



Vision and Commitment 2018
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in
everything
&
everywhere

Discipleship Series Youth - Putting First (Prioritising)

Key message

Jesus teaches obedience and priority towards his Father, teaching others to do the same. His ministry was empowered by his time with God and the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We were created to be in a relationship with our Father - this is where we will be the most at home, complete and fulfilled. Spending quality time with our Father, knowing we are completely loved and totally accepted, is the fuel that will enable us to be disciples - every day, in everything and everywhere.

Key Scriptures

Mark 6:45-46 and Luke 10:38-42

Resources

- Celebrity siblings cards (Appendix 1)
- Bibles - or print outs of the Scripture passages
- Pens/paper
- Large pieces of paper/card and marker pens
- Selection of resources for use in personal devotional time
- Phone picture for each person (Appendix 2)
- A device on which you can watch YouTube videos

Welcome

Choose either of these games using celebrity siblings.

1. Before the session print the names of celebrity sibling pairs on sticky labels, with one name on each label (Appendix 1). You will need enough for everyone in your group to have one sticky label. You need an even number of people to play this game, so get a leader to join in if necessary. Stick a label to each person's forehead without letting them see whose name they have. The young people then have to find their sibling. They can do this by asking each other questions that can only have the answer 'yes' or 'no'. For example, 'Am I famous for playing sport?', 'Am I musical?', 'Am I a member of the Royal Family?', 'Am I a fictional character?'. Once they have worked out who they are, they need to search the rest of the group for their sibling. Keep going until everyone is paired up.

<https://www.energize.uk.net/meeting-plans/1373>





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2. Create cards or slips of paper with both names of the famous siblings written or printed on. Split into two teams. Have one person in the team try to describe the pair to the rest of the group, without saying the names. Or they could mime the names in the style of charades. See how many cards each person can describe for the team to guess correctly within a set time limit. The team with the most correct pairs is the winner.

3. Split into two teams. Ask each team to write down as many celebrity siblings as they can think of within a set time limit. The team with the most correct pairs is the winner. Suggested famous siblings (could be real or fictional):

- Beyonce and Solange Knowles
- Michael Jackson and Janet Jackson
- Serena Williams and Venus Williams
- Prince William and Prince Harry
- Mary-Kate Olsen and Ashley Olsen
- Mary and Martha
- Moses and Aaron
- Dakota Fanning and Elle Fanning
- Malia Obama and Sasha Obama
- Cain and Abel
- Andy Murray and Jamie Murray
- Nick Jonas and Joe Jonas
- Kim Kardashian and Kourtney Kardashian

Word 1. Jesus spends time with his Father

a) Read:

'At once Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to Bethsaida, on the other side of the lake, while he sent the crowd away. After saying good-bye to the people, he went away to a hill to pray.' (Mark 6:45-46 GNT)

'But Jesus would often go to some place where he could be alone and pray.' (Luke 5:16 CEV)

'Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray.' (Mark 1:35 CEV)

b) Use any of the following thoughts as you find helpful to unpack these Scriptures with your group.

Being a disciple is all about a relationship. That's what we have been called to - a life-giving, life-changing and loving relationship with the one who made us!





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This relationship is the only thing life-fulfilling that will sustain us and keep us going on our spiritual journey. We won't make it if we simply try to follow a list of rules, act a certain way or live out certain values, or even by turning up to church every week. The Salvation Army's theme for this year is discipleship. The main passage is based on 2 Peter 1:3-16 in which Paul mentions a whole list of qualities/characteristics that we should be developing in our spiritual lives if we want to grow as a disciple. This is all underpinned by the invitation from God who has chosen each one of us to come into a relationship with him and from whom we can receive everything we need to make our Christian lives really work and make sense.

Jesus showed that his relationship with God was the most important thing to him. We read in the Bible that many times Jesus took himself away from everyone and everything to pray. It was in his relationship with his Father that Jesus drew his strength, calmed his anxieties, found guidance and fulfilment. We were created to be in a relationship with our Father - this is where we will be the most at home, complete and fulfilled. Spending quality time with our Father, knowing we are completely loved and totally accepted, is the fuel that will enable us to be disciples - every day, in everything and everywhere.

Here is one story in the Bible in which Jesus tells two sisters exactly this.

Word 2. Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

'As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me." But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."' (Luke 10:38-42 NLT)

Mary and Martha both loved Jesus. When Jesus came to visit, Mary sat at his feet listening to his words, whilst Martha was distracted with preparing and serving the meal for the group. Of course, the task that Martha was attending to was important and necessary. Jesus doesn't tell her that she should have been in with Mary listening to him. He does, however, comment on the fact that she is worried and upset about many things when she could be doing what Mary is doing.

The point of this story is not that we shouldn't do any jobs (!) but that we should always ensure that Jesus is our priority. There will always be things/people/activities to distract us from our relationship with Jesus and our spiritual journey; and many of these activities will be good, healthy and useful to our lives. But even our good works will get us nowhere without a proper relationship with Jesus. We can be so busy doing things for Jesus, that





we don't spend any time with him. Mary demonstrated the 'one thing worth being concerned about' and that is to spend time with Jesus!

