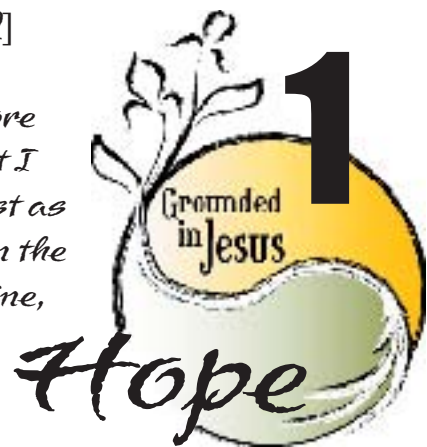


¹"I am the true vine, and [God] is the vinegrower. ²[God] removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit [God] prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine,



What Are Your Hopes?

Hang or space out seven large sheets of paper or poster board around class area. Place markers at each one. On each of the papers write one of the following phrases.

- Hope for yourself
- Hope for camp
- Hope for family
- Hope for school/friends
- Hope for community
- Hope for church
- Hope for world

"Carry You"

by Amy Grant

Provide time for everyone to write their own comments on each of the seven papers. Review and discuss answers as a whole class.

What Is Hope?

Create a definition for hope. For background understanding ask small groups or individuals to check out references.

- Dictionary
- Bible dictionary
- Bible references →

-Matthew 12:21
 -John 15:1
 -1 Peter 1:3
 -Galatians 5:5
 -Romans 5:2-5
 -Romans 8:24-25
 -Romans 12:12
 -1 Corinthians 13:13
 -Colossians 1:4-5
 -Colossians 1:23
 -1 Thessalonians 1:3
 -Hebrews 11:1

Hope is basic to our Christian view of life. Faith and love spring from hope. What is the difference between your hope as a disciple of Christ and the hope society portrays for our world? How are they the same?

A Disciple's Response

Break into small groups. Assign each group one or two posters to review. Give each group a large piece of paper or poster board and markers. Explain that their task is to look at the hopes on the sheet written earlier by the class and decide how they as disciples of Christ can and should respond. Each group should report back their ideas to the rest of the class through poster, descriptive list, ad, song, or skit. Following each group's presentation let the rest of the class add their ideas for ways they can respond.

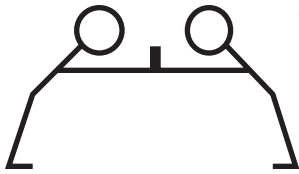
In all of the places in our lives where we are afraid, anxious, discouraged, guilt-ridden, or alienated, Jesus Christ speaks "peace" and opens the way to peace, not just for individuals, but for the whole of creation.

—Steven Veazey, Community of Christ President
2005 World Conference Sermon

People are living, acting, and reacting out of fear rather than hope. The cause of Zion, the peaceable kingdom, is a compelling, desperately needed vision of hope for creation that we are called to lift up and proclaim with all of the energy and resources we can muster.

Hope Requires Trust

To allow oneself to hope requires letting go. It requires trust. Do the following trust exercises to explore how fear and lack of trust can keep us from accepting the hope of Jesus Christ.



TRUST LEAN

Break group into pairs. Have them stand facing each other, arms outstretched in front of them, touching palm to palm. Carefully pairs begin to walk their feet backwards while relying on the support of their hand-to-hand partnership.

TRUST FALL

Practice the "spotter" and "faller" stances before breaking into pairs.

Spotter: Place one foot in front of the other, arms extended, "give" with the weight of person falling, taking it mostly through the legs.



Faller: Stand upright, feet together. Cross arms over chest. Keep body stiff.



Break into pairs. Take turns spotting and falling. Spotter and faller should take position and then when ready to catch the spotter should ask: "Are you ready?" If the faller is prepared to fall they should respond by saying, "Ready."

CIRCLE FALL

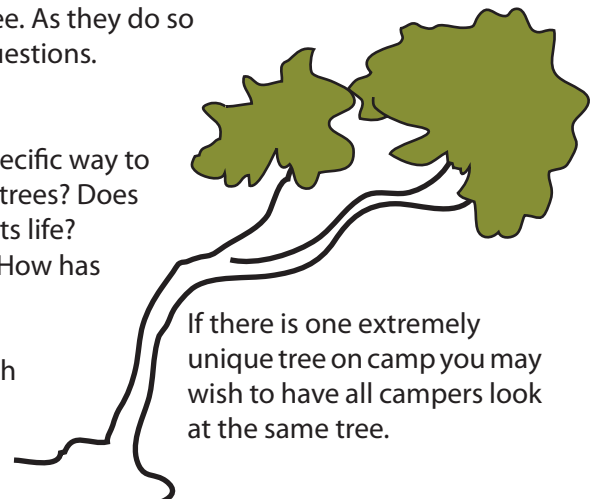
Break into groups of about eight. Stand in a circle, facing inward, shoulder to shoulder with one person in the middle. Persons in the circle take the "spotter" stance. The person in the middle takes the "faller" stance. When everyone is ready the center person falls into the circle and is passed back and forth around the circle by the "spotters."

An Example of Hope: the Tree

Move class to a location where trees can be observed. Ask everyone to spread out and explore the trees—stand back and look at them, touch them, walk around them, sit under them. Give each person a tablet* of paper and pencil to describe or sketch their chosen tree. As they do so guide them through the process with the following questions.

- What are unique qualities of this tree?
- Are there signs of struggle in its life? Does it lean a specific way to get light, has it grown straight and tall between other trees? Does it have scars from broken branches or other events in its life?
- How has the tree compensated and moved forward. How has it continued to grow strong?
- What stories do the roots of the tree tell?
- How is the tree an example of hope? What can it teach you about hope?

*Personal class journals can be used.



If there is one extremely unique tree on camp you may wish to have all campers look at the same tree.

Digging Deeper

¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches.
—John 15:1–5
NRSV

Focus on John 15:1–5. The image is strong. Spread a vine (an artificial one will work if you cannot find one around camp) for all to see. Examine it. What is the purpose of the roots, the vine, the branches? Discuss and research the following points.

- Gospel of John has several long dialogues of Jesus. This one is focused on Jesus preparing his disciples for his departure from them.¹
- The vine image can also be found in the Old Testament: Isaiah 5:1–7; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezek 19:10–14; Hosea 10:1. For God as vine grower see Isaiah 5:5–6.²
- "To bear fruit" is a common Old Testament image for the community's faithfulness (e.g. Psalm 1:3). Here "to bear fruit" is to keep Jesus' commandment to do acts of love.³
- The "I am" saying links Jesus self-revelation to God.⁴
- The greek word for "pruning" (kathairein) can mean "cleansing."⁶
- "Abide in me as I abide in you." The "abiding" theme has already been used in John to speak of believers continuing relationship with Jesus. The vine and branches metaphor is used to express the necessity and nature of Jesus relationship with his disciples. It is a unity that does not exist without the disciples choice of participation.⁷

1. Interpretation Bible Studies, Mark A. Matson, Westminster John Knox Press, 1998, Louisville, Kentucky, 90–91.

2. The New Interpreter's Study Bible New Revised Standard Version, Abingdon Press, 2003 Nashville, TN, page 1938.

3. Ibid., 1938.

4. Ibid., 1938.

5. Interpretation Bible Studies, Mark A. Matson, Westminster John Knox Press, 1998, Louisville, Kentucky, 90–91.

6. HarperCollins Bible Commentary, James Mays, HarperCollins Publisher, New York, 2000, page 979.

7. Ibid., 979.

Flowers of Hope

Plant a flower bed of flowers, some already blooming, some with buds, some not yet started. As the class prepares the flower bed soil appropriately for the region discuss the importance of the proper soil, water, and nutrients for the flowers' growth. Look at the roots of the plants. What is the purpose of the roots? (to feed the plants, to ground them, to give them strength, to hold them firmly, to support them) Compare the roots of the flowers to what it means to be grounded in

Voice of Truth

Play the video "Voice of Truth" by Casting Crowns from the WOW Hits 2006 DVD. Following the video provide time for individuals to write their reactions and thoughts in a personal journal (kept by teacher for use in each day's class).

⁹As [God] has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept [God's] commandments and abide in [God's] love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹²"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for



Love, Love, Love

Decorate the area with hearts, red balloons, and other things that make us think "love." Give each person a chocolate candy as they enter and sit down. Have music playing in the background that sounds sweetly romantic.

Ask the class to define love. Write thoughts down on a flipchart. As the various types of love begin to emerge tear off the first sheet, hang it for all to see, then start a new sheet. On the second sheet categorize types of love: romantic love, parental love, family love, friendship love, compassionate love, God's love.

Agápe is a greek word that expresses God's love for humankind. In the New Testament Jesus lived out agápe love. Through his actions he showed the people what it meant to truly love as God loved them.

Break into small groups, giving each group several Bibles, a piece of flipchart paper, and a marker. Their assignment is to look through the gospels to discover examples where Jesus lived out agápe love. Let each small group report back to the whole class.

