

The Great Commission



Matthew 28:16-20



Many people are searching for followers. They want to influence the way we dress, think, act, purchase and generally live our lives. Many have good intentions, while some do not, but they all fall short of the person we follow as Christians. In our Bassline session today we will explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and how following him is the best decision we can make in our lives. As Jesus encountered his disciples on the mountaintop, he gave the most important instructions they would ever need, which remain applicable to us today.

You will need:

- Creative resources for the Sound Check section (appropriate for the group)



Beat

Leader's notes:

Ask the group to write down names of ten people they think are positive role models. They can be people they know or those who are in the public eye. They must be people whose advice they would be willing to follow.

Once the lists are completed, discuss their choices together. What criteria did they use to select names for their list? Are there any disagreements about those that have made the list?

Say:

Many people are searching for followers. They want to influence the way we dress, think, act, purchase and generally live our lives. Many have good intentions, while some do not, but they all fall short of the person we follow as Christians. In our Bassline session today we will explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and how following him is the best decision we can make in our lives.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Whose advice do you listen to the most? Why are they so trustworthy?

 **Amplify****Say:**

Jesus gathered his disciples together to give them instructions about the best way to follow him.

Read:

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’

– (Matthew 28:16-20)

Ask:

- What information do we discover about this encounter with Jesus in Matthew 28:16-17?
- In verse 18, Jesus says that he had been given all authority in Heaven and earth. What do you think he means?

Say:

The New Testament scholar NT Wright points out that through this statement, Jesus makes it clear that he has all the authority to rule the world. Despite the current state of the world, Jesus is the ruler of Heaven and earth through his death and resurrection.

NT Wright says the following:

‘People get very puzzled by the claim that Jesus is already ruling the world, until they see what is in fact being said. The claim is not that the world is already completely as Jesus intends it to be. The claim is that he is working to take it from where it was – under the rule not only of death but of corruption, greed and every kind of wickedness – and to bring it, by slow means and quick, under the rule of his life-giving love. And how is he doing this? Here is the shock: through us, his followers. The project only goes forward insofar as Jesus’ agents, the people he has commissioned, are taking it forward.’

– (NT Wright, *Matthew for Everyone* Part 2)

Ask:

- Read Matthew 28:19-20. What has Jesus commissioned us to do?

Say:

Verse 19 commands us to 'Go and make disciples'. This does not mean that we all need to be missionaries setting out for far-off lands. Instead, 'go' is an active term. As we go through our lives, we are called to make disciples. In the Sound Check section, we will explore what it means to be a disciple and how we can play our part.

Ask:

Verse 19 mentions that we are to baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In The Salvation Army we do not baptise with water like many denominations do. Why are we different, and what do we do instead?

Say:

Unlike most other denominations, The Salvation Army does not perform water baptisms; however, members are free to be baptised if they wish. Although we respect other denominations that participate in this sacrament, and understand how important it can be to the individual, we do not believe that it is a necessary requirement to being a Christian or an essential part of following Jesus. We believe that the Holy Spirit baptises us and that the way we live our lives is more important than the rituals we observe.

Say:

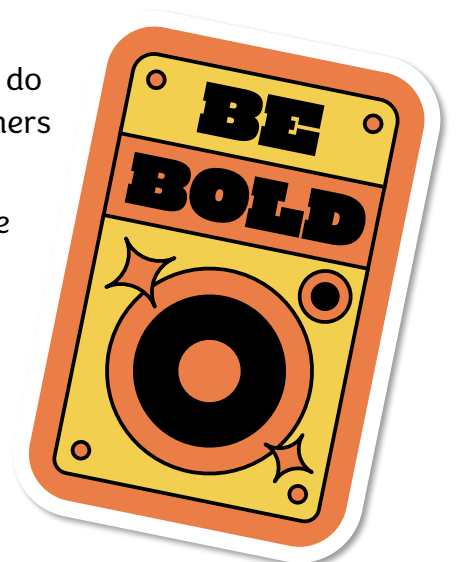
Verse 20 highlights how following Jesus involves teaching others about him.

Ask:

- How can we teach others to obey Jesus' commands?
- As Christians, we are all called to teach others about Jesus. How do you feel about that? In what ways are you currently teaching others about Jesus? How could you grow in this area?
- This may all seem like a daunting task, but what reassurance are we given at the end of verse 20?

Say:

As we choose to follow Jesus, we are never alone. No matter the challenges we face, he is always with us.



 **Bridge****Leader's notes:**

In today's Scripture, Jesus encounters his disciples on the mountain. If the group would like to explore more about the importance of mountains in the Bible, then watch and discuss the following clip together.

Watch:

Mountains Symbolise Something Amazing in the Bible (stop at 2:47)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxDleoVz7_8

 **Sound Check****Leader's notes:**

The aim of the Sound Check activity today is for the young people to explore what it means to be a disciple and creatively present that information. They could create a 'build your own disciple' kit, a disciple instruction guide, a poem or a piece of artwork. You can organise this activity however works best for your group, but an information clip and Bible verses are provided below to get the group thinking.

Watch:

What is a Disciple? – Christianity Still Makes Sense w/ Dr Bobby Conway (2:34)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1y5HC8EJzM>

You could put up a list of the following Bible references for the young people to use as a starting point.

Bible Verses linked to the life of a disciple:

³⁴ A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
– (John 13:34–35)

³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'
– (John 8:31–32)

²³ Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?'
– (Luke 9:23–25)

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

– (Matthew 28:19-20)

25 Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 ‘Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰ saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

31 ‘Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.’

– (Luke 14:25-33)

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

– (Philippians 2:3-4)

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

– (Colossians 3:17)

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned about discipleship today, would you describe yourself as a disciple? Explain your response.

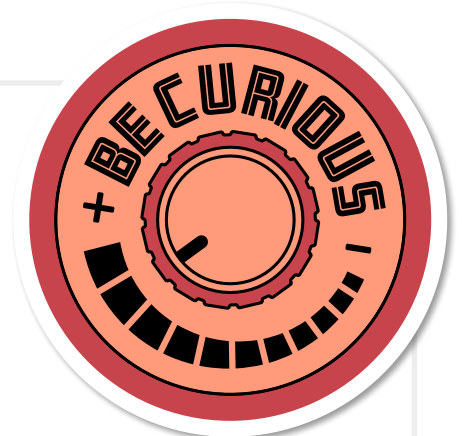
 **Bridge**

Ask:

– What is your response to the following quote?

‘Discipleship is not an option. Jesus says that if anyone would come after me, he must follow me.’

– Tim Keller



 **Selah****Ask:**

What is a good day for a disciple? What does it look like?

Leader's notