time it would require. Be practical and realistic as you do this exercise.



Closing Prayer

The following prayer can be read by one person or said by the group together

Lord, grant us that we may be formed in the image of your son Jesus
and teach us that there are no easy options but to follow Him.
Grant us that we may be at your disposal,
to be agents of your saving grace in this world.
Shape us to embrace a new culture,
where forgiveness, trust, love and hope reign;
where we grow together praying and learning,
finding and providing a safe space of fellowship for each of us to flourish
and experience the joy of worshipping you together.

Lord, fill us with your life-giving Spirit
that in our words and deeds we may proclaim your love
and offer our service to the world you have loved.
May our going out and coming in be blessed in your name,
that we may live out your message for this world
with the light of hope in our eyes,
the fire of inspiration on our lips,
your Word of life on our tongue,
and your love in our hearts.

Lord, make us your disciples.

Amen

Study 5: Discipleship in Global Context

For a while, baby Jesus, with his parents, Joseph and Mary, lived in Egypt as a migrant. Later on in his life on several occasions, he crossed Palestine national boundaries into Samaria. Jesus thus became a 'global' figure.



Opening Prayer

Lord God Almighty, you have created the world in its diversity and uniqueness thereby reflecting your nature as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Inspire me to appreciate the diversity and uniqueness that I encounter, in all human beings and the natural world, as gift from you. Grant me the courage to witness to your love in overcoming fear that comes through difference and diversity, through your Son Jesus, Christ, our Lord and Saviour.



Our Story

Early one Wednesday morning, in Nigeria, Rebecca Sharibu, the mother of Leah (aged 15) heard girls' voices and the sound of vehicles passing her house. After hearing the voices of returning girls, she could not resist leaving her house to see the girls. (Leah and the other one hundred and ten girls had been captured by the Barnawi, a branch of Boko Haram, on 19 February 2018.)

All around Leah's mother were joyful parents and their returned daughters. But she could not find Leah anywhere. Frantic with worry, she found two of Leah's friends and asked them: "Where is Leah, I can't find my Leah, why did you leave her?". "We begged her to just recite the Islamic declaration and put the hijab on and get into the vehicle [the friends replied], but she said it was not her faith, so why should she say it was? If they want to kill her, they can go ahead, but she won't say she is a Muslim.'

Leah asked her friends to ask her parents to pray for her, they said, but her mother could not find out anything else about how her daughter was, as the army then ordered all of the released girls to report to the hospital.

Though distraught that she remains a prisoner, her parents and the pastor of her church remains very proud of her. "I am feeling fantastic because she did not deny Christ as her personal saviour", said Lathan Sharibu, Leah's father and a policeman, "That makes me feel great...I expect the Federal government to bring her back to me the way they brought the others home."

Story first published in Christianity Today (15 October 2018)



Getting Started

God calls us to witness to his love in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves. Discipleship is about every aspect of our lives. It is more about living Christ than merely talking about him. It is about our life and our conduct, even when we face hostile circumstances. Amidst hostility, Leah found spiritual energy in her faith in Jesus Christ but also other Christians, namely her parents. Bearing witness for Christ is an act of faith that sometimes may bring personal discomfort or even adversity. However, knowing that we have the prayer support of other Christians must strengthen us in our daily faith journey.

In pairs share with each other one occasion when God gave you courage to act as a witness for Christ.



Reading

Hebrews 1 : 1-3

You may find it useful to use the following method to read this passage:

- One person reads the passage slowly
- A period of silence while everyone reflects on one word or phrase which struck them
- The group can then share the words and phrases they noticed but without discussion
- A different person reads the passage again (perhaps from a different Bible version)



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. A central focus of discipleship in a global context seems to be an awareness of belonging to a larger Christian community – how much is this part of your Christian discipleship?

2. Read **1 Peter 3: 15-17**. How does 'good living' bring hope to people in our world today? How is 'good living' an act of discipleship? In what ways does good living give hope to people in your community? What is the relationship between suffering for 'good doing' and discipleship?
3. If we take the example above, how did Leah's life try to transform her personal circumstances? In what way can your life touch the lives of other people, especially those different from you through race, religion, denomination, tribe, gender, sexual orientation, class, caste, or economic status?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of 5 minutes quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learned about discipleship in the global context. As a focus for reflection you could light a candle, provide a relevant picture or play some suitable music. At the end everyone joins in praying the disciples' prayer.



The disciples' prayer

said together

***Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.***



Going Deeper

In the report *International Discipleship and Disciple Making*, a bishop from North Africa draws attention to how easily we judge disciples from another culture. He uses the example of Muslim-background disciples of Jesus who

easily help themselves to the resources (time and possessions) of other members of the Christian community because they come from a culture where such things are communally owned, but they are then easily accused of 'stealing' by other Christians who come from more individualistic societies where time, money and possessions belong to individuals.

In a consultation on Intentional Discipleship held in Kenya there was a heated debate about polygamy. In some traditional cultures men can have several wives but when they become disciples of Jesus what should they do? Some group members were very clear: the Bible says we should have one wife so the other wives should be sent away. However, other group members pointed out that sending away 'spare' wives, and their children, often condemns them to a life of poverty and even starvation. Is that the right action for a disciple of Jesus?

Some years ago a donor in the UK gave funds, through mission agency, for a diocese in an African country to run a youth conference. They later discovered that the youth conference had been postponed until the following year and their money used to pay the hospital bills of a very sick church leader. They were very angry. Was this a failure of accountability? For the African diocese saving the life of their leader was the obvious priority. In our diverse cultures living Jesus-shaped lives can mean different things in different cultures and at different times. We need that living relationship with Jesus that his first disciples enjoyed to be able to know 'What would Jesus do?' in every circumstance.



Discussion

1. What are the difficult issues in discipleship in your context (like the examples of theft, polygamy and financial accountability given above)? How do you discover "What would Jesus do?" in your context?
2. What can we learn from disciples of Jesus who live in very different contexts? For example, does the attitude of Muslim-background disciples in North Africa (see 'Going deeper' above) say anything to you about your attitude to time or possessions?
3. How is your discipleship connected to the global Christian community?



Life

As you prepare to leave, take a few minutes to write down one discipleship action you can take this coming week to improve the lives of our global human family. It might be something like buying only fairly traded clothes, praying daily for another nation or showing kindness to a person of another faith. What would Jesus do if he lived in our contemporary global community?