Love Posters

This activity can be done in small groups or a whole class with everyone working together. Provide a wide variety of pop-culture magazines: teen magazines, bridal magazines, womens/mens magazines, health and fitness magazines, etc. Also provide a variety of news and world culture magazines: National Geographic, weekly news magazines, parent magazines, Christian magazines, youthworker magazines, outreach and mission magazines, etc. Large sheets of paper, scissors, tape, and/or glue sticks will also be needed.

The goal of this activity is to create two posters:

- Poster one represents love as media and pop-culture portrays and encourages.
- Poster two reflects love as Jesus commanded us to live.

Compare and discuss finished posters. What difficulties are associated with both kinds of love? Let persons share testimonies of times when they experienced agápe love.

Jesus Christ had a full depth of understanding regarding God's vision for creation. That is why he opposed the dominant religious and political trends of his day that were counter to God's purposes. That is why he ate with sinners, healed the unclean, reconciled the guilty. That is why he tended to the needs of the poor, and called people from all walks of life to a new kind of compassionate, peaceful community grounded in the love of God, self, and neighbor.

—Steven Veazey, Community of Christ President, 2005 World Conference Sermon

A Disciple's Response

To talk about loving as Jesus loved is one thing, to actually react with that kind of love in real life situations is another. Role play the following situations and discuss potential responses. A few connecting references to Jesus' lessons, parables, or actions are given for each example. What others might apply? How does Jesus' lesson on love translate into today's world? Today's world is different than when Jesus said and did these things. Would his advice and/or actions differ today? If so, how and why?

- There is a group of kids, who won't leave you alone. They are always making fun of you; pushing you in the halls; taking your things; and trying to get you in trouble. They even threaten to hurt you. (Matthew 5:38-48, Luke 6:27-36)
- You have always tried to be a good kid. You do good in school, you follow the household rules, you don't smoke, drink, or do drugs, you are active at church, and you try to help whenever your parents ask. Your sister on the other hand is just the opposite. For her rules are meant to be broken. She is seldom home, spending days at a time away. She borrows money and never pays it back, steals your stuff and hocks it for money, and never acknowledges any of it. Her schoolwork is a joke and her life is all about friends and parties. She does work at the local store and claims she loves her family. Every time she tries to come back to the family and "be good" your parents seem to bend over backwards to help her and be nice to her. To you it always just feels like a way for her to get more money so she can leave again. (Luke 15:11-32)
- A new family has started attending your church. They have just moved into a nearby neighborhood that by most standards is considered quiet poor. The family consist of a mother and three kids, one is your age. They seem nice enough but their clothes speak volumes about their economic situation. The first Sunday they attend there is a potluck so you get a chance to spend quite a bit of time with the one your age. You actually have a lot in common. The next day while standing around talking to your school friends your new church friend walks by. The school friends immediately begin talking about this person, what he/she is wearing, what he/she looks like, smells, like, etc. They even say that they heard his/her father is in prison for something. (Luke 19:1-10)

The Golden Rule

www.humanitarian.net/interfaith/goldenrule.html

While not all faiths believe in Christ, all of the great world religions offer a standard saying that reflects a very similar teaching of love. Write a version of the golden rule that will speak to you today.

Baha'i

Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.—Baha'u'llah Gleanings

Buddhism

"Treat not others in ways that yourself would find hurtful.—Udana-Varga 5:18

Christianity

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets."—Matthew 7:12 NRSV

Hinduism

This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.
—Mahabharata 5:1517

Islam

Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.
—The Prophet Mohammed, Hadith

Judaism

What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary.
—Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a

Sikhism

I am no stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.
—Guru Granth Sahib, 1299

Taoism

Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.—T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218

Unitarianism

We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent of all existence of which we are a part.—Unitarian principle

My Dear, if You Love Me, Please Smile

Play this game for a look at a more silly side of love. Sit in a circle. One person is “it.” “It” must choose someone to say the words, “My Dear, if you love me, please smile.” After the words are said to them, the person listening must say, “You know I love you but I just can’t smile.” This interchange happens three times, or until the person answering laughs. If a person laughs, they become it. If they do not, “it” moves to another person.

