



**cell outlines**  
**JANUARY 2018**

These Cell Outlines are written by Youth and Children's Ministries. They are available every month from our web site. For more information and other Cell resources, visit [salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources](http://salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources)

# DISCIPLESHIP

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first Cell material of 2018. Over the next 12 months we'll be unpacking the territorial theme of discipleship, looking at what it means for everyone, everywhere, to follow Jesus. Each month we'll look at a story of Jesus, a character elsewhere in Scripture's discipleship journey and some other key discipleship principles and practices.

As well as providing material for gathered group times, this year we will also be facilitating day-by-day discipleship journeys through the 'Remind' app. By signing up to this, young people (and anyone else) will receive daily discipleship questions, thoughts and challenges directly to their phones. Please encourage your young people to sign up to this by going to [www.remind.com/join/followsa](http://www.remind.com/join/followsa) and downloading the 'Remind' app to their mobiles. Alternatively you can search for YCMUSA on the app.

This month we'll follow the calling of the first disciples and remind ourselves that humanity has been called to follow God since the beginning of our story.

# THE CALLING OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

## WELCOME

When trying to understand the world of the first disciples, we need to understand what their lives were like. What was it like to be a fisherman? Was catching fish a fun experience? As relaxing as those placid hat-wearing chaps we see sitting by a river in the countryside? It turns out that being a fisherman was a physical, tough job. Well, today we'll kick off by getting to grips with that world. We can't catch fish, but we can catch the closest thing: wet sponges.

Get your group into pairs and give each pair two buckets, one of which would be empty while the other should be full of water and sponges. Ask each pair to decide who is throwing and who is catching; blindfold the thrower and give them the full bucket. Place the catcher a few metres away and get going – the aim is for the thrower to get as many wet sponges in the catcher's bucket. The winning pair is the one with the most sponges in the correct bucket. (If you've got enough sponges and buckets, you could play this game with all the pairs going at the same time. If not, one pair going at a time will give the opportunity for everyone else to enjoy the other pair's tomfoolery!)

Once the game is over, bring the group together and tell them that this year we're going to explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and to kick off we're going to look at the story of the first of Jesus' followers. Ask the group to discuss these questions:

- 🗨️ What does it mean to be a disciple?
- 🗨️ What else could you be a disciple of?

## WORD

As a group, read Matthew 4:18-22:

“ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were 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.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

After you've read this passage, discuss these questions as a group:

- 🗨️ What about this story surprises you?
- 🗨️ How do you think Peter, Andrew, James and John would have felt during this story?
- 🗨️ How would you react if Jesus told you to put down your work to follow him?

Show the ‘Dust’ episode of Rob Bell's *Nooma*. If you've got access to the download or DVD, show that; but if not, it's available on YouTube here:

📺 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kM3qHBAekhg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kM3qHBAekhg).

After watching the clip, discuss these questions:

- 🗨️ Does this make you think differently about Jesus calling these disciples?
- 🗨️ The clip says: ‘A disciple doesn't just want to know what the rabbi knows. A disciple wants to be like the rabbi and wants to learn to do what the rabbi does.’ Have you ever thought about Jesus as your rabbi? Would you consider yourself a disciple?
- 🗨️ Do you believe that God believes in you?

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🗣️ 'Jesus has faith that you can follow him and that you can be like him.' What does it mean to be like Jesus? Can you do it?

**Say:** Sometimes it's easy to think that the call to follow Jesus is one of hard work and sacrifice. And while these elements are involved, it's bigger than that. Jesus calls us to join him on a great adventure, an adventure open to each and every one of us, irrespective of how clever, funny or good looking we are. He invites us to join him in bringing about the redemption of all things, in sharing the transformative power of the Kingdom of God – and he calls us because he believes we can make a difference!

## WORSHIP

**Say:** In order to follow Jesus, the disciples had to drop their nets, they had to give up the things that defined them (and in some cases held them back) in order to properly follow Jesus. Explain that over the next year, the whole Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland is going to be focusing on discipleship – looking at what it means for everyone to follow Jesus everywhere, every day. At the start of the year, we're going to take a moment to stop and reflect on what nets we're holding on to, what Jesus might be calling us to drop in order to follow him more fully this year. Remind the group that not everything we do, our jobs and social lives, are bad things; Jesus doesn't call us to stop doing things, but instead to make him number one. As we see later in their story, the disciples still went fishing, but it was no longer their top priority.