Closing Prayer

Holy and everlasting God, we worship you for you are love.

We marvel that you unceasingly pour out your love into the life of our world. And we are moved as your love opens our hearts and we discover what it is to love one another.

God of community, make us Christ's body.

Forgive us, O God,

- For the pride and hatred which has brought disunity to the life of your church;
- For our absorption with our own petty concerns and our neglect of your mission agenda;
- For all the times that we stuck with people with whom we were comfortable when you were calling us to step out to welcome the stranger.

God of community, make us Christ's body.

Grant that we may know the empowering and energizing that comes from your Holy Spirit:

- Giving us courage to take new initiatives so that the life of your church will be relevant to the people of our time and place;
- Opening our hearts to people, from near or far, with whom we belong together in the life of the one church;
- Creating imagination so that we may discover new ways to form friendships, struggle for justice, and act in service.

For we bring our prayers in his precious name. Amen

From Together Towards Life, World Council of Churches, ed. (Jooseop Keum, 2013).

Study 6: Discipleship for Families

Today's families vary in composition, but they are still the first place where a new generation learns its values and is shaped for life. What does the Jesus-shaped family look like, and how can our relationships continue to be enriched, healed and strengthened so that we can be living witnesses in our communities?



Opening Prayers

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You have awakened our church to hear again the call of our Saviour Jesus Christ to come to Him and learn from Him. Grant that as we say 'yes' to discipleship, Your Holy Spirit will enable us so completely to commit all areas of our lives to His service, that in our personal, family and church lives we would act as Jesus would have acted if He were in our place. In His name and for His sake we pray. **Amen.**

Prayer by Bishop Harold Daniel, Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands Lenten Bible Study Booklet 2018) permission granted by Director of Christian Education, Rev. Douglas Barnes



Our Story

Oh no! The lights just went out. The house was dark and the moonlight beamed us to gather out on the veranda. Now that the television, fans, radios and the other gadgets were shut off, the sound of the night could be clearly heard. As we gathered enjoying the cool of the night, my grandmother started to tell a story.

She spoke about her youth growing up in a rural area: eating fruit from the trees, swimming in the river or walking to school. They had to make room at the table for the unexpected visitor, or take a share of the meal to an elder down the road. At other times she had shared scary stories that taught us to always listen to our parents.

No matter the story, what I cherished the most was the feeling of togetherness. There in the dark as we listened, as we learned of the past and how to live in the present, we were one.



Getting Started

Invite everyone to sit in a circle and share the following with each other: Who was the storyteller in the family you grew up in? What were some of the stories they shared? Have you passed on any of these stories to anyone?



Reading

Deuteronomy 4: 9-14

You may find it useful to use the following method to read this passage:

- One person reads the passage slowly
- A period of silence while everyone reflects on one word or phrase which struck them
- The group can then share the words and phrases they noticed but without discussion
- A different person reads the passage again (perhaps from a different Bible version)



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in sub-groups if your group is large.

1. The Israelites were encouraged to remember their story as people with whom God made a covenant, and to share the story with their children. As Christians we too have a story which is a continuation of theirs and bound up in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. However, many people today find it difficult to share the Jesus story and other matters of faith with those closest to them – their family. How can families share the story of Jesus and their personal experiences of the divine?

2. Families that pray together to start their day are more equipped to face the challenges outside the home. In what other ways can we bond together and strengthen each other within our families?
3. As the Israelites found it difficult to hold to their values in the land across the Jordan, so too it is sometimes difficult to take Christian values out into the wider community where they may be seen as alien and strange. How can we strengthen each other to remain faithful to the values taught in the home, and to share them when we are out in the wider community?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of 5 minutes' quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learn about discipleship in the family. As focus for reflection you could light a candle, provide a relevant picture or play some suitable music. At the end everyone joins in praying the disciples' prayer.



The disciples' prayer

Said together

**Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped lives
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.**



Going Deeper

Deuteronomy stresses the importance of the parents' role in teaching each new generation to walk in the ways of the Lord. This includes constant

reminders of the story (what God had done in Israel's past) and of the teaching (God's covenant promises and commandments).

Discipling means discipline, and that was part of the function of the wider Israelite household in which individuals found their identity, security, memory, hope, and responsibility.

As our daily following of Jesus (our apostolic vocation) draws us deeper into the Body of Christ (the life of the Triune God), reconciliation becomes a pressing priority. Humanity shares the brokenness and pain of our world, and this needs to be brought to God, to be offered at the Cross – to find reconciliation, wholeness, and life in the shattered life of God. As Paul reminds us, the heart of our discipleship is not only to 'be reconciled' with God but also to exercise a 'ministry of reconciliation' (2 Cor 5.11–21). That ministry is to be exercised within the Church, in the wider community, and in our relationship with the whole created order.

(Excerpt from: *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*)



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in sub-groups if your group is large.

1. What are some of the barriers to wholeness in our family relationships?
2. How can we reconcile with each other as we journey towards truly reflecting the unity of God in our families and becoming better role models in our community?
3. Some families have learned valuable lessons by walking in each others' shoes for a day and seeing life from another perspective. We are accustomed to the usual roles: parents teach, children learn, one person in the family leads and everyone else follows. What may be some of the lessons we can learn by reversing the roles we have assigned in our families, e.g. having children teach, others lead? How can God minister to us through this activity?

4. Galatians 5:22-23 contains values that should characterise every Christian. How should we behave as persons who are guided by: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility and Self-Control? For example, if I have love within me, then I respond by seeking to do no harm to anyone and the wider environment? How can this impact the relationships in my family?



Life

As you prepare to leave, take a few minutes to write down one action you can take this coming week to bring discipleship into your family context. It might be: selecting a family member for special prayers; identifying a relationship that requires reconciliation; praying for guidance and then seeking out the individual in love; learning Morning and Evening Prayer liturgies, teaching them to your children then having each person lead one day per week.

What would Jesus do if He lived in your home?



Closing Prayer

The following prayer can be read by one person or said by the group together.

Eternal God

You have declared in Christ

The completion of your purpose of love.