Flowers of Hope

Check on the flower bed planted the day before. If one was not planted, consider planting one today. Decide whether the flowers need watered. If any appear to have fallen over they may need to be replanted or supported with more soil supporting it. Talk about the balance of a plants life and our life. Love and nourishment can come from inside, but we also need to be nourished from relationships outside ourselves. Just as plants need external source for water, we need to love and be loved by others. Jesus taught us the meaning of compassionate, unjudging love. His life and ministry was the ultimate example

Voice of Truth

Show the video “Unchanging One” by Todd Agnew from the WOWHits 2006 DVD. Following the video provide time for individuals to write their reactions and thoughts in a personal journal (kept by teacher for use in each day’s class).

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.

¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.

¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹²This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

—John 15:9–13 NRSV

Digging Deeper

Focus on John 15:9–13. Here, as in many other places, Jesus expresses his commandment, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” Have the group skim through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John for other times Jesus talked to his followers and disciples about love.

Discuss and research the following points.

- For Jesus the relationship between God, himself, and the community of believers must be intertwined and shaped by love. God’s love for Jesus mirrors Jesus love for his disciples¹
- What does it mean to love as Jesus loved?
- Remember this is part of Jesus’ farewell to his disciples. He is trying to prepare them for life without him. So for Jesus his ultimate sacrifice of love is death. How does this translate for you as a disciple, trying to follow his commandments of love?
- Jesus refers to the disciples as friends. A more literal translation of the Greek work *philos* (friend) is “loved one.”² How would you define friend?
- If you love Jesus, you will know that same love for others. This is the core of Jesus’ self-revelation: self-giving love.³
- Friendship is a two-way street. If the disciples wish to be a part of Jesus’ circle of friends, then they will keep his commandment of loving God and loving others.
- What does John 3:16—“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life”—combined with the message of John 15 say about the author of John’s understanding of Jesus’ purpose and mission? What about God’s attitude toward humanity?⁴

1. The New Interpreter’s Study Bible New Revised Standard Version, Abingdon Press, 2003 Nashville, TN, page 1939.

2. Ibid.

3. 1. Interpretation Bible Studies, Mark A. Matson, Westminster John Knox Press, 1998, Louisville, Kentucky, 96.

4. Ibid., 97..

14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these



I Chose You

Prior to class ask each person to do a simple task that will help start today's class. Try to match people with tasks they will enjoy and appreciate. It is important to note that individuals do not have to accept the challenge and if they do they may have some extra work/practice to do before the next class.

Following are a few suggestions. Adapt and add to these to make them work for your class.

- Create a worship center.
- Prepare a song to sing as part of a duet, quartet, small choir.
- Read today's scripture.
- Write a poem or song about being a disciple.
- Write a short, positive note to assigned individuals.
- create positive "fortune cookie" sayings that relate to being a disciple of Christ.

Start class with the tasks assigned the day before. Following everyone's presentation of ministry discuss the activity.

- What does it feel like to be chosen?
- How does the act of being specially chosen effect your attitude, response, and sense of responsibility?
- Was it easier or harder to do this because you knew someone believed you could do it?
- How does it make you feel and/or respond knowing that you have been

All Walks of Life

Break into at least four small groups. Make sure each group has at several Bibles (New Testaments) to use. Assign each group one of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—to find persons who were disciples/followers of Jesus. Allow ten minutes for this exercise. If more than one group has the same book, assign one groups separate chapters. Make a list on poster board or flip chart paper with names and person's "walks of life" as identifiable from the text.

Peter—Fisherman
 Nicodemus—Pharisee
 Woman at the well—Samaritan divorcee
 Zaccheaus—tax collector

Allow time for smaller groups to report back to the larger group. In the larger class setting create a list of "walks of life" that you encounter in your school, your community, on the news, and in the world that one might assume would not be a follower of Jesus. Discuss why we might make those assumptions and how and why Jesus would think differently. What would Jesus asks of us as disciples when we encounter persons from "walks of life" different from our own?

The call of discipleship is the call to attach our lives fully and completely to Jesus Christ—heart, mind, and soul. Discipleship must be grounded in intentional spiritual formation that centers us in the presence of God, where we find inner peace. It is out of the depth and overflow of this peace that we find the capacity to cope with life and to extend ourselves in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world.

—Steven Veazey, Community of Christ President
 2005 World Conference Sermon

Holding Hands

Play a two team relay until frustration or “winning” occurs. Discuss the difference between the two teams. Relate to relationships with Jesus, family, friends, etc.

Team 1: Form a seat by holding hands—fingers only—with a partner. Have a third person sit on the seat and be carried from point to point.

Team 2: Hold hands with a partner to form a seat but this time intertwine hands by crossing them and holding onto wrist not fingers. Have a third person to sit on the seat.

