



GRACE COMMUNION
INTERNATIONAL

ON BEING DISCIPLES

Participant guide ———



SESSION 1: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS?



 **Big Idea:** Disciples follow Jesus by learning and living what he taught.

 **Key Scripture:** Luke 9:23-26

Opening Reflection:

Use this space to reflect on the opening question or icebreaker.

Key Scripture Notes:

What stood out to you during the reading? What insights or questions did the group raise?

 **Discussion Highlights**

Use this space to jot down ideas, takeaways, or stories shared in discussion.

 **Key Insights:**

Write down key points from today's session as you hear them.

 **Practice This Week:**

Practice This Week: Denying Self to Follow Jesus

This week, pay attention to moments when you can “deny yourself” to say “yes” to Jesus. Denying self doesn’t mean rejecting who you are. It means surrendering habits, preferences, or desires that compete with Christ’s way of life. It’s a daily act of discipleship.

Here are a few examples to help spark ideas:

- Choose humility: Instead of defending yourself in a disagreement, listen with empathy and curiosity.
- Serve when it’s inconvenient: Offer to help someone even when your schedule is full.
- Let go of control: Ask God to lead in a decision you’ve been clinging to.
- Resist instant gratification: Say no to something you want right now in order to say yes to something better (like prayer, patience, generosity, or rest).



Reflect:

- Write down one area where Jesus might be inviting you to deny yourself this week.
- Each evening, take 2 minutes to reflect or journal:
“Where did I follow Jesus today?”
“Where did I hold back?”
“What would I do differently tomorrow?”

Then bring one insight to share in the next session, if you feel comfortable.



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SESSION 2: WHAT DO WE KNOW?





Big Idea:

Doctrine matters because it helps us know and worship God as he truly is. Our beliefs shape our relationship with God and how we live.



Key Scripture:

2 Timothy 1:8-14

Today's Focus:

What we believe about Jesus shapes our identity and our response to life.

Opening Reflection

Use this space to reflect on the opening question or icebreaker.

Key Scripture Notes:

What stood out to you during the reading? What insights or questions did the group raise?



Discussion Highlights:

Use this space to jot down ideas, takeaways, or stories shared in discussion.



Key Insights:

Write down key points from today's session as you hear them.



Practice This Week: Growing in Knowing God

This week, take one intentional step toward knowing Jesus more deeply. You don't need to study for hours—but find a small, meaningful way to engage with what you believe.

Here are a few options to choose from (or come up with your own!):

- Read and reflect on one of the following short passages:
 - **John 1:1–14**
 - **Colossians 1:15–20**
 - **Hebrews 1:1–3**After reading, ask: *What does this show me about who Jesus is? What might I be missing in how I see him?*
- Talk with someone about a spiritual question you've been wondering about. See what you can learn from their perspective.

SESSION 3: WHAT DO WE DO?





Big Idea:

We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Our good works do not earn us salvation, but they are the evidence of his life at work in us.



Key Scripture:

James 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:8-10

Today's Focus:

Our good works flow from Jesus' finished work—not to earn grace, but in response to it.

Opening Reflection:

Use this space to reflect on the opening question or icebreaker.

Key Scripture Notes:

What stood out to you during the reading? What insights or questions did the group raise?



Discussion Highlights:

Use this space to jot down ideas, takeaways, or stories shared in discussion.



Key Insights:

Write down key points from today's session as you hear them.



Practice This Week: Responding to Grace

Discipleship is a response to what God has already done. This week, practice saying "yes" to Jesus through small, concrete acts of love. These don't earn anything. They reflect his goodness already in you.

Choose one of these practices (or create your own):

- Look for an opportunity to serve someone this week in an unexpected way—without being asked and without expecting recognition.
Then reflect: How did this act align with who Jesus is?
- Identify one area of self-denial that helps you put Jesus first. That could be:
 - Choosing forgiveness over bitterness
 - Turning off your screen to be more present
 - Letting someone else go first or take credit

- o Skipping a purchase or indulgence to practice simplicity

Afterward, journal: Was this difficult or freeing? What did it reveal about my heart?

- Memorize **Ephesians 2:10**: *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

Let it shape how you approach daily decisions this week.

 **Reflection Prompt for the Week:**

At the end of each day, ask: *“Where did I get to participate in the life of Jesus today?”* Jot down one moment you saw grace in action.

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SESSION 4: WHAT DO WE FEEL?





Big Idea:

God is deeply invested in our hearts. He invites us to love him with our emotions as well as our actions and thoughts.



Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 13:1–3; Philippians 4:4–8; 2 Peter 1:5–7 Today's Focus:

Discipleship includes learning to feel as Jesus feels—loving what he loves, grieving what he grieves.

Opening Reflection:

Use this space to reflect on the opening question or icebreaker.

Key Scripture Notes:

What stood out to you during the reading? What insights or questions did the group raise?



Discussion Highlights:

Use this space to jot down ideas, takeaways, or stories shared in discussion.



Key Insights:

Write down key points from today's session as you hear them.



Practice This Week: Tuning Your Heart to God

Emotions are part of our discipleship. This week, choose a practice that helps you *notice, name, and nurture* the emotions God is shaping in you.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Lectio divina with **Philippians 4:4–8**
Read the passage slowly each morning. As you do, pay attention to what stirs in your heart. Ask God to shape your emotional life through joy, gentleness, peace, and gratitude.
- Emotion journaling
Each day, write down:
 - One moment you felt close to God
 - One moment you felt disconnected or emotionally off
 - One thing you're thankful forUse this to ask: What might God be revealing through my feelings?

- Practice rejoicing or lamenting intentionally
If something brings you joy this week, pause and celebrate with God.
If something brings sorrow or anger, offer it in prayer using the psalms (e.g., **Psalm 13 or Psalm 30**). Let Scripture shape how you express and entrust your emotions.



Reflection Prompt for the Week:

What emotion do you want to grow in with God’s help right now?
Invite God into that space daily and note any shifts by the end of the week.

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SESSION 5: DISCIPLESHIP AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD





Big Idea:

Discipleship and kingdom life are deeply connected. Following Jesus means living as citizens of God’s present and coming kingdom.



Key Scripture:

Luke 19:11-27

Supporting Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:4, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 10:25

Today’s Focus:

We are part of God’s kingdom now, learning to live in his ways as we await his fullness.

Opening Reflection:

Use this space to reflect on the opening question or icebreaker.

Key Scripture Notes:

What stood out to you during the reading? What insights or questions did the group raise?



Discussion Highlights:

Use this space to jot down ideas, takeaways, or stories shared in discussion.



Key Insights:

Write down key points from today’s session as you hear them.



Practice This Week: Living the Kingdom Now

Discipleship isn’t just about believing something new. It’s about learning how to live in a new kind of kingdom, one that operates with grace, love, and faithfulness.

Invite participants to try one of these simple practices that reflect life in the kingdom of God:

- **Faithful stewardship:**

Choose one small “mina” (gift, responsibility, opportunity) God has given you, and ask: *How can I use this to bless others or honor Christ this week?*

Then act on it—no matter how small.