Group discussion:

- Why is Martha so upset and frustrated?
- What do you think about Jesus' gentle rebuke of Martha?
- What is the 'one thing worth being concerned about'?
- Why is it important to make time 'sitting at the feet' of Jesus?
- How was Martha seeking to honour Jesus in her activities?
- Are you more like Mary or Martha? Why?
- Do you find it easy to spend time with Jesus or do other things crowd that time out?
- In what ways do you sometimes find yourself busy, upset or distracted like Martha?

Use any of the following activities with your group as you find appropriate:

a. List the top ten things/people/activities that are the priorities in your life. An easy way to establish this would be to look at what you spend the most time doing each day/week. Where does Jesus fit in?

b. Complete the paraphrased Scripture inserting your name and the things/people/activities that you become distracted by. What would Jesus say to you about this? What is your response to him?

As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman/man named (insert your name) welcomed him into her/his home. Her/his sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. But (insert your name) was distracted by

.....

And the Lord said to her/him, "My dear (insert your name), you are so distracted/worried/ upset/influenced by

..... There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her." (NLT)

Action

Use this section to spend some time chatting with your group about how you can build a relationship with God and the importance of regular 'quiet times' or 'devotional times'. You could start by watching this short YouTube video.

Messy Mondays: 'Making Time' for God -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgMFXan9pjQ>





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Spread out five large pieces of paper or card, each with one of the following words written on:

- Why?
- Where?
- When?
- What?
- Distractions?

Talk about each one in relation to the time you spend with God and jot down your thoughts onto the paper. Create a spider diagram that provides you with a visual record of your discussion. Ask your group to share about their own times with God, what works and what doesn't. Encourage your group members to be really honest and tell it as it is! Here are just some examples, hopefully your group will think of many others, especially as they share their own experiences.

Why should we spend regular time with God?

- It's a friendship - we spend time with our friends, don't we?
- God wants time with us - he has things to say that we need to hear
- We want to get to know God more
- Our relationship with God is where we will find we are most loved, fulfilled and at peace; where we can get fuelled up and calmed down.
- Somehow, when we prioritise being with God, the rest of the day falls into place and we seem to have more time to get all our other important tasks done, not less!

Where?

- Anywhere!
- Your bedroom
- A different room in your house that is quiet
- In the garden
- Out walking
- A special favourite place outside
- In the car
- At the gym/out running

When is a good time?

- Anytime that works for you!
- First thing in the morning, before the day begins
- Last thing at night - as long as you don't fall asleep!
- The important thing is to create a consistent habit, so try to maintain the same time every day.

What should you do during this time?

- Pray





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- Read the Bible
- Use daily Bible reading notes / personal devotional material
- Meditate (think about) the Bible passage you have read
- Chat to God about anything that's on your mind
- Listen to what God wants to say to you
- Pray for other people
- Keep a journal
- Listen to music
- Worship
- Sing
- Dance
- Paint/write/draw
- Read a book
- Listen to a podcast
- Take a walk

Talk about/show your group members a selection of different resources that are available for personal devotional times. For example, using a good Bible translation and/or Bible study notes. There are many different apps that provide a daily devotion: try Word For You Today (WFYT). This app also has a daily Bible reading plan that takes you through the whole Bible in a year. Infinitum provides a daily inspirational quote or Scripture, along with other resources. YouthBytes provides a short devotional that corresponds with a ten-minute video clip. There are also many podcasts and loads of different devotional books (take a look on the Eden Christian bookshop's webpage of 'youth & teen' devotional books).

Distractions?

- On the last sheet of paper think about the things that distract you from your relationship with God and from spending time with God. How can you put them in the proper place in your life?

Prayer

For young people, one of the biggest distractions can be their phone. Pray together and use the young people's phones as a symbol of their commitment to putting Jesus as number one in their lives. You could simply ask the young people to hold their own phone as they pray. (It would be interesting to discuss how they could use their phone as a way of connecting with God too, eg, wallpaper, apps, podcasts, worship music etc).

Alternatively, you could give each young person a picture of a phone (see Appendix 2).

Play some reflective music and ask the young people to prayerfully consider all that you have discussed during this session. Ask them to note down any





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people/things/activities/worries that are distracting them in their discipleship on the blank space in the phone.

Remind the young people that even Jesus regularly took himself away from everyone and everything to pray, and so we should follow his example.

Read Proverbs 3:6 (TLB) to the group:

'In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.'

Encourage group members to write this verse on their phone and then ask each person to use this verse to pray a short prayer, e.g. 'God, my commitment is to put you first in my life in all that I do and all that I am. Amen.'

Any of the following songs may be suitable for your time of prayer and worship.

This Is Living - Hillsong Young and Free

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsJEmLkphrI>

Where You Are - Hillsong Young and Free

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQ1mciSk1MQ>

Jesus, You Alone - Tim Hughes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElEwNKwaipc>





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Appendix 1

Beyonce Knowles	Solange Knowles
Michael Jackson	Janet Jackson
Serena Williams	Venus Williams
Prince William	Prince Harry
Mary-Kate Olsen	Ashley Olsen
Mary	Martha
Moses	Aaron
Dakota Fanning	Elle Fanning
Malia Obama	Sasha Obama
Cain	Abel
Andy Murray	Jamie Murray
Nick Jonas	Joe Jonas
Kim Kardashian	Kourtney Kardashian





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Appendix 2