For more information on Redwoods: www.savetrees.org/2520primer.htm

The coastal redwoods, *Sequoia sempervirens*, in the western United States is a magnificent specimen of tree. It is the tallest living species on Earth. The tallest tree lives in Big Basin Redwoods State Park. It is 367.8 feet tall and 44 feet around the base.

Redwoods do not die of old age. They have very few natural enemies—the worst being humans and their chain saws. While some fungi and beetles can cause damage, no disease is known to kill them. The oldest recorded redwood lived to more than 2200 years. A single large tree may produce millions of seeds in a year but only one in a million will like every become a mature tree.

One would expect such tall, massive, old trees to have an extremely deep and strong root system. However, while the root system may spread out 125 feet, it’s depth is only about four to six feet! How does it survive? Roots of individual redwoods frequently intertwine with one another as if holding hands. This network of roots creates a strength that supports the trees in even the largest of storms.

The life of a young disciple can be similar to the redwoods. At times it may seem like the roots that hold you strong don’t go very deep. Your relationship with Christ is growing and maturing, even as you are called to bear fruit as a disciple. So how do you stay strong. Connect with one another. Go to camp. Connect with a congregation who will support and mentor you. Become active in good activities with good people. Find a youth group that help each other grow and serve the Lord together. Recognize that sometimes our roots of understanding are not very deep, but there are other disciples waiting to hold your hand and hold you up.

A Disciple’s Response

Spiritual formation requires active participation. Set up the following stations for individuals to experience spiritual exercises that can help them become more grounded in intentional spiritual formation.

LECTIO DEVINO

Make a copies of the worksheet (page 9) for individuals to use to guide them through the reflective study process of lectio devino.

LABYRINTH

Create a labyrinth for individuals to walk through as a personal centering prayer.

CONFESSION

Create a small campfire in a meditative place. Provide paper and pencil for individuals to write a personal letter of confession to God. Finished letters should be placed in the fire as a gesture of accepting God’s forgiveness.

LISTEN

Create a comfortable atmosphere with soft pillows and blankets. Play reflective music for quiet listening. Journal if desired.

MEDITATION

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Place hands in lap.
- Breathe in deeply.
- Breathe out deeply.
- With each breath in say the words, “fill me.”
- With each breath out say, “ground me.”
- Repeat over and over, focusing only on the words. Keep the mind free of processing, worrying, planning, or evaluation. Just be and let God fill you.

Lectio Devino (Spiritual Reading)

LECTIO DEVINO IS THE ANCIENT METHOD OF PRAYING THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES.
IT INVOLVES BOTH HEART AND HEAD TO DISCERN GOD'S WORD IN US.

Step 1: Reading (Lectio)

- Slowly read through the scripture passage.
- Circle any word or phrase that attracts your attention.
- Read it again and again. This is slow motion reading, don't rush!
- Savor the richness of the word or phrase you have circled.

Step 2: Reflecting (Meditatio)

- Reflect on the meaning of your word or phrase.
- What images, memories, feelings, thoughts, or connections with other scripture passages arise?
- Let yourself dialogue with this portion of scripture.

Step 3: Responding (Oratio)

- Allow your heart to respond to God's invitation.
- Is God calling you to joy? expectation? sorrow? confession?
- Voice your experience to God in prayer.

Step 4: Resting & Receiving (Contemplatio)

- Be quiet in God's presence.
- Do not try to force any lesson or insight from God.

¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

—John 15:14-17

adapted from www.rca.org/disciples/spirituality/lectio.html



Digging Deeper

¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.
—John 15:14–17
NRSV

Focus on John 15:14–17. Here, as in many other places, Jesus expresses his commandment, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” Have the group skim through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John for other times Jesus talked to his followers and disciples about love.

Discuss and research the following points.

- For Jesus the relationship between God, himself, and the community of believers must be intertwined and shaped by love. God’s love for Jesus mirrors Jesus love for his disciples.¹
- What does it mean to love as Jesus loved?
- Remember this is part of Jesus’ farewell to his disciples. He is trying to prepare them for life without him. So for Jesus his ultimate sacrifice of love is death. How does this translate for you as a disciple, trying to follow his commandments of love?
- Jesus refers to the disciples as friends. A more literal translation of the Greek word *philos* (friend) is “loved one.”² How would you define friend?
- If you love Jesus, you will know that same love for others. This is the core of Jesus’ self-revelation: self-giving love.³
- Friendship is a two-way street. If the disciples wish to be a part of Jesus’ circle of friends, then they will keep his commandment of loving God and loving others.
- What does John 3:16—“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life”—combined with the message of John 15 say about the author of John’s understanding of Jesus’ purpose and mission? What about God’s attitude toward humanity?⁴

You Are Mine

Show the video “You Are Mine” by Third Day® from the WOWHits 2006 DVD. Following the video provide time for individuals to write their reactions and thoughts in a

²⁶"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.



