

# Developing a Disciple Formation Growth Plan Lesson for Any Age

**Focus:** *To develop as disciples, a Community of Christ Mission Initiative, students will explore and learn the Practices of Discipleship as a way of following Jesus and living out their discipleship.*

**Focus Scripture:** “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27 NRSV).

**Ages:** *for children, youth, adults, or all ages together*

**Objectives:** *The learners will ...*

- explore the Practices of Discipleship.
- read how Jesus Christ lived out the practices.
- create a Disciple Growth Plan for themselves.

**Materials:** (download at [www.CofChrist.org/dfg](http://www.CofChrist.org/dfg))

- Practices of Discipleship Chart (1 for teacher)
- Disciple Growth Plan for the ages being taught (1 per person)
- Jesus Living the Practices (1 per person)
- Disciple Formation icons (2 of each, approximately 8" x 8")
- 8 sheets of newsprint
- masking or painter’s tape
- markers and pencils



**Prepare before class:**

- Create a large logo of the Practices of Discipleship logo by cutting and pasting the eight icons in a circle like the logo on this page.
- Write “Practices of Discipleship” in the center of the circle.
- Display on a wall in the classroom.

## Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson  
(15% of total lesson time)

Play a “Follow Me” game. Invite students to follow your movements as you circle the room, such as clapping your hands, laughing, hopping, turning around.

Say, “It’s fun to play Follow Me. I believe you play Follow Me often, even when you might not realize you are. It’s when you follow Jesus. Let me show you how.”

Play the game again as leader, again inviting students to follow. This time your actions are folding your hands in prayer, inviting students to join you, and others. Students may volunteer other ideas.

Stop to gather everyone and say that Jesus asked his disciples and others to “Follow Me,” often; it is recorded in the Bible at least 25 times! Read the scripture: “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:2 NRSV).

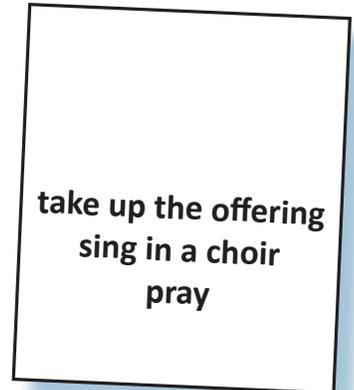
Say, “Today, we will learn together what it means to follow Jesus Christ, to do the things that Jesus did, to find out in how many ways we already follow Jesus, and to plan new ways to follow him.”

# Engage

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of total lesson time)

Tape eight sheets of newsprint onto the walls of the room.

Ask: “What do you do—in church, at home, at camp, or in school, alone or with others—to follow Jesus?” Introduce some ideas such as “giving the offering,” “praying,” or “singing in the choir.” Write these on one of the posters. Be aware that later you will add the name of the practice and the icon to each poster; therefore, write all the ideas for personal spiritual practices (such as prayer, meditating) on one poster, community spiritual practices (such as taking up offering, singing in the choir) on another. List several ideas on each poster.



