



# WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

## Being with God: Session 1 – Facilitator’s ppt script.

The numbers correspond with the slides. This is an edited version of the Content booklet. ① indicates an animation click is needed.

1. Intro slide
2. **What is a ‘disciple’ and where do we see discipleship today?**  
Let’s start with three more modern examples...What do these tell us about discipleship?
3. The Elvis fan. Paul MacLeod ① was possibly the most dedicated Elvis fan in the world. His house is named after Elvis’s: Graceland Too ①. He made it look like Elvis’s home. His only child is called ‘Elvis Aaron Presley’, and he divorced his wife when she said, “It’s me or your Elvis collection.” Every room in his house is literally littered with Elvis paraphernalia.
4. The Miley Cyrus guy. ① This man has 30 tattoos of Miley Cyrus, whom he claimed got him through a divorce.
5. Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi from ① Star Wars, Phantom menace. **(Discuss together at this point: ideas might be – the complete single-mindedness of their “discipleship”; the way everything else comes second; being proud to be associated with the “teacher”; their identity changing as a result; it being clear they are disciples...)**
6. Being a disciple is not just a Christian idea. ① Before and after Jesus, people were and had disciples. Plato was a disciple of Socrates in ancient Greece. Many Jewish teachers (rabbis) had a set of teachings, known as their “yoke”, and disciples ① whom they would invite to “follow” them.
7. Most Jewish people saw Jesus as a rabbi, a teacher – the name they give Him 90 times in the gospels – with disciples whom He invited to, “Come, follow me.” Whereas the word “Christian” only appears in the Bible three times (as an insult!), ① the word disciple is used 268 times.
8. Right at the beginning of His work the first thing Jesus did was to call disciples to be with Him. ① “As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’ At once they left their nets and followed him.”
9. And right at the end of His work, ① Jesus told his disciples to, “Go and make disciples.”
10. The call was not to, “Believe in Him,” but to, “Follow Him.” To be a disciple of someone is about being someone who ① “learns as they follow.” It is about having a close relationship with someone in which we are increasingly being with them, becoming like them, and doing the things they do. To be a disciple is to follow, and the nature of that discipleship *is defined by the One we follow.*
11. One writer says that, ① “Being a disciple or apprentice of Jesus is a definite and obvious kind of thing. To make a mystery of it is to misunderstand it. *There is no good reason why people should ever be in doubt as to whether they themselves are his students or not.*”
12. Many churches, especially today, emphasise discipleship. Pope Francis says that the church should be a ① “community of missionary disciples.”
13. **Why is being a disciple a good way of life?**
14. There are five good reasons to be living as a disciple: ① **We all follow someone.** The examples of superfans might be unusual, but the truth is we are all centring our lives on something or someone. 24 hours a day. As one writer puts it, ① “...if we don’t disciple, *then the culture sure will*, and it’s doing a good job of it. Consumerism is the alternative religion of our day.” Alan Hirsch. The question isn’t “Am I a disciple?” The question is ① “Who or what is shaping me?”
15. **Becoming fully human.** ① Someone once said that Jesus did not come to make us more religious but came to make us fully human. Orthodox Christians have a beautiful understanding of being a disciple called ① “theosis”. It’s not that we can “become God”, but that as we draw close to God and reflect His love and life more fully, we become alive, more human as humanity was intended to be, because we have allowed God’s life to fill and eventually overwhelm us. ① Discipleship takes us along this road until eventually the (human) mirror is no longer seen, but only the reflected glory of God.
16. **It’s the best life you can find!** Cyrille Regis was the third black player to be capped by England, and a pioneer in the fight against racism in football. He played 614 matches and scored 158 goals in a 19-year professional career with Coventry, West Brom, Aston Villa and Wolves, which also saw him make five appearances for England. He became a Christian when he discovered that ① “... the penny drops. It really sinks in that Christ loves me. He died for me and He rose again from the dead and this awesome sense of peace comes over me.”