Defining Peace

Peace is a tricky word and an even harder reality. It carries different definitions, hopes, and even values for different people. Set up for a mural using long sheets of newsprint or flipchart paper taped together. Sidewalks and chalk can also be used. Ask the class to create a mural that expresses their vision and definitions of peace. Pictures, words, and phrases may all be used.

Disciple's Response

Jesus ministry was all about relationships. If we as disciples are called to "BE the peace of Jesus in this world," then we must understand that peace is about relationships. For the purposes of this lesson those relationships will be divided into four areas.

1. The personal relationship between ourself and God
2. Relationships between two or more individuals
3. Relationships between countries, cultures, governments
4. Relationships between humankind and all of God's creation including the earth, plants, animals, etc

Take another look at the mural. As a group assign a number to the various examples and visions of peace shown in the class mural. Is one area of peace more prominently displayed than another? Discuss why this might be. Do youth feel less responsible or involved in some areas more than others? Were these the areas depicted in the mural? Why or why not?

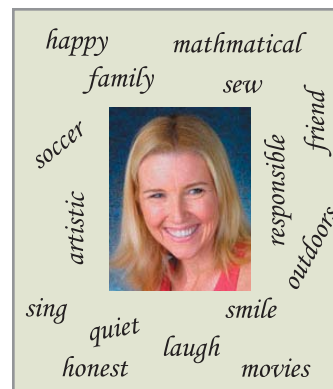
Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group one of the four areas of peace to concentrate on. The task of each group is to make a list of ten things youth can do that will make a positive impact on peace in their assigned area. Reinforce that the things on this list should be everyday things that each person can reasonably do. Have groups share their lists with the whole class.

And this is my testimony. As I am becoming increasingly rooted and grounded in Christ, I am finding, at the center of my being, peace—abiding peace—that passes understanding. This peace is not a passive peace. It is a peace that frees me to relate and act in ways that are counter to many of the destructive attitudes and trends so common today. It is an all-encompassing peace that assures me that in life or death I belong to Christ. Therefore, I do not need to be afraid.

—Steven Veazey
Community of Christ President
2005 World Conference Sermon

Peace Skills: Honor Others, Honor Yourself

Take a digital picture of each person and print before class. Mount the picture in the middle of a picture frame mat. Give each person their picture and ask them to write words or phrases that represent them on the mat around their picture. Explain that it is important in our relationship with God and ourselves to acknowledge the value and worth within us all. If this task seems difficult for individuals add to it by having



CRAFT IDEA:
Create
frames from
grape vine.

Peace Skills: Learn to Listen

The following lists represent good listening habits and poor listening habits. Use role play to better understand their consequences. Write down each of the following listening habits on a slip of paper. Let teams of two or three draw a slip of paper and act out the listening situation. They decide how to play it out. These should be short and go quickly. Others in class will try to guess what they are doing right and/or wrong.

LISTENING TRAPS

- self-absorbed: "the know-it-all", everything centers around them
- unfocused: always in process of moving on to another task or thought
- selective: only hears what they want to hear
- closed-minded: refuses to hear because their mind is already made up
- judgmental: judges on previous opinions not on shared information
- impatient: interrupts person speaking
- nit-picky: concentrates on style, language, and delivery not content
- distracted: more aware of surrounding than speaker

POSITIVE LISTENING TIPS

- find a commonality
- use eye contact
- watch body language
- think before you react
- ask questions to clarify
- avoid dead-end (yes/no) questions
- keep emotions in check
- reflect back what you hear and feel

Peace Skills: Listening Circles

Explain and practice the method of a listening circle. The purpose of listening circles is to dialogue, not debate. It is about creating a "safe space" where people can be honest and know that they will not be punished for anything they say or feel. It is not about decision-making or even compromising. The goal of listening circles is to provide opportunity for participants to better understand the opinions, beliefs, values, and perspectives of others without judging whether or not they are right or wrong. Choose a topic associated with peace.

BASIC RULES

1. Invite God's presence into the process.
2. The facilitator establishes the topic.
3. Each person has opportunity to speak three to five minutes on topic.
4. Speak for oneself instead of one's "side." Speak as "I" not "we." Avoid generalizations.
5. When one person speaks, others silently listen. No person should be interrupted (except by the facilitator if time is an issue.)
5. Everyone's opinion is valued and respected. Questions are asked for clarification and information only.
6. Everyone in the circle has opportunity to speak if they wish. No one has to speak.

