



Vision and Commitment 2018
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in
everything
&
everywhere

Vision and Commitment Sunday - Children's Outline

Aim

- To help the children understand what a disciple is and what is meant by discipleship.
- To help the children explore how they can grow as disciples.
- To encourage the children in their journey of discipleship.

Preparation

- Garden string to make a 'start'/'finish' line.
- Pens and paper.
- Image of Jesus' disciples (freebibleimages.org) - (Appendix 1).
- Eight empty 'boxes'. These can be shoe boxes, archive boxes, plastic crates, Duplo bricks, foam bricks or Jenga bricks OR A3 paper and pens with Sellotape or Blu tack.
- The words FAITH, GOODNESS, UNDERSTANDING, SELF-CONTROL, PATIENCE, DEVOTION TO GOD, CONCERN FOR OTHERS, LOVE printed out to fit on the 'boxes' - (Appendix 2).
- Post-it notes.
- Print out Appendix 3 (flip-flops) enough for each child. You will also need scissors, pipe cleaner and buttons for the prayer activity.
- Board or flipchart.

Background for leaders

Read 2 Peter 1:3–11 (*CEV*)

In this passage Peter is telling the early Christian readers – and us – that having faith is not enough! Having come to faith, we need to continually live a life that is pleasing to God.

Peter names seven virtues, or qualities, that we need to work on to complement our basic faith: goodness, understanding/knowledge (about God), self-control/discipline, patience/perseverance, godliness/devotion to God, kindness/concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and a love for all people (vv5–7).





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It is our personal mission as disciples of Jesus to activate and grow in all of these areas. Jesus possessed all of these qualities, so we should pursue them too. This is what discipleship is about – becoming like the Master.

A life of discipleship can be difficult, but Peter reminds us that God himself empowers us to ‘live a life that pleases [him]’ (v 3). God shares with us his own power, resources, riches and goodness so that we can share in his nature! Peter suggests that the more we get to know God, the more we share in his nature and the less we retain of our own sinful nature. In other words, we have been given the power of God, from God, to live a life that pleases God – a fruitful, meaningful, useful and effective life. A life of discipleship.

If a life of discipleship sounds like a slog, remember there is a fantastic reward we will receive – both in this life and the next.

Icebreakers

- **Growing Up Relay**

This is a relay race game for two or more teams. Using the garden string, set up a line at one end of the room for the teams to line up behind and another line at the other end of the room. Each person in the team gets to go three times per race, racing each leg in a different style.

The first time, each player sits on the floor and crosses their legs. On ‘Go’ the players have to shuffle along the floor like a baby, pass the line and come back, before tagging the next shuffler. This carries on until the last player in the team has shuffled there and back. As the race continues, on the second leg the players have to crawl across the floor on their hands and knees like a toddler (or just hands and feet if they prefer). On the third and final leg they can run normally.

After the game, point out that when we were babies we could only shuffle, but as we grew we began to crawl and toddle, and then we could walk and then run. This is all part of growing up; we get stronger and better at doing things. In our Christian lives, as followers of Jesus, we need to grow too, to become better disciples – knowing Jesus more and achieving greater things for him. Today we are going to explore some of the ways we can grow as Christians.

- **Growing Up: Thinking Challenge**

This can be done individually or in small teams. Give every individual or team a pen and paper. Explain that they have three minutes to write a list of things that they can do now that they couldn’t do as a baby or toddler. Make it a competition and see who can produce the longest list.

Afterwards, talk about the things on the list and wonder at all of the things we have learnt to do as we have grown.





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- **Icebreaker Question**

Get the group to sit in a circle. Ask them, if they can, to: *Name one way in which you think you have grown as a Christian in the last year.*

Have an answer ready for yourself first, so you can show the children how to answer. Let children put their hands up if they are ready to answer. If they are struggling, get them to think of some new things they have done in service to God. This could be something new they have learnt about God in the Bible, a way in which their prayer life has developed, or a way in which they enjoy helping others. Some won't be ready to answer, but they will have been thinking, so that's okay.

Lesson

Disciples Weren't Just for Bible Times!

Start by talking about Jesus and his disciples. Show a picture of Jesus with some disciples (Appendix 1). Other versions are available at freebibleimages.org. Ask the children what is going on in the picture and who the characters are. Explain that when Jesus was on earth he began his teaching ministry by choosing 12 people to join him.

Jesus was a rabbi, which means teacher. Jesus chose his disciples – close followers he could teach – and spent time with them. The disciples saw how he lived, what he did, and what he said – and they learned from him. He was preparing them for the time when he would leave this earth and they would carry on his work. What Jesus began all that time ago with just 12 disciples continues to this day, because they obeyed his command to teach others.