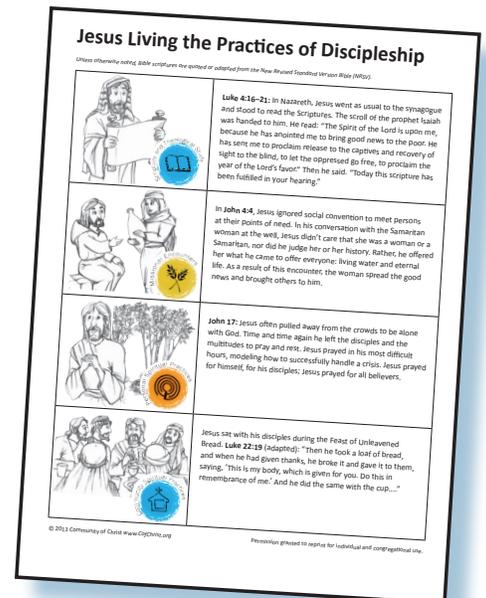
Practices of Discipleship			
Young Children	Children	Teens	Adults
Learn scripture stories.	Study scripture and Community of Christ beliefs.	Study about God through scripture and Community of Christ beliefs.	Responsibly interpret and faithfully apply scripture. Study Community of Christ theology.
Help God by helping others.	Generously share your gifts to help others and the world.	Generously respond to God's love through action.	Apply a Christ-like response to the needs of humanity and creation.
Learn to pray.	Pray and listen to God.	Spend time alone with God.	Closely connect to God through spiritual practices.
Go to church.	Come together to worship and praise God.	Get together with others to worship and praise God.	Closely connect to God and one another through spiritual practices.
Be a friend.	Build friendships.	Know God through friends and mentors.	Develop one-on-one relationships for sharing and accountability as disciples of Jesus Christ.
Be with family and friends.	Be with family and friends.	Share God's love with family and other communities.	Experience fellowship and build relationships in Christian community.
Hear about Jesus' love.	Share your story of God's love.	Hear, tell, and live the sacred story. Share personal and communal stories of God's grace.	Hear, tell, and live the sacred story. Share personal and communal stories of God's grace.
Grow and learn.	Grow your mind.	Learn new ways to be a disciple.	Develop discipleship through specific instruction and training.

Introduce the practices by writing the names of each practice at the top of each poster and taping the appropriate icon to the poster. Use the “Practices of Discipleship” chart to define each practice for the age group you are teaching.

Explain that the **Practices of Discipleship** are what Jesus Christ modeled for us—what we do to follow him as disciples.

Distribute the “Jesus Living the Practices” handout to each student. Ask for volunteers to read each scripture story. As they do, write what Jesus did on the matching newsprint poster. For instance, on “Community Spiritual Practices,” write “Jesus and the Last Supper.”

Invite students to wander about the room and write more ideas on each of the posters—examples of that practice in their lives. What else do they do as a “missional encounter” or “witnessing and storytelling”?



# Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing  
(35% of lesson time)

Give each student a Growth Plan (available for children, youth, and adults). Read some of the ideas from the sample Growth Plans for children, youth or adults.

Now invite students to create their own personal disciple practices for a given time period. You may choose one month, several months, or until the next class time. Circulate among the class to help students, if needed.

*Note: Filling out a complete plan may be too much for some children. If so, choose one or two practices to work on each month.*

Ask students if anyone would like to share any of their ideas with the entire group. They might hear a good idea they want to add to their Growth Plans!

 <b>Scripture and Theological Study</b> Study about God through Scripture and Community of Christ beliefs.	Read online interpretations of scripture and new concepts provided on the church website.
 <b>Missional Encounters</b> Generously respond to God's love through action.	
 <b>Personal Spiritual Practices</b> Spend time alone with God.	While crocheting, empty my mind and let it be at peace. Don't use this time to worry about other things. Just me and my art.
 <b>Community Spiritual Practices</b> Get together with others to worship and praise God.	Visit other faiths, learn about and worship with them. Think about what we believe that's similar, and what's different.
 <b>Personal Relationships</b> Know God through friends and mentors.	
 <b>Shared Experiences in Community</b> Share God's love with family and other communities.	While helping the teacher cut out flannel board characters for Bible stories, share my experiences learning Bible stories as a child.
 <b>Witnessing and Storytelling</b> Hear, tell, and live the story of Jesus Christ.	
 <b>Lifelong Learning</b> Learn new ways to be a disciple.	Become more comfortable learning and trying new things, especially in sports!

# Send

Explores how the lesson might be lived out  
(10% of lesson time)

Encourage students to post their plans at home and read through them occasionally to remind them of their goals. They may also add new ideas.

Note: Plan to meet together soon to hear how they are doing, how they feel about this process, and to make new goals. Always look for opportunities and encourage their development as disciples.

# Bless

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope  
(5% of lesson time)

Gather and sing:

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”      CCS 499  
OR “The Summons”                      CCS 586

Offer a prayer of blessing.