Digging Deeper

²⁶"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.
²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.

—John
14:26–27

The scripture for this lesson comes from John 14, verses 26–27. While it is the only scripture used from chapter 14, it is part of the same dialogue between Jesus and his disciples as chapter 15.

- What was the purpose of this dialogue? What was Jesus preparing the disciples for?
- Jesus is sometimes referred to as the "Prince of Peace." Yet he was also thought of as a rebel, one who defied rules that were unjust, he befriended persons his culture and society looked down upon, and he challenged his disciples to shake things up. How does Jesus style of peace translate into today's society? What "rules" do we live by that need to be questions? What customs, traditions, laws?
- Does everyone agree that the same issues of peace need to be addressed and that they should be addressed in the same way? Why not?

Does it uphold the rights and value of all creation?

- What basic standards of Jesus can we use to judge our own actions of peace?

In all of the places in our lives where we are afraid, anxious, discouraged, guilt-ridden, or alienated, Jesus Christ speaks "peace" and opens the way to peace, not just for individuals, but for the whole of creation.

—Steven Veazey, Community of Christ
President
2005 World Conference Sermon

Rooted in Strength

Cut off the top of a two-liter clear plastic pop bottle. Place about 1/2" of dirt in the bottom. Place four beans around the outside edges of the bottle where they can be easily watched. Mix together plaster of Paris (two cups) to little water until the plaster is like thick cream. Gently pour the mixture over the dirt and beans. Make sure that the beans remain under the surface but close enough to the edge that they can be watched. When the plaster dries it will be as hard as a rock. Keep the plaster moist by sprinkling it with water each day. In a few days the plaster will break up from the beans growing through them.



Show the class the example of the strength of a plant that is strongly rooted, determined, and growing. Discuss what it is like to seek peace in today's world. What does it take to break through the surface?

Healing Rain

Show the video "Healing Rain" by Michael W. Smith from the WOWHits 2006 DVD.

While the video is playing, start softly misting sprinklers outside the area, but within view, of the class. Following the video, challenge everyone to identify in their journal—or just in their heart—one specific thing that is currently standing in their way of being the peace of Jesus. Play the video again, but this time, when they feel ready they are invited to go out into the sprinklers and stand in the healing rain. Explain that this experience is their personal prayer. Let the healing rain wash away the barriers and flood you with the hope, forgiveness, guidance, openness, guidance, or freedom that you need. Let yourself be healed so that you may be the peace of Jesus.

26" When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you, the Spirit of truth who comes from God, will testify on my behalf. 27" You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.



Rings of Testimony

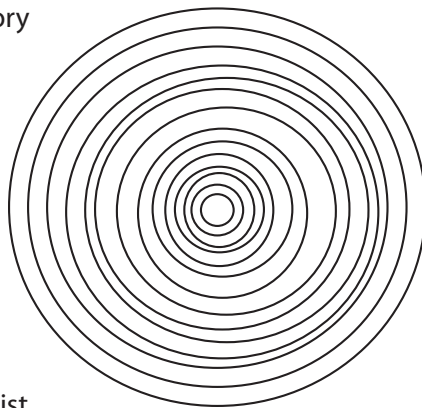
The rings of a tree testify of its life story. The study of this is called dendrochronology. Give each person a slice of a tree (or look at logs waiting to be used for campfire).

A few clues to Dendrochronology:

- 1 year = a light ring + a dark ring
- Darker lines represent the end of a growing season, the light rings are formed during the height of the growing season (spring/summer)
- The ring closest to the center is the oldest growth ring (1 year old)
- In drier seasons narrow rings are formed.
- In good growing conditions wide rings are formed.
- Uneven rings can be a result of uneven sun exposure or wind.
- Clues of insect, fire, erosion, etc. can also be seen in the rings.

Break into pairs and study the story their tree has to share. Provide opportunity to share unique findings with the whole group.

Compare the rings of the tree with our personal testimony. A testimony is sharing your story with others. It is the telling of what has happened, what one knows, believes, and has experienced. To testify of Christ is to share with others your faith journey through words and actions. It is to tell others of the story of your walk with Jesus. Give each person a permanent thin tip marker. Have them use the slice of wood to record some of the events in their life that are now part of their testimony with Christ. If wood slices are not available, create a worksheet of rings and give each person a copy to use.



born...first went to church...blessed...baptized...very sick...went to school...overcame a fear...made a new friend...a special teacher...camp...a prayer answered...