May we live by faith, walk in hope and be renewed in love

Until the world reflects your glory and you are all in all.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

from Alternative Services Book, Church of England 1980

Study 7: Discipleship in the Workplace

Jesus is no stranger to work. Before he became a travelling preacher and healer, he was a 'tekton': a builder, a skilled worker in wood and stone. And before he was born to Mary he had co-created the entire universe, maintained it by his word of power and instructed human beings to work to steward and release creation's potential for the benefit of others.



Opening Prayers

Our Father, praise you, creator and Lord of all,
Our Father, praise you, redeemer and restorer of all.
**Thank you that you have been with us in everything this day,
In work and rest, in words and silence, in furrowed brow and joyous laughter.**

We offer all that we have done this day to you – the floor washed, the meal made, the fruit picked, the brick laid, the child taught, the report written, the wound dressed, the heart listened to – whatever we have done, may it be pleasing in your eyes.

We bring all that we have experienced this day to you – the kindnesses and the cruelties, the successes achieved and the mistakes made, the pain we may have caused, the hurt we may have received.

Lord in your mercy forgive us.

Lord in your mercy heal us.

Lord in your grace transform us.

Thank you for this time together, speak and minister to us. And help us to minister your grace and love to one another, for Jesus' sake. Amen



Our Story

It's Victoria's first job. She's an apprentice hairdresser. There's been lots to do and lots to learn and she has been feeling the pressure. Three weeks after she started, her minister commissioned her for her work and she's been feeling

more at peace. “What difference does knowing Jesus make to the way you wash someone’s hair?” she was asked. “Well,” she replied, “I pray for them when I massage in the conditioner.”

Here’s a worker who knows that even this small task matters to God and can be a means of blessing, spiritual as well as physical. She is a disciple who believes that God acts in hairdressing salons as well as sanctuaries, who believes that God cares for every person, and who believes in the power of prayer – though she may never see the results herself.



Getting Started

Each person has a piece of paper and writes three headings on it: ‘Thank you’, ‘ouch’, and ‘please’. Everyone thinks about their work (inside or outside the home), workplace and co-workers, and writes down one thing they are thankful for, one thing that is causing them distress or disappointment, and one thing they would really like to see God do. People share one of their points – more if there is time.



Reading

Ruth 2:1-16

You may find it useful to read this passage in this way:

- One person reads the passage slowly
- A period of silence while everyone reflects on one word or phrase which struck them
- The group can then share the words and phrases they noticed but without discussion
- Someone else reads the passage again. As they do so, those listening imagine that they are one of the characters in the passage.



Discussion

Use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. We're reminded in Colossians 3:23 to do whatever we do 'as working for the Lord'. Our Ruth passage includes workers with different roles: a boss, a supervisor, harvesters (both male and female) and gleaners. What does the passage suggest might be 'God's way' of doing each of these roles?
2. How might Boaz's words and actions have encouraged Ruth? Is there someone in your workplace you might minister to? Is there some change you would like to see that would improve your workplace?
3. What challenges are you facing as a disciple in your work and your workplace at this time?



Pause for thought

Ask people to close their eyes and imagine themselves at the entrance to their workplace – even if that's their home. Ask them to imagine that Jesus meets them there, and then that he goes into their workplace with them and shows them around. Where does he take them? Where does he stop? Who does he point out? What does he say? Allow some time for reflection, and for sharing.



The disciples' prayer

said together

**Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped lives
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.**



Going Deeper

God is love. In Genesis 1, the work of the loving God establishes order out of formlessness, provides for all living creatures, brings joy, creates beauty, and embeds potential in creation that is there to be released. In sum, God creates a context for people to flourish. Our work, though in a fallen world, reflects those objectives: to give our talents, resources, energy so that others may flourish as whole human beings for his glory. Our work is a gift to others. At the same time, our daily work is not just a way in which we contribute to God's mission of restoring all things to himself (Colossians:1:15-20), and to seeing 'his kingdom come, his will be done' (Matthew 6:10) in factories and fields, offices and schools, shops and hospitals. Work is also one of the ways God disciplines us.

Does he only want to teach us humility in a Sunday service or a home group? Is our workplace also a wonderful context to grow in the fruit of the Spirit? (Galatians 5:22-23). Is it not a place where we may suffer injustice and learn forbearance; a place to forgive and be forgiven? Is it not a place to grow in our living trust in God, in his word, and in his power to answer prayer? A place to bring change to people's hearts, to systems and structures, and to teach us to walk in the loving way of Jesus day by day? So, as we go to work, we do not only pray, "Lord, work through me to bring change to others," but "Work in me to change me – into the likeness of your Son Jesus."



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. In what particular ways does your daily work contribute to the peace and wellbeing of others in your society – whether physical, emotional, mental, material, relational, or spiritual?
2. Jesus is the master disciple-maker. What has he been teaching you through your work, workplace and co-workers in recent months?



Life

As you prepare to leave take a few minutes to write down one action you can take this coming week to bring Jesus' ways into your workplace. It might be by;

- praying for a particular co-worker
- asking for God's help with a piece of work
- coming in early to pray round your office or factory
- praising someone for an action
- honouring your boss
- asking for forgiveness
- looking for a way to serve a particular person – a coffee, a chocolate, a note of encouragement, or an offer of help



Closing Prayer

The following prayer can be read by one person or said by the group together

Lord Jesus, as you served your disciples by washing their feet, help us to serve others through our work this week;

As you only did what you saw your Father doing, help us to work in your ways and in your power this week;

As you gave wisdom to fishermen who'd caught nothing, give us your wisdom for our tasks this week;

As you work through bread and wine made by human hands to bring life and hope, work through the work of our hands this week;

As you spoke through the work of the potter to your prophet Jeremiah, speak to our co-workers through our work this week;

As all you did glorified the Father, may all we do bring glory to your name this week. **Amen**

Study 8: Discipleship that Transforms Communities

Jesus calls us to him to send us to the world. To live Jesus-Shaped lives today we hear this call and obey his command to not be conformed to this world but transform it by the renewal of our minds and by acting like Jesus



Opening Prayers

Flame of the Holy Spirit, warm our hearts with love for those in need

Come Holy Spirit and transform the creation

Flame of the Holy Spirit: enlighten our steps to walk in the path of Jesus, the truth

Come Holy Spirit and open our eyes

Flame of the Holy Spirit, awaken in us the passion for justice and freedom

Come Holy Spirit and strength our ministries

Flame of the Holy Spirit, gather us to celebrate your resurrection

Come Holy Spirit and dwell among us to lead us to be salt and light in the darkness.