17. **Being and making disciples is the Church's central task.** ① The writer Robert Warren states, ① "The best way to grow the church is to grow *people*." In the Roman Catholic Church, writer Sherry Weddell says, "...we have seen it happen over and over. *The presence of a significant number of disciples changes everything*: a parish's spiritual tone, energy level, attendance, bottom line, and what parishioners ask of the leaders." So the truth is ① if we focus on being and making disciples first, the rest will follow. Can we agree with this...? "The best decision anyone can ever make, at any point in life, in any circumstances, whoever they are, wherever they are, is to become a disciple of Jesus Christ." Archbishop Justin Welby

### 18. What was the life of a disciple in Christ's day? What's the aim of discipleship?

19. In Christ's day, and in the early church, disciples would live with and follow their rabbi so closely it was difficult to know where the life of the rabbi ended and the disciple's life started. Jewish people said, "May you be covered with the dust of your rabbi..." May you be walking so closely with them, listening from them, watching them that at the end of each day you would be covered with the dust they kick up from the road in front of you. Discipleship-following would lead to change – a transformation in every aspect of who we are, how we think, how we act. The best way of describing what this feels like, is to think of being an apprentice to someone. This would involve three things:

20. **Being with:** ① Obviously if you want to learn from a "teacher" the first thing will be that you spend as much time with them as possible.

21. **Becoming like:** ① Over time you will start to become like them – their character will shape yours, their responses and thoughts will become part of the way you tick. Character change is a key part of being a disciple, and in fact, of being more fully human. This is precisely the hope that Paul expresses to the early Christians. "May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation – *the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ* – for this will bring much glory and praise to God." Philippians 1:9-11, NLT

22. **Joining in with:** ① The apprentice will gradually take on the work of the teacher and do things the way the teacher does them. An ① "important way of putting this is to say that I am learning from Jesus to live my life as *he would live life if he were I*. I am not necessarily learning to do everything he did, but I am learning how to do *everything I do in the manner in which he did all that he did*." Dallas Willard.

23. The aim of discipleship is always about change. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul exclaimed, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Cor 5.17). **(Here we have a video break and discussion time).**

### 24. How are these aims reflected in the Way of Discipleship?

25. The Way of Discipleship is helping people to become apprentices, ① who are being with God ①, becoming like Christ ①, and joining in with the Spirit. ① There is information, but this is much more about changing as we live, and learning as we follow. The four modules are focussed on these three aspects of being an apprentice, and having 'Bible confidence' by understanding how the Bible works ①, how to listen to God through it, and how the story of your life is shaped by God's story.

### 26. I understand becoming like Christ, and joining in doing the things God does, but how do I grow in being "with God"?

27. It's easy to see how the early disciples could be "with Jesus", but what do we mean by being with God now, in our daily lives? Firstly, it's important to know that God *is already with you*. Our part everyday in being 'with God' is to be aware of Spirit. Making time to 'abide' in Jesus (John 15). Dallas Willard puts it this way: ① "The first and most basic thing we can and must do is to *keep God before our minds*. This is the fundamental secret of caring for our souls ① ... as we take intentional steps toward keeping God before us. Soon our minds will return to God as the needle of a compass constantly returns to the north. If God is the great longing of our souls, He will become the pole star of our inward beings."

28. If God is always with us, the first thing an apprentice does is to *pay attention*. ① Listening to God and responding to Him IS the heart of being a disciple. Our first module is all about this, and as we journey together, we will always be seeking to help each other pay attention. That's why Archbishop Rowan Williams believes, being a disciple means to be ① someone who keeps watching, listening and learning. There's no magic, or celebrity, or certificates to it. Just watching, listening and learning as an ongoing process.

29. How does this Chinese painting of the disciple Mary being with Jesus speak to you about "being with" God?

### 30. How do the modules "work"? How do disciples grow?

31. "From my desk at college," writes Shane Claiborne, "it looked like some time back we had stopped living Christianity and just started studying it. If we are to make disciples, we must do more than help people acquire

- biblical and theological information. ① Our task is not simply to study the Word of God; *it's to get it off the page and into our lives...it is meant to change us and change the people around us.*"
32. To grow in this way there are (at least) four important elements. We need the *information and to be taught*. Jesus' method has parallels in the way people learn a new language. Firstly, it obviously involves knowing some vocabulary and grammar. There is a body of information to be absorbed. Similarly, Jesus taught His apprentices in that He gave them information. The Sermon on the Mount, Lord's Prayer, parables, the greatest commandment. They needed their minds shaped to understand what relationship God wanted with them, and the mission they were invited into. By and large, we are very good at this in church circles and in society. But what is more helpful in actually being able to use a language is being able to listen to people speaking it, and to *imitate* them, sometimes with unintended results. *Information alone won't make you a speaker.*
33. *Modelling and imitation* ① *is at the heart of apprentice-style learning*. Jesus inviting his disciples to live life as He lived it. He *demonstrated* everything He taught – how to pray, to heal, to teach, to love enemies. They learnt by observing Him. Most famously He did this at the last supper, when having washed their feet He said, " ① So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." I would say that the people who have had most influence on me are the ones whose lives I have sought to imitate. *Discipleship is more caught than taught.*
34. But I'll tell you how language really improves. By living in the country! *When you have to actually use your knowledge, improvise, immerse yourself in the culture, down the market, in the college, the words you have read on the page, and repeated after other people, actually start to become a living language.* Jesus taught his apprentices, he demonstrated, but then He sent them out on His mission. They learnt on the way. It's common educational wisdom in action: as the Chinese proverb says, ① "Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I'll remember. ① Involve me, I'll understand."
- 35. Can I really be a disciple?**
36. If we are not asking this question sometimes, then we are probably not paying attention...But the answer is, of course! ... Like Peter, *most of the disciples have their successes and failures.*
37. The disciples Jesus chose came from the *bottom of the social ladder*.
38. God always *starts where you are at* ① – you never need to wait until you are "ready". ① They were called disciples from day one – learners as they followed.
39. *We come to God, and we grow, in different ways.* There are four stories in the book of Acts which illustrate some of these different journeys. Some come because of the influence of a *particular person* – see Philip and the Ethiopian – Acts 8: 26-39. Some grow up as disciples, *inheriting faith* from their family – see the Philippian jailer story in Acts 16: 22-34. Some are *gradually drawn into church* and start the Way of Discipleship step by step – see the life of the early church in Acts 2: 42-47. Some hear a message and *the penny drops in a moment* - see Paul preaching to people who have never heard before in Acts 17: 22-34.  
① *We go through different stages in life, and on our faith journey.* There is a two page document on this if you want to study further.
40. Finally we change through *training*, not trying. The Way of Discipleship is about *training us in ways of life* that help us transform over time.
- 41. Can we really disciple each other?**
42. Jesus told us to "make disciples". The call was given to *every* disciple. But we may worry that we don't have the right to apprentice others, as we either don't feel worthy, or we don't want to judge others. There is a balance here. We certainly can't judge anyone, both because of our own state, and because we can never truly know what is happening in someone's heart. But just because we can't see what's happening inside, as Sherry Wedell writes, " ① Conversion and true faith are works of the Holy Spirit. *But it is also true that we can, by our responses, help or hinder another's journey.*"
43. We can help others, or we can hinder them. ① Paul knew that he was a model for others, so when writing to his disciples in Corinth he said simply: ① "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) Bob Ronglien writes, "The call to make disciples is a call to point people towards Jesus by the fallible example of our lives. If people are only imitating us, they will get a degraded version of Jesus. ① People don't need a perfect example of Jesus - they just need a living example. Paul would not let Timothy use his age as an excuse for not inviting people to imitate him."