We are called to share the peace of Jesus Christ, the fullness of the gospel, with all who will hear and respond. We are called to bear witness, through word and deed, of the cause of Zion, the peaceable kingdom, the vision of hope for this desperate world.

—Steven Veazey, Community of Christ President
2005 World Conference Sermon

Share Your Story

Ask the class to get into new pairs to share and explain the story told by the rings of their life with each other.

Pray for One Another

In pairs pray for each other, for their journey as a disciple with Christ, and for their awareness of the testimony

Check the Garden

Check the flower garden planted at the first of the week. Does it need water? Any other care? Has it changed since it was planted? Have new flowers bloomed? Discuss how this garden will testify to others of your week of camp together.

Testimony Tools

We testify of Christ in our life through many avenues. Sometimes tools (newsletter, brochure, web page, license plates, bumper stickers, T-shirts, poster, songs, poems, stories, artwork, etc.) can open doors of opportunity to testify. Assign the task of designing a testimony tool such as a T-shirt design, web page, bumper sticker, or poster. Teens may work individually or in small groups. Share sample ideas and explain that this is only a rough draft and/or starting idea. Provide paper, markers, pencils, flipcharts, scissors, and glue. Small classes may choose to all do the same project. Share ideas with one another.

Generous Witness

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we accept responsibility for sharing generously with others. Our sharing is in response to the gift of God's love for every person. We share our witness of Jesus Christ and our resources. Sharing with others acknowledges that all we have and are is a gift from God to us. Sharing our witness tells others what Jesus Christ and the church mean to us. Part of our witness as disciples is sharing the news of God's great generosity. God shares in abundance. All that we have and all that we are is a priceless gift to us from God. What then is our response as disciples of Jesus Christ? In simple terms, we respond with thankfulness and share with others as generously as God has shared with us.

For more information on Disciple's Generous Response go to:
www.cofchrist.org/generosity/

How we live our life, how we care for the things God has given us, and how we share our resources is a living testimony of our commitment to being a disciple of Christ. If we allow ourselves to be grounded in Jesus, then generosity is a natural outgrowth. Discuss ways teens can testify through their generosity. List ideas on a flipchart. Give each person a copy of the commitment slip below, a pencil, and a stamped envelope. Ask them to fill out the slip, address the envelope to themselves, and then give it back to you. Explain that in one month you will send the note to them as a reminder of their commitment to generously testify.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ I pledge to generously share in the following ways.

- My testimony:
- My time:
- My talents:
- My resources:

Agency is our ability to choose freely how we respond to God's infinite love and grace. Using our agency wisely allows us to manage our time, giftedness, and resources to benefit our personal, family, congregational, and community life. More specifically, our stewardship of financial resources defines the extent we can generously share, wisely save, and responsibly spend. The following six principles of A Disciple's Generous Response guide us in living out our stewardship of resources:

1. A disciple practices generosity as a spiritual discipline in response to God's grace and love.
2. A disciple is faithful in response to Christ's ministry.
3. A disciple's financial response, while unique to individual circumstances, expresses love of God, neighbor, creation, and oneself.
4. A disciple shares generously through tithing so that others may experience God's generosity.
5. A disciple saves wisely in order to create a better tomorrow for self, family, the church's mission, and the world.
6. A disciple spends responsibly as a commitment to live in health and harmony with God and the world.



Digging Deeper

²⁶“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you, the Spirit of truth who comes from God, will testify on my behalf.

²⁷You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

—John 15:26–27
NRSV adapted

- Jesus was trying to prepare the disciples for his death and resurrection—something they could not yet comprehend or understand. He knew that the unknown brings with it fear and frustration. He was trying to reassure them that he would not leave them alone in a world filled with hatred. What was he sending to them?
- Jesus expected the disciples to continue with his ministry, relying on their experiences with Jesus and the knowledge and understanding he shared with them in their time together. From those experiences they gained testimony to share and knowledge to teach. They literally learned at Jesus’ feet. Where do we today gain this knowledge and witness?
- The Holy Spirit is our every present testimony of Christ Jesus. The Spirit of truth speaks deep within us if we just take time to listen. Ask teens to share testimony of times when the Holy Spirit has testified to them.

Love, Peace, Happiness

Show the video “Love Peace and Happiness” by Out of Eden from the WOWHits 2006 DVD. Following the video provide time for individuals to write their reactions and thoughts in a personal journal. Following today’s class give journals to individuals to keep.