Our Story

In Cuba, Bishop Griselda Delgado's eyes light up as she remembers a turning point in her ministry many years ago in her former parish, Santa Maria Virgen de Itabo. She describes an elderly lady, Claribel, in the community. The church helped Claribel with seeds and encouragement to grow her own tomatoes. "The neighbours then asked if they could share her tomatoes," Bishop Griselda recalls. "Claribel called them to learn how to seed and cultivate their own tomatoes. This spread out across the community. They started to transform the land and learned new things. When they had surplus, they learned how to preserve and sell. The next step was to build a seed bank to achieve self-sustainability."

"This is an example of how to work with people to transform their lives, their way of thinking and to plan their future. They learned about things which they

did not know they had. For me this is actually the Gospel – to open the doors [of the church] and transform minds, land and spirit,” Bishop Griselda added.

Bishop Griselda later brought this vision of community transformation to the diocese and developed a new programme of mission and development. This sits within the wider vision for the Episcopal Diocese of Cuba, which states: “We seek to become a church that, united in diversity, celebrates, evangelises, teaches, serves and shares God’s love.”



Getting Started

Being a disciple means you are committed to look like Jesus, do what he did, speak the words he spoke in the way he spoke, go to places and be closer to people as Jesus did, relate to others in the manner and spirit Jesus did, challenge the structures (religious, family, economic, political) with braveness and cleverly like Jesus.

Think about what you do that Jesus did. Then think about what Jesus did that you have not yet done. After this, share with the larger group and, if possible, write your thoughts on a large sheet of paper.



Reading

Luke 4 : 18-19 and Luke 10 : 25-37

You may find it useful to use the following method to read this passage:

- One person reads the passage slowly
- A period of silence while everyone reflects on one word or phrase which struck them
- The group can then share the words and phrases they noticed but without discussion
- A different person reads the passage again (perhaps from a different Bible version)



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the facilitator) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. What are the issues that need to be transformed in your community?
2. What are the issues that need to be transformed in yourself?
3. Does our community look like Jesus? What is missing to achieve that?
4. From the lessons we have learned, what can be used by the community to be more effective disciples of Jesus and to make more disciples who can transform the community?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of 5 minutes quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learned about discipleship that transforms lives and communities. Light a candle and carefully pass it around. When each person is holding it they can share aloud or offer a silent prayer.



The disciples' prayer

said together

**Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped lives
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.**



Going Deeper

The Gospels are concerned about teaching us how to follow Jesus and what this path means. We learned that discipleship requires a willingness to be missionary. The report *International Discipleship and Disciple Making* reminds us that mission is “God’s way of loving and saving the world”, and that at the heart of this mission is the “the movement of God’s love toward people [and the rest of creation]”, in which “The Church [the whole Body of Christ] as an instrument for mission” has been called to participate. Therefore, God’s mission is at the very heart of the life and existence of the Church and Christian service and ministry.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus began by proclaiming a message about his kingdom and the need to transform communities. The very centre of that message is not ultimately what he said, but *what he was and did*. How was Jesus’ behaviour regarding injustice, exclusion, privilege, individualism? The parable of the Good Samaritan helps us to understand that the question posed to the Pharisee is becoming the question for us: to whom am I intentionally becoming closer?



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the facilitator) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. What are the verbs (actions) used in the two passages from Luke that we read earlier? Make a list.
2. Are we challenged by these verbs (actions)? In what way?



Life

As you prepare to leave take a few minutes to write down one action you can take this coming week to bring discipleship into your community context. It might be joining a social action of your community or starting one. Or it can be a commitment to sharing information about the campaigns on environmental and gender justice that the Anglican Communion is part of.



Closing Prayer

Invite someone from the group to lead you all in prayer.

First, take a moment to thank God for the guidance we receive to be shaped by Jesus' life. May our words and actions contribute for healing, justice and love.

Then we can pray together as follows:

**May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.**

Study 9: Anglican Discipleship

Anglican disciples share the rich heritage of Celtic and Latin (Catholic) Churches, the Protestant Reformation, English Pietism and the global mission movements of recent centuries. As Anglicans live Jesus Shaped Lives in today's world they reflect the inclusive nature of God's Kingdom.



Opening Prayers

Lord Jesus Christ, let your presence fill our hearts and overflow in our actions, that we may proclaim the good news of your Kingdom. Let your glory fill our lives; **Let your glory fill the world.**

Lord, fill us with your welcoming Spirit of truth, that we may faithfully teach, baptize and nurture those who come to believe in you. Let your glory fill our lives; **Let your glory fill the world.**

Lord, as you came to serve and not to be served, fill us with the compassion and insight to respond to human need by loving service. Let your glory fill our lives; **Let your glory fill the world.**

Lord, let the fire of your goodness and justice burn into us and through us, that we may seek to transform the unjust structures of society. Let your glory fill our lives; **Let your glory fill the world.**

Lord, as you come into our lives to redeem all that is good, guide us in our turn to renew and sustain the life of your creation. Let your glory fill our lives; **Let your glory fill the world.**

Almighty God, in our baptism you adopted us for your own. Quicken, we pray, your Spirit within us, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Adapted from prayers written by The Very Rev. Dr. Iain Luke, Dean of Athabasca in Canada



Our Story

A man moved into a new house. In the garden was an apple tree, but the fruit on the tree was so small that he assumed it was a 'crab apple' tree, not a tree whose fruit is good to eat. A friend visited him and as they sat in the garden the owner of the new house expressed his disappointment that the tree was not going to give him any fruit; that it was the wrong sort of tree. "It isn't a

crab apple tree,” his friend replied. “It is an apple tree. But it has never been pruned.” So that winter the man pruned his tree. The following summer it produced a magnificent harvest.



Getting Started

Can you think of times in your life when you have had to be pruned? Have there been times when you have had to give things up, stop and start again, or change your priorities in order that your life might bear fruit? How did it feel? Who did the pruning? How did it make a difference?



Reading

Luke 6 : 43-49

Jesus uses the example of a good tree bearing good fruit and of a wise builder digging firm foundations. He says that we will be known by our fruit and that the house built on rock will be able to stand firm even when the storms come.