Play some reflective music, perhaps a worship song the group is familiar with, and give the group some time to ponder this question, and what they need to do to more fully focus on following Jesus in 2018.

## WITNESS

We all know that it's difficult to follow Jesus day by day, and so this year we've created something to help you follow Jesus every day, everywhere. Introduce the group to the Remind app. Explain that this year we will be facilitating day-by-day discipleship journeys through the app. By signing up to this, young people (and anyone else) will receive daily discipleship questions, thoughts and challenges directly to their phones. Please encourage your young people to sign up to this by going to [www.remind.com/join/followsa](http://www.remind.com/join/followsa) and downloading the 'Remind' app to their mobiles. Alternatively you can search for Follow: Discipleship 2018 on the app. Give the young people the chance to do this now. Explain that no personal data or information is handed over as part of this app.

End by speaking this blessing over your group:

*'May you believe in God. But may you come to see that God believes in you. May you have faith in Jesus. But may you come to see that Jesus has faith that you can be like him. A person of love and compassion and truth. A person of forgiveness, and peace, and grace, and joy, and hope. And may you be covered in the dust of your rabbi, Jesus.'*

# CREATION AND WALKING WITH GOD - RELATIONSHIP

## WELCOME

This week we are going to be thinking about what a creator God is like and what impact this should have on how we live our lives.

### Creation Pictionary

Split the group into two teams and get them to decide who will draw for each team. Give the selected person from the first team a list of creation-themed words (see below for ideas or come up with your own if you would prefer) and get them to draw as many as their team can correctly guess in two minutes. Repeat this (using a different list of creation words) for the second group. The winners are the team that had the most correct answers in the allocated time.

Team 1	Team 2
Stars	Moon
Sky	Sun
Plants	Sea
Fish	Birds
Cow	Dog
Snake	Frog
Lion	Mouse
Humans	Trees

### Intro

The Bible begins with a story of how our world came into being. This story also paints a wonderful picture of the Creator, who by simply saying 'Let there be...' spoke the whole of creation into place. The story doesn't end with the familiar seven-day story, or with Adam and Eve. This is just the beginning of a story that carries on through centuries and centuries to the present day, and will continue into the future. It has huge implications for us as a people who are loved, rather than a people who are here through cosmic coincidence. We have an amazing creator God who wants to have a relationship with each and every one of us; the God who put the stars in space knows every minute detail about us... so what does that mean for us, the way we live our lives and our relationship with him?

## WORD

Genesis is a fantastic book with some of the greatest, most familiar and most quoted stories of the whole Bible.

Watch this video which illustrates the creation story –

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ean\\_aMNkAgM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ean_aMNkAgM)

God created everything and it was good. But the story doesn't end there... God created human beings and wants to have a relationship with us.

Read together Genesis 12:1-3

- “ The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.  
<sup>2</sup> ‘I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great,

and you will be a blessing.  
 3 I will bless those who bless you,  
 and whoever curses you I will curse;  
 and all peoples on earth  
 will be blessed through you.'

## Discussion

- Why does God make covenants? Surely he doesn't need to make such agreements with mere mortals.
- Why is it important to God that people know who he is, and worship only him?
- Does this have any impact on our relationship with him?
- What does it mean to be blessed to be a blessing to others?

God continues to make covenants with his people throughout the Old Testament, notably to Jacob who is promised that his descendants will be like the dust of the earth.

Even today, God has opened the floodgates saying that his covenant is for all people. He wants to be our God and promises to love us. There is a covenant quoted in Hebrews 8:7-12 where God says he will put his teaching in our minds and write them on our hearts.

It is worth noting that whenever a covenant appears, there is also a strong warning against idolatry.

- What are the things we make into idols?
- What impact does that have on our relationship with God?
- How can we ensure we leave God as number one and do not make created things take the place of our creator?

## WORSHIP

Provide each group member with a piece of paper and ask them to write three headings on it...

**Love for the will of God**

**Love for the creation of God**

**Love for the people of God**

Play some reflective music and ask the group members to spend time prayerfully considering the three headings by asking themselves what they would see happen with their relationship with God if they committed more of themselves to each of these areas.

Close this section of the cell session with a prayer.