Disciples weren't just for the Bible. Today, Jesus calls us to be his disciples – how amazing! Being a disciple of Jesus is exciting, and an adventure, but it isn't easy. It's something we have to work at daily. Today we are going to explore how we can grow as disciples.

Bible Reading

Read the Bible passage, 2 Peter 1:3–11. This can be a difficult text for children to understand but the Contemporary English Version (CEV) is a good option to help them with this. It may help to print out a copy of this version for each child so they can follow it as you read, or so others can take turns to read it too (available from Biblegateway.com).

Wondering

Have eight empty boxes ready. They could be shoe boxes or, even better, large archive boxes, or even plastic crates. If you're very tight for space and are working round a table, use Duplo bricks, foam bricks or Jenga bricks. It would help if the boxes or bricks are all of a similar size. Large boxes would look the best for impact. (If you don't have boxes or bricks, use sheets of A3 paper instead, and use Blu tack to attach the sheets to the wall, one above another.) Beforehand, you will need to stick onto each box or brick a large label with the following words in big letters (Appendix 2):





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1. FAITH (this should be the largest box as it goes on the bottom)
2. GOODNESS
3. UNDERSTANDING
4. SELF-CONTROL
5. PATIENCE
6. DEVOTION TO GOD
7. CONCERN FOR OTHERS
8. LOVE

The idea is that you will gradually build up a tower of boxes, in that order, as you wonder about each word in turn, starting with FAITH.

Explain that in Peter's letter he wrote about the qualities that we must grow in ourselves in order to live as good disciples (followers) of Jesus. We are going to explore these qualities today. Encourage every child to participate in the conversation, and show that you value every contribution.

1. FAITH. Bring out the first box with the word FAITH attached to it and put it on the floor so all the children can see it. Say: '**I wonder what faith is?**' Invite the children to suggest what they think faith is. (Peter, in his writing, starts with faith, because this is always the first step of our Christian lives and the foundation of all the other virtues that we will build upon.) Put very simply, faith is our belief in God, and our belief that Jesus is our friend and Saviour. Let the children think for themselves and thank every person who contributes a suggestion.
2. GOODNESS. Peter explains that just having faith is not enough. Once we become Christians and disciples we need to grow; and to do so we need to add other qualities to faith. Ask a child to find the box with GOODNESS on it and place it on the FAITH box. Ask: '**I wonder what having goodness means?**' (Verse 3 indicates that goodness is something Jesus has and wants to share with us.) Goodness is a practical, hands-on type of quality. It means looking for opportunities to be good to others. When you see that the wondering about goodness needs to move on, invite a child to find the next box.
3. UNDERSTANDING. Prompt the children to explore what this means by asking: '**Peter said we need to grow our understanding, or our knowledge. I wonder what things we need to know more about or understand better?**' In the discussion, explain that, most importantly, we need to grow in our understanding and knowledge of God. (2 Peter 1:2 says that we will receive more and more of God's grace and peace the better and better we know him (*The Living Bible*). We must constantly grow in our knowledge of God and Christ – Colossians 1:10.)
4. SELF-CONTROL. Ask the children: '**I wonder what self-control is?**' Allow time for wondering and discussion. Self-control is the ability to control your emotions and





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desires, especially in difficult situations. As Christians we need to place our old, sinful selves under the control of the Holy Spirit. To get the children to relate this to their own lives, ask: **'I wonder when you might lose your self-control?'**

5. **PATIENCE.** Ask: **'I wonder when you have had to show patience?'** or **'I wonder why we need to be patient with each other?'** Let the suggestions keep coming. But if it is quiet, don't rush on too quickly. Allow time for the children to have their own, private wondering.
6. **DEVOTION TO GOD.** Explain that devotion to God is showing him love, loyalty, faithfulness and commitment. Then ask: **'I wonder how we can show devotion to God?'**
7. **CONCERN FOR OTHERS.** Explain that this also means showing kindness for your brothers and sisters in Christ or enjoying and liking other people. Ask: **'I wonder which of these descriptions you like the best?'**
8. **LOVE.** Ask: **'I wonder who God wants us to love?'** Finally we come to the greatest of all virtues: love – for God and for all people. Not just our family and friends, not just others in the church, not just nice people, but even people who do horrible things. Jesus loves everyone and so should we.

You will now have a stack of eight boxes.

Finish with these final wondering questions:

- I wonder which of these qualities is the most important?
- I wonder which one you have the most of?
- I wonder which one is the hardest for you?
- I wonder if there are any of these qualities that we can take away, but still have all the qualities we need to be a disciple of Jesus?