- One person reads the passage slowly
- A period of silence while everyone reflects on one word or phrase which struck them
- The group can then share the words and phrases they noticed but without discussion
- A different person reads the passage again (perhaps from a different Bible version)



Discussion

There really isn't anything about Anglican discipleship that makes it very different from being a disciple in any Christian community, though the Anglican Church has always placed a great emphasis on thinking and reasoning about our faith. However, there is one thing that is distinctively Anglican that makes a big difference to our lives as disciples of Jesus. It is the five marks of mission.

The Five Marks of Mission are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The Five Marks of Mission describe what it looks like for a Christian community to participate in the mission of God. But they can also be the marks of an individual life that is shaped by Christ: a Jesus Shaped Life. They are the roots and the foundations of what it is to live as a disciple of Jesus.

The Five Marks of Mission can also be summed up in five helpful words which are at the very heart of being an Anglican disciple:

Tell • Teach • Tend • Transform • Treasure

This also leads to some helpful questions about how we live as Anglican disciples today. In your context in your part of the Anglican Communion how can we:

- **Tell** others about Jesus and why he is important to Christians;
- **Teach** others about God and pass on the stories of the bible;
- **Tend** those in need and look after ourselves and others;
- **Transform** the world for one person and make a difference;
- **Treasure** the world we live in and preserve it for others?

Spend some time discussing these questions in twos and threes and then share your ideas with the whole group.

Pause for thought

Allow a period of five minutes quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learnt about the five marks of mission and Anglican discipleship. As a focus for reflection you could light a candle, provide a relevant picture or play some suitable music. At the end everyone joins in praying the disciples' prayer.



**Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped lives
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.**



Going Deeper

Living a Jesus shaped life according to the Five Marks of mission will mean:

- a. Every Christian knowing that they are called to be a witness to Christ in their daily life;
- b. Every Christian being able to give a reason for the hope that is in them;
- c. Every Christian being a good neighbour in their community and active in meeting the needs of those who are poor and disadvantaged by acts of mercy, loving service and by charitable giving;
- d. Every Christian being committed to building a better future for the world by active involvement in transforming their family, their neighbourhood, their community, and their nation; recognising their inter-dependence across the world; and belonging to each other in ways that transcend the world's usual boundaries of nationality, colour and class.
- e. Every Christian caring for the environment, locally and globally, and developing ways of living that do not exhaust or exploit God's creation.

Jesus says that "It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks" (Luke 6.45). Our hearts will be full to overflowing when we pay attention to the foundations of the Christian life; when we put down roots. Then our hearts will be filled with the goodness, the values, the desires and the abundance of Christ, and it will bear fruit. It will bear fruit in the words we say, in the things we do, and, ultimately, in the communities we build. They will become God's kingdom on earth.



Discussion

1. Which of the five marks of mission are the most challenging for you personally?
2. Which seems the most relevant to your life? Your church? Your nation?
3. What differences would you expect to see if these marks of mission shaped the lives of Jesus' followers today?



Life

As you prepare to leave take a few minutes to write down one action you can take this coming week to live out one or more of these five marks of mission. What might you need to prune in order for this to bear fruit?



Closing Prayer

Draw your Church together, O God,
into one great company of disciples,
together following our Lord Jesus Christ
into every walk of life,
together serving him in his mission to the world,
and together witnessing to his love
on every continent and island. **Amen**

New Patterns for Worship, Church House Publishing, 2002, Pg. 295

Optional

Study A: Discipleship in other Christian Traditions

Jesus prayed that we might all be one as He and the Father are One (John 17:21). Living Jesus-Shaped lives means we need to understand what it means to grow in the image of Christ with men and women in other Christian traditions who share this same faith in Jesus.



Opening Prayer

Holy God,
Bless our time together and give us an awareness of your presence;
Lift before our hearts your children throughout the world;
Deepen our desire to be one in you;
Through Jesus your Son
Amen



Our Story

Attending a small church in my own village, one year the pastor asked us to form prayer groups for Lent with people from other churches and meet in our own homes. This was a big surprise we had never done it before. We all wondered what it would be like but we formed our house groups and each week there was a sense of excitement as we heard about how God was working in other people's lives. We became aware of how active God was in our community and when we met each other in the street we had warmer smiles and greetings. There was an excitement about learning from each other too – how to pray in different ways, how to study the scriptures using different translations and how to live out our faith in ways we had not thought of but we now saw someone else doing. We saw how God was enlivening the faith of the people around us and realised that the body of Christ is bigger than we had ever imagined or understood. We also found that we shared the journey of becoming Jesus' disciples, many roads perhaps but one destination. Jesus wants us to be brothers and sisters as we love and follow Him.



Getting Started

At the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016, Archbishop Justin Welby, said that ‘the best decision anyone can ever make at any point in life, in any circumstances, whoever they are, is to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.’ In the report *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*, there are some examples of other traditions making disciples. It seems as if the Holy Spirit is calling brothers and sisters all over the world to look more deeply at how we grow in faith and faithfulness. Take a moment to name the other Christian churches in your community.



Reading

John 17 : 17-23

The Indigenous peoples of Canada have a Gospel Based Discipleship way of reading the Bible which you may like to try. When you have finished leave the Bible open at the Gospel throughout the discussion time – if anyone wants to hear it again they call for the gospel to be read.

Pray

Creator, we give you thanks for all you are and all you bring to us. In Jesus, you place the Gospel in the center of this Sacred Circle. You show us the way to live in generosity and compassion. Give us your strength to live together with respect and commitment as we grow in your Spirit, for you are God, now and forever. Amen.

Read the passage

- Read the Gospel – What word(s), idea(s), or phrase(s) stand out for you?
- Read the Gospel – What is Jesus (the Gospel) saying to you?
- Read the Gospel – What is Jesus (the Gospel) calling you to do?



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

Jesus' prayer in our scripture passage calls and invites us all into the family and presence of God. This is Jesus' prayer for disciples of every time—past, present, and future. Think of the people who discipled you, then think forward to those you hope to disciple. Remember we are part of one story, and one love.