## WITNESS

If you look at the amazing vibrant planet we inhabit, then widen the perspective to see the vast space surrounding us, you will see what an incredible world we live in, fine-tuned to support our very existence with all manner of incredible factors all being sustained and held in place so that we can just be here. When you start to see life from that perspective, hopefully it can make us feel pretty incredible about having a relationship with our almighty creator God.

Ask the group what they could do this week to honour God, honour his creation and honour themselves.

## WHAT ELSE DO WE FOLLOW?

### WELCOME

To kick off this week thinking about who we follow, play the 'Social media: higher or lower' game. For this, you'll need the slide show called 'Social media: higher or lower' from [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/youth-and-children-resources](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/youth-and-children-resources). In this game, each slide contains a famous person and their social media account. As the game progresses, the group have to guess whether each person has a higher or lower number of followers than the person on the previous slide in the style of the Bruce Forsyth game. You could play the game with the group shouting out answers, or eliminate people as you go, with young people having to stand up for 'higher' and sit down for 'lower' until you're left with a winner.

After the game is over, discuss these questions as a group:

- 🗣️ Who's the most entertaining person you follow on social media? Who's the weirdest?
- 🗣️ What makes you follow someone on social media?

**Say:** We're all used to following people, be it on Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram. And we also know that we're called to follow Jesus. Today, we're going to reflect on whether we sometimes follow the wrong things.

### WORD

Before you meet, prepare some wood and kindling and put it in a paddling pool. You'll also need a bucket of water to hand. Sit around the paddling pool as you share today's story. Read 1 Kings 18:20-39.

“ So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, 'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.'

But the people said nothing.

Then Elijah said to them, 'I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire – he is God.'

Then all the people said, 'What you say is good.'

Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.' So they took the bull that was given to them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. 'Baal, answer us!' they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

At noon Elijah began to taunt them. 'Shout louder!' he said. 'Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or travelling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.' So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, 'Your name shall be Israel.' With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and

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laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, 'Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.'

'Do it again,' he said, and they did it again.

'Do it a third time,' he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.'

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord – he is God! The Lord – he is God!'

As you're telling the story, have a volunteer build the 'fire' from the wood and kindling, pour the water over it and then (unsuccessfully!) attempt to light the fire at the appropriate points of the story. Once the story is over, ask the group to discuss these questions:

- 🗨️ What stood out to you from this story?
- 🗨️ Who do you most relate to in this story? Why?
- 🗨️ The people had stopped following God and had started following something else. Do you ever follow the wrong things? What kind of things do you follow?
- 🗨️ It took a huge, impressive miracle for God's people to turn back to him. Are we sometimes a bit slow and need something big and impressive to follow God wholeheartedly?

Say: It's easy to get distracted and follow the wrong thing. In our age of instant gratification when we can buy, watch or listen to whatever we want almost instantly, following Jesus, whose way is sometimes slow and tricky, is really counter-cultural. This week, how can we commit to following the right things?

## WORSHIP

Ask the group to reflect on the story and what they follow while you play 'What a beautiful name' by Hillsong. Once the song is over, say: One line in this song says: 'You have no rival, you have no equal.' We know that God has no equal, but sometimes things in our lives become rivals to God. What are they for you at this time? How can you ensure God has no rivals in your lives this week? Hand out Post-it Notes and, as you play the song again, encourage the group to think of one thing they can do in the week to ensure God has no rivals in their life. They could put the Note somewhere they'll see it this week to remind them. (Ensure you tell the group that they'll be sharing these things in smaller groups.)

## WITNESS

Once they've reflected on this question, encourage the group to get into smaller groups or pairs with people they feel comfortable with. Give them chance to share what they've been thinking about – what rivals God in their lives and what they can do about it. Encourage the group that by sharing these things we make ourselves accountable to each other, and can allow ourselves to be supported by others. Give time for the groups to pray together to finish.



# KEY DISCIPLE PRACTICES

## WELCOME

Ask everyone to share something that they think makes them unique within this group. Here are some ideas that might help give your group members inspiration...

- \* Where they were born
- \* The colour of their hair
- \* Something that they do in their spare time
- \* A skill that they have

Make sure that everyone has been able to come up with something, and if anyone is struggling then ask the rest of the group to help come up with some ideas!

## Intro

This week we are going to be looking at some key practices that will help us grow as disciples. Hopefully by taking part in the welcome activity your group will have been able to name something unique about themselves. It is also most probably the case that we learn differently, we behave differently, we like different things and we all have different ways of doing stuff. We are going to spend some time thinking about some really key practices that will help us in our discipleship, but we are going to try and embrace them in a way that works best for us as individuals.