To finish this lesson ask this question: **'I wonder how God helps us be disciples?'** Invite the children to look again at verse 3 and make sure they understand that we don't have to do it in our own strength. (In fact that would be impossible.) It is God's power working in us that enables us to live in a way that pleases him.

Activities

- **Visual Illustration**

Ask the children to illustrate this passage in one of these visual ways. Give each child a sheet of paper and ask them to write the word **FAITH** in the middle. At the top they should write the heading **'Growing as a Disciple'**. Then give each child seven Post-it notes. On each one they need to draw a simple diagram to represent one of the seven qualities they need to strengthen and add to their faith, i.e. goodness,





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understanding, self-control, patience (or endurance), devotion, concern for others (or kindness) and love. They add their Post-it notes around the word FAITH. You could get some ideas from this short video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTsYkVtvOac>

- Make a large wall display with the word FAITH in the middle, and headed 'Growing as a Disciple'. Invite the children to each make an illustration of just one or two of the words on an A4 sheet. Make sure that all seven words have an illustration. Pin up their work around the central text on the display board/wall.

- **Memory Challenge**

Build up your stack of boxes or bricks with the labels facing towards the children. (If you used sheets of paper then set these out on the floor, face up.) Get the children to turn around so they aren't looking, and take away one of the boxes or pieces of paper. See who can spot which word has been taken away. You may prefer to do this in teams.

- **Mime**

Divide the children into pairs, or small groups depending on your numbers. Give each pair or team one of the virtues (goodness, understanding, etc). Ask each group to work on a mime that they will perform to everyone else so that the others can guess their word.

Worship

Song suggestions relating to being a follower of Jesus (all available on YouTube):

- *2 Peter 3:18 (Glory, Glory, Glory)* by The Rizers
- *Glory and Honour* by Doug Horley.
- *With God's Power Working In Us* by Doug Horley
- *Radio* by Hillsong kids
- *Get it Started* by Hillsong kids
- *Be bold! Be strong!*

Prayers

- **Discipleship Sandals**

(An idea from <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/discipleship-sandal-craft.html>)

If we want to follow Jesus, how could we show that in our everyday lives? To get across the idea of following being an active thing, make a sandal (or flip flop!) of ideas.

Cut out a flip flop shape from card (Appendix 3) and make three holes.





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Put a pipe cleaner underneath the flip flop shape and thread one end through hole A and one end through hole B.

Choose people to remember to pray for and then choose a button to represent each person, threading the buttons onto the pipe cleaner ends. Now thread both ends through hole C to make the flip flop strap and secure them underneath.

Now discuss things you could do (achievable things!) that would reflect the fact that you are trying to live out what Jesus taught, and write them on the flip flop as a reminder. For example: think about God at school, respect my friends, listen to my dad, read a Bible story once a week, pray.

Finally spend some time in prayer, asking God to help us achieve these things.

Response

- **Peer Group Powwow**

Have the children pair up or work in threes. Invite them to ask each other these questions:

- What have you learnt for the first time today?
- Is there something that you are confused about from today's lesson?
- What question would you ask Jesus about being a disciple?

- **Thinking Time**

Ask the children: 'What will you try and do through this year that will help you grow as a disciple?' Write this on a board or flipchart so all can see it.

Create a space where they can have a few minutes to think and pray about this question. It might help to play some quiet music in the background. Some ideas you could give them to think about include:

- Pray every day. You could write a prayer diary (look for some ideas on Pinterest to make your own prayer diary/journal).
- Create a prayer wallchart – maybe using a large blackboard, a magnetic board and letters or a roll of lining paper.
- Read the Bible regularly and follow a published Bible reading plan like Snapshots or Topz, or the Big Bible Challenge.
- Meet a grown-up once a month to talk about faith, the Bible or growing as a disciple (you may wish to get the corps to organise a formalised mentoring scheme).
- Plan a special event at your corps that is open to other children from your school or community. You may want to explore some ideas as a group another time.

In future sessions you could return to this and see how the children are getting on with their commitment to growth as a disciple.





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- **Discipleship self-evaluation sheet**

For older children. Get the children to design a sheet to fill in each week, asking these questions, or other questions they think of:

- How have I shown goodness this week?
- What have I learnt about God in the Bible this week?
- In what area did I need to show more self-control?
- When did I need to have more patience or perseverance?
- How did I best connect with God?
- How have I shown concern or kindness to those around me?
- Who did I show generous love towards this week?





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Appendix 1



(freebibleimages.org)





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Appendix 2

FAITH

GOODNESS

KNOWLEDGE

SELF-CONTROL

PERSEVERANCE

GODLINESS

LOVE

MUTUAL AFFECTION





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Appendix 3