1. Archbishop Justin Welby said "Our love for Jesus Christ should change the way we act and live; we don't do 'churchianity' or church going we make disciples –followers of Jesus." Can you see common behaviours between Christians in your communities? Can you name some of them? How were these things taught?
2. Jean Vanier wrote a wonderful book on the gospel of John and he has this to say about our relationship with Jesus, this holy friendship. "This friendship with Jesus is something deep but simple It is not a mystical experience or impressive apparitions. It involves living day by day with Jesus, walking with him, listening to him, following his desires and being nourished by his words and his body. Jesus in us and we in Jesus." What different ways to disciple people do you think help this holy relationship with Jesus go deeper and deeper?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of 5 minutes quiet reflection so that each person can consider how to respond to what we have learned about discipleship in other traditions. If people have brought prayer books or Bibles with them place them together in the centre of the room as a reminder of our different backgrounds.

You might like to sing this together:

I have decided to follow Jesus; (x3)
No turning back, no turning back.

Though I may wonder, I still will
follow;(x3)
No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross
before me;(x3)
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, still I will
follow; (x3)
No turning back, no turning back.

Will you decide now to follow
Jesus?(x3)
No turning back, no turning back.

Songwriters: Traditional / Leslie B. Tucker



The disciples' prayer

said together

*Almighty God,
said together
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.*



Going Deeper

Canon Dr. Scott Sharman, Ecumenical Animator for the Anglican Church of Canada, speaks of two trends in Intentional Discipleship. One concerns how we are formed and the other how we live together.

The Catechumenate, he reminds us is one of the gifts from the Eastern Orthodox tradition in the realm of discipleship. From the third century, when adult conversions to Christianity became common, there was a need to develop a process of growing disciples into the image of Christ. Often over a number of years, through a combination of learning and practice of the faith they entered a kind of spiritual apprenticeship. In recent decades this ancient Christian practice, which never completely went away in the churches of the East, is being revived by churches in the West. The riches of this pre-eminently Orthodox Christian institution are being shared in wide and interesting ways, with Reformed, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican Christians alike all finding useful resources for their own contexts.

The Ekklesia Project is a network of Christians from across traditions who rejoice in a friendship rooted in common love of God and the Church. They come together from Catholic parishes, Protestant congregations, Anabaptist communities, house-churches and more as those who are convinced that following Jesus Christ must shape all areas of life. They describe themselves as:

God-centered: Seeking to overcome the dominant culture's limited vision of faith as merely private or personal. Bearing witness in our lives and work to the triune God. Living by trust and prayer.

Church-centered: Sharing a common commitment to the Church as Christ's gathered Body, whose true heart is communal worship and whose true freedom is disciplined service. Convinced that the Church crosses all borders and human divisions.

Shalom-centered: Committed to the peace established in Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Embodying the crucified and risen Messiah, the Church provides an alternative to the world's violence. Listening we learn from each other on those matters we understand differently.



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. How were you formed in your church? Do you think of yourself as completed or a work in progress? What would help you travel further in your journey?
2. What would it look like in your community if all Christians were of one mind?



Life

As you prepare to leave take a few minutes to write down one action you can take this coming week to give thanks for the varieties of Christian communities where you live. How do non-Christians know that we are all part of the body of Christ? How could churches work together to show that in healthy ways?



Closing Prayer

The following prayer can be read by one person or said by the group together

Draw your Church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples,
together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life,
together serving him in his mission to the world,
and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island.
We ask this in his name and for his sake. AMEN

(from the Book Of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada)

Optional

Study B: Discipleship and other Faith Communities

The amazing love of God stretches to all humankind and offers God's salvation to all people of all nationalities. During his life on this earth, Jesus shared the bread of God's Word not only with Jews but also with people of other religions, Samaritans and gentiles, for example. However, being a disciple of Jesus and living a Jesus-shaped life in the context of other faith communities often can be a challenging and dangerous task.



Opening Prayer

Oh Lord our God we bow down before you in awe and admiration.

We thank you for your mercy and love for people of all nations.

We thank you for the gift of your Son

Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Lord and Teacher.

We thank you for Your Holy Spirit

Who teaches us and reminds us of all what you said.

We thank you for your Word

Which transforms our minds and prepares us to live like Jesus

Fill our hearts with Your love for all people

And help us to do the good works for which you equipped us.

Help us to faithfully deliver Your Good News to all people.

Help us to make your disciples of all nations

Teaching them all that you taught us

So that they will be able to teach others.



Our Story

A young man from a Muslim family had a passion to know God and be His servant. He tried his best to follow the teaching and traditions of Islam but although he worked hard, he still did not feel closer to God and could not understand whether he was on the right way. One day a friend shared the

Good News with him but he rejected it. However, after seeing Jesus in his dream he was truly convinced of God's love. He repented of his sins and accepted Jesus as His Lord and Saviour. He was very happy and wanted to tell everyone about his faith, but his family were very angry and ashamed of what happened to him. His own brothers beat him almost to death. They took him to the cemetery where their grandfathers were buried, telling him to renounce Jesus. When he refused, they beat him even more. Thinking that he was dead they took him to the railway and put him on the rails so that the train would run over his body. When they left, he regained consciousness and was able to move from the rails. He had to hide from his family and move to another part of the country. He met with other believers in their homes where they secretly worshipped God, prayed and studied his Word. Life was difficult and sometimes dangerous but he remained faithful to Jesus. He learnt to follow Jesus by following his teaching and practicing it in his daily life. One day he met a Christian girl who was also a former Muslim and they got married. The young man became a pastor. Today, they are serving the Lord together in Asia where they share the Good News, and help people to know Jesus and live as His disciples in a hostile environment.



Getting Started

Being Jesus' disciple or discipling believers in the context of other faith communities is often a challenging task. One such challenge is persecution. In some countries sharing Good News, meeting for worship, studying God's Word together or even possessing the Bible and other Christian literature is prohibited by the law and can result in imprisonment and even death. There can also be other challenges.

Ask each person to take a few minutes to think about other possible challenges for discipleship in other faith communities. Share with the group, and compile a list of those challenges together.



Reading

Matthew 28 : 18-20

Ask one person to read the passage slowly.

Allow each person some time to reflect on the passage, paying special attention to the phrases with the words “all” and “always”.

Read one by one the phrases with the words “all” and “always”.

2 Timothy 2 : 2

Ask one person to read the passage slowly.

Allow everyone to reflect on the passage and choose one word or phrase which struck them. Make sure the group shares the words and phrases without discussion.

Read the passage together.

These two Bible passages are closely connected as they reflect the ultimate goal of discipleship – making disciples who can disciple others.



Discussion

You may use these questions or others suggested by your leader either as a whole group or in smaller subgroups,

1. What does the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28 : 18-20) tell us about reaching out to the people in other faith communities?
2. What is our part in fulfilling this task? What is Jesus’ promise to us as we do it (see verse 20)?
3. How can we help the believers in small indigenous churches in the context of other faith communities to stay strong, and grow both spiritually and in number?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of 5 minutes to reflect silently on what each person has learnt about our responsibility to make disciples of all nations. Think about people from other faith communities who you meet each day in your neighbourhood, or at your work place etc. Do you realize that the Great Commission speaks about them as well? At the end everyone joins in the disciples' prayer.



The disciples' prayer

said together

**Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.**



Going Deeper

Reaching out to the people from other faith communities is difficult. You must overcome barriers that separate you from them. First, you need to learn how to be friends with them. Sometimes we do not know even how to speak with them. A good resource to help you with this, especially when communicating with Muslim people, is a DVD course **Friendship First** by Steve Bell and Tim Green (available at <http://friendshipfirst.org>). You can also find other resources for sharing your faith with the people of other faith communities.

Another challenge is finding tools for discipling believers with a background in other faith communities. Praise God that the Bible is now available in over 3000 languages! However, there is often a lack of contextualised Bible study materials in many languages especially for Christian minorities within other faith communities. It is important that all the followers of Jesus can know well

the Word of God and explain it to other people, especially to the people in their community. It is also important that they can live a Jesus Shaped Life by applying his teaching in their daily lives. During the past few decades the SEAN courses (www.seaninternational.com) have become popular and have been contextualized and translated into over 80 languages. They are actively used in over 100 countries by churches of different denominations including indigenous house churches in the context of other faith communities (Muslims in Pakistan, Hindus in Nepal, Buddhists in Mongolia etc). They are also becoming popular among diaspora churches (including Nepalese in Malaysia, Russian-speaking Koreans in Korea, Central Asians in Russia). Tools to Empower and Equip (TEE) courses are also available. In Asia alone there are over 100,000 TEE students. You can learn more about TEE on the Increase Association website www.increaseassociation.org.



Discussion

You may use these questions or others suggested by your leader either as a whole group or in smaller subgroups.

1. What kind of barriers can we experience when trying to share the Good News to people in other faith communities? How can we overcome these barriers?
2. What do we need to know about people from other faith communities when sharing our faith with them? Do you know any good resources that can help in this?
3. What does a new believer with another religious background need in order to grow in Christian faith, live a Jesus-shaped life and be able to teach and disciple others? What tools and resources you can suggest in your context?



Life

As you prepare to leave take a few minutes to write down a small plan of first steps or actions you can take in order to share the Good News with your neighbour or colleague from another faith community.



Closing Prayer

The closing prayer can be read by one person or by the group together.

Almighty merciful God, you are the God of nations. Thank you for calling us to be your ambassadors and your instruments in this world, to fulfil your Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. Help us to know your Word well and practice your teaching daily in our lives. Help us to be filled with your Holy Spirit and to show a good example of Jesus-shaped life to all people of all nationalities and religions.

We thank you for our brothers and sisters who chose to follow you in the context of other faith communities. We ask you for your continuous protection and support for them. Help them to be strong and courageous in all circumstances, grant them your wisdom and help them to know your Word well and be able to teach it to others. Help us to be your instruments for making your disciples in the context of other faith communities.

In Jesus name. Amen.

Study 10: Disciples – Equipped to Multiply

In three year's ministry Jesus trained only a handful of disciples, twelve men and maybe a similar number of women. How then did the early church grow so fast? Jesus trained disciples who made disciples – multiplication.



Opening Prayer

I will sing of loyalty and justice to you, O Lord

I will sing.

I will attend to the way that is blameless as you come to me, O Lord

I will attend.

I will walk with integrity of heart in your ways, O Lord

I will walk.

I will turn away from all that is worthless and evil, O Lord

I will turn away.

I will embrace all those you call into your ways, O Lord

I will embrace.

I will rejoice with the multitude un-numbered who own your Name, O Lord

I will rejoice, I will rejoice, I will rejoice. Amen.

(Prayer based on Psalm 101)



Our Story

In a small town below the mountains, Haluk, a Christian disciple, decided that each day he would go to the shopping mall and ask God to bring him one new person with whom he could share his faith. God was faithful and by the end of the first week Haluk had a small group of 7 new disciples. At the end of a month he had established a church of around 30 people, which later that year topped 300 members! Each day a new disciple.

In that same town a Christian sister, Rocio, had a different plan. For her, discipleship was not just about evangelism but also teaching and mentoring. She asked God to give her one other person to whom she could teach the Christian faith for a whole year and then both of them could do this the following year for two more people. God was faithful and after three years eight people were using this discipleship method.

But there was a third person who had yet another idea. Isa asked God to give him a group of about twelve people whom he could live with and disciple for a full three years and then send them out to do the same. God was faithful and Isa's movement grew year by year.

At the end of ten years Haluk was an exhausted broken man, going every day to the market square to share the gospel and now looking after a church of over three thousand members. Rocio, however was still only mentoring one person at a time but now over 500 people in her neighbourhood were doing the same thing. Isa had left the area after three years of discipling his small community, but they had continued his work and now there were over 1,800 people growing in faith in these small Christian communities.

After twenty years a surprising thing had happened. Huluk's church of 7,292 people was suffering badly as their pastor was totally exhausted. Rocio's gentle mentoring had helped over 1 million people to live Jesus Shaped Lives and Isa's movement of disciple-making communities had grown to over 39 million disciples. That's the difference between addition and multiplication! (You can check the figures yourself.)



Getting Started

People who live Jesus-shaped lives are disciples who make disciples.

In pairs, think about whose disciple (follower) you are when it comes to any two of the following (in each case name a person):

- Menus for a good meal
- Football
- Music
- Fashion
- Christian teaching
- Social media

Now share some of these in the group and say whether you have ever met the person you named or whether another of their followers persuaded you to follow them.