## WORD

### Discipleship communities

Read the following Bible verse to the group:

#### The Believers Form a Community

- “ All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshipped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.’

Acts 2:42-47 NLT

- \* What can we learn from this reading about the importance of spending time in a community of believers?

If you are using this session as part of an ongoing cell group, it would be worth talking about how this very gathering is a discipleship community and how important it is being a part of something like this for the reasons that you have hopefully just discussed.

- \* What other types of discipleship communities are the group aware of? Are any of the group involved in a different type of discipleship community and what do they think the positives are of that type of community (for example 1-2-1 discipleship, Life Transformation Groups etc).

## Prayer

Prayer makes our relationship with God stronger; it can help to change us for the better and it can have a big impact on the world in which we live. Praying is much more than giving God a list of stuff you want him to do, although sometimes it can seem like that! It is more to do with spending time enjoying God's company, a bit like you would do with your best friend – asking questions, talking about your family and friends, wondering about the future, saying sorry, saying thank you, listening to what they have to say, not worrying about silence, but just glad to be with them.

Prayer is to be a constant part of our daily lives. This is the reason we speak of our 'prayer life'. Think about the times that most of us do pray – at church, during our quiet times, before meals, before bed, in times of crisis. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to pray 'continually' (*NIV*), 'without ceasing' (*KJV*) and 'all the time' (*The Message*).

A great way of remembering the importance of prayer is that people often liken prayer to breathing, as essential to our spiritual lives as breathing is to our physical lives.

- \* Ask the group to share any tips or ideas that they find helpful for making prayer a daily activity in their lives. If they are struggling for ideas then suggest setting daily reminders, using a journal, using a set part of the day (bus journey, when going for a run) etc.

## Bible study

Why is it important for us to read the Bible?

### 1. Reading the Bible shows us God's character. The Bible is our definitive source for the answers to our questions about God.

'In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven' (Hebrews 1:1-3).

### 2. Reading the Bible teaches us to imitate God.

'Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children' (Ephesians 5:1).

### 3. Reading the Bible helps us discover our next step.

'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path' (Psalm 119:105).

### 4. Reading the Bible keeps us from sin.

'I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you' (Psalm 119:11).

### 5. Reading the Bible helps us to renew our minds so we can know God's will.

'Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will' (Romans 12:1-2).

### 6. Reading the Bible allows us to be certain of what God said. The Bible is our final authority.

'Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth' (John 17:17).

### 7. Reading the Bible allows us to receive the desires of our heart.

'If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you' (John 15:7).

### 8. Reading the Bible is how we learn about the gospel.

'You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life' (John 5:39-40).

### 9. Reading the Bible gives us courage.

'Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and

courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go' (Joshua 1:8-9).

**10. Reading the Bible helps us to be fruitful.**

'...but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers' (Psalm 1:2-3).

[newspring.cc/articles/10-reasons-to-read-the-bible](https://newspring.cc/articles/10-reasons-to-read-the-bible)

So we've just heard a lot about why we should read the Bible; but what about for those of us who don't find it very easy to read the Bible, or who start with all good intentions on day one and then by day two forget to pick it up?

Discuss as a group some tips and ideas to help make Bible reading and study more appealing. For example, listening to an audiobook version, downloading a daily reading Bible app, using a doodle Bible etc.

**WORSHIP**

We have spent some time considering three key disciple practices of Bible reading, prayer and spending time in a discipleship community. There are many and varied ways of engaging in all of these things, and for each of us we might have very different preferences as to what works best for us.

Think back to our welcome activity in which we thought about how each of us is unique. We have looked at three very specific areas, but we want to embrace our uniqueness when thinking about how best to approach these different things in light of our own preferences and individuality.

Place three sheets of paper in front of the group, one with 'Bible reading' written on it, one with 'Prayer' and the final one 'Discipleship communities'.

As some music plays, ask the group to consider what is written on the paper in front of them and how they could commit to developing in those areas. Really encourage them to think about how they can use their own gifts, talents, interests and learning styles to make sure that they are embracing these practices in a way that best suits them and who they are.

**ACTION**

Ask the group to make a note of some of the ideas that they have come up with. Spend a few minutes sharing those with each other if people feel comfortable, and then commit to putting this into action over the coming weeks.