

Discipleship: Then and Now



Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Matt: 4:19; 24:14; 28:19, 20; Mark 16:20; John 3:21–30; Acts 5:34–39.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Analyze the current definition of discipleship.
- ▶ Demonstrate knowledge of Jesus'

simple plan for His followers.

- ▶ Evaluate the relationship between discipleship and soul winning.

Preparing to Lead

When Jesus said, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people” (Matt. 4:19, NRSV), He showed how simple and transparent His plan of salvation really is. Every road to happiness leads to the One that can give life. But the disciples missed the point right away. They failed to see immediately that Jesus' plan was

for them to humble themselves first and be good students before they could reap the blessings of being transformed into apostles. This week, it will be crucial to examine the difference between discipleship and apostleship, realizing that one leads to the other and that they are not mutually exclusive.

Getting Started

A. Divide the class into groups of four or five. Have each group choose a leader. The rest of each group will be blindfolded. Instruct the blindfolded members that they are to walk independently only by hearing instructions from their leader.

After a few minutes, have both the leaders and blindfolded members discuss how they felt during this exercise.

B. By playing *Simon Says*, see how quickly students lose the game by not following very simple directions.

Ask how the members felt when they were eliminated from the exercise because they performed the instructions even though they didn't hear the words *Simon Says* first.

Materials

cloth blindfolds; wall space with large sheets of paper; butcher paper; pens or pencils

Delving Into the Word

A. Say: Discipleship is not a one-way street. It is a reciprocal relationship between seekers and masters. If the seekers are too pretentious or condescending and lacking in humility, they will not maximize their time with the Master, the one who desires to give knowledge. God's plan of salvation was fulfilled at Calvary. However, He gives us a chance to be co-ambassadors of His kingdom. Normally,

God works through promising us something or doing something, then asking us to do our part.

Then pass out the reproducible activity (p. 32). Have the students work on the sheets independently for about 10–15 minutes. Then discuss their responses as a class.

What other examples can the class think of including specific texts?

B. One reason why Jesus was such a good disciple-maker was because of His gift of teaching. He modeled the behavior that He wished the disciples to engage in, and He possessed all of the attributes that He wished to see in others. Make a list of

what all of these attributes are (for example, patience, humility, etc.) and cite some biblical references when Jesus displayed these attributes.

Discuss how we may obtain and display these same attributes.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why did Jesus make His plan of “making disciples” easy to understand and follow?

2. Why is a disciple more likely to make other disciples?

3. How are salvation, obedience, and discipleship related?

4. Why does Jesus wish to use His students to spread the gospel when He can do it Himself in a perfect way?

5. What deficiencies and shortcomings did the original 12 disciples have that

also plague us today, and why?

6. In what ways is teaching children a way for parents and teachers to carry on their own beliefs and traditions? How does this relate to the gospel?

7. Why do you think Jesus chose to tell parables and perform miracles rather than preach many sermons?

8. Is our church characterized as a preaching or a teaching church? Why or why not?

Closing the Activity

Designate some wall space where you can hang large pieces of paper. Since the theme for the week was discipleship, end the class by pairing up students and having them share what they learned. After two minutes, pair them up with another two students and proceed as many times as you wish according to class size. Fi-

nally, have one student per group go up to the wall space and write down on the paper what they learned from their classmates. Finish by reading aloud all of what they wrote. Pray that these lessons will be made personal and effectual in creating disciples.

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Fill in the following chart by examining the following Bible verses, then listing what God did or promised, what the disciples had to do, and the outcome.

Bible Text	What Jesus Did or Promised	What the Disciples Had to Do	The Outcome
Matt. 4:19, 20			
John 13:34, 35			
Matt. 28:20			
John 8:30 Mark 16:20			