Reading

John 14 : 12-29

You may find it useful to use the following method to read this passage:

- One person reads the passage slowly
- A period of silence while everyone reflects on one of Jesus' promises in the passage (in the form "I" and then a verb, eg. "I say", "I will", "I am") which struck them
- The group can then share their promise with a very brief reason why this particular one struck them.
- A different person reads the passage again (perhaps from a different Bible version)



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. Reflecting on the opening story about Haluk, Rocio and Isa which model of disciple-making do you associate with (a) Evangelism (b) Anglicanism (c) Jesus?
2. If the model of a small community of disciple-making disciples growing together and then moving on to form their own communities is the most effective (at least numerically in the long term), what implications does this have for your church?
3. In our reading from John 14, Jesus is speaking to his disciple-making community at the end of their three years together. What issues is he addressing? What is Jesus saying to your Christian community about your last three years?



Pause for thought

Allow a period of five minutes quiet reflection so that each person can consider how they want to respond to what we have learned about Jesus-shaped disciples

who make new disciples. As a focus for reflection you could light a candle, put a large calculator on the table, or a picture or objects which represent 'community', or play some suitable music. At the end everyone joins in praying the disciples' prayer.



The disciples' prayer

said together

**Almighty God,
You have called us to live and share Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.
Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.**



Going Deeper

In the final pages of the report *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*, we read, "The [Anglican] Communion is the child of mission, born as Anglican Christians travelled to new places to invite others to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Discipleship is the very essence of Anglicanism. Anglicanism, from its roots in Celtic and Augustinian spirituality and shaped by the European Reformation, has always been a lived-out (not a purely intellectual or spiritualised) faith. It is about following and living the ways of Jesus. ... Discipleship is the future of the Anglican Communion. It is only as we call each generation anew to a daily walk with God, a living discipleship, that the Anglican Church can grow or even survive. Without new disciples our future is no longer than one generation."

Anglicans are not alone in focusing on discipleship. Pope Francis has called all Roman Catholics to "missional discipleship" and from Brazil and Ghana to Malaysia and New Zealand we see churches of very different traditions focused on building Disciple-Making Movements (DMM). If your church is interested in becoming a local DMM then you can find many resources freely available on the internet (including on-line training at <https://coramdeo.com>) and advice from your diocesan or provincial leadership. See also the resources section at the back of this life guide.



Discussion

You may use some or all of these questions (or others suggested by the leader) either as a whole group or in smaller sub-groups if your group is large.

1. If a new flu virus were to kill everyone in your local church over 50 years of age what would the church look like? That's what it will look like in a few years from now if you do not make new disciples. How could disciples-making-disciples change the future of your church?
2. What are the biggest barriers to turning your church into a disciple-making movement or a small discipleship community (like the one Jesus formed in Palestine that went on to change the world)? What first steps can you take to overcome these barriers?
3. Is your church doing 'multiplication' or 'addition' (or perhaps even 'subtraction' or 'division')? Which do you want to do? How can you pray for this?



Life

As you prepare to leave give each person a card which looks like this:

+	Growth	My prayer is
—	Community	
÷	Jesus-Shaped Life	
X	DMM	

Invite each person to circle one symbol and one concept that they wish to work on in their local church and then to write down their own prayer.



Closing Prayer

The following prayer is responsive.

Holy is God

Holy and Almighty

Loving is the Son

Loving unto death

Empowering is the Spirit

Empowering and source of all joy

Eternal Trinity of being

You draw us into the mystery of our being with you

Shape our lives

That we might reflect the life of Jesus into your world

Embrace us as your disciples

At home, in our work, amongst our neighbours, in our communities and to the ends of your world

Jesus, Bread of the world

Make us hungry to walk every day as your disciples

Jesus, Water of life

Make us thirsty to see every child, woman and man drawn into the life you so richly pour out for all humanity

Jesus, the Way the Trust and the Life

Keep us faithful as Jesus-shaped disciples, who make new disciples, for your glory alone.

Amen.

Moving On

In the introduction to this life-guide we said that this is not a course to be completed but a guide for living. So as you complete these twelve sessions there is no certificate or qualification to be gained – just a life to live, a Jesus-shaped life.

Jesus life is, and has been from eternity, always about community: the community of the Trinity; the community of his earthly family and disciples; the community of the Body of Christ, the church, for whom he died and lives today. Theologians use a Greek word to describe the life of the Trinity, of Father Son and Holy Spirit. They speak of *perichoresis* – a powerful word about a very intimate relationship. Amazingly, discipleship is about being invited into this quality of life and inviting others to join us there.

The journey has only just begun. To know and be known; to be open and honest, can be very challenging but also very rewarding. Welcome to church as you may never have known it before.

We hope that you have found this life-guide helpful. Now recommend it to others. Help other disciples to live Jesus-shaped lives and help them to make new disciples. Together welcome new disciples into the community of God's life.

We would very much welcome your comments and suggestions for improving this life-guide or for other resources that could help Anglicans worldwide in their own discipleship journey.

Perichoresis ...

creates a freedom to know and be known. In this freedom arises a fellowship and sharing so honest and open and real that persons involved dwell in one another. There is union without loss of individual identity. When one weeps, the other tastes salt. It is only in the Triune relationship of Father, Son and Spirit that personal relationship of this order exists, but the good news is that through Christ's death we have been included in this relationship and it is to be played out fully in each of us and in all creation.



Resources

As part of the *Anglican Communion Season of Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making* the international coordinating group has put together a Resource hub on the Anglican Communion website where you can find many discipleship resources. They are grouped by appropriate age group (children, youth, adults) and according to how far along the road of discipleship you have got (starting out, on the road, going further).

You will find the resource hub at on the Communion website
www.anglicancommunion.org

Prayer Resources

A number of prayers have been provided in this life-guide from different parts of the world and some were written specifically for this guide. You can use these in you church or small group as you move forward in discipleship but you can also write your own or find others in your community, from your diocese or on the internet.

Here are two prayers for a Jesus-shaped life, one very ancient Celtic prayer and one contemporary prayer from Cameroon.

*Great God of the blood-red moon
and of the falling stars;
Great Saviour of the miraculous birth
and the rising from death;
Great Spirit of the Creator and the wise;
Come in sovereign power
into our dreams,
into our thoughts,
into our mouths,
into our bodies,
into our actions,
til we become your sign, and presence, and wonder,
in your world.
Amen*

*God , I am small
and fragile
and very plain
and not very clean.
But can you use me,
like a mirror
that nobody sees
because they see only
the beautiful reflection
of you,
only you
and all your glory
Please, Jesus
shine in me. Amen*

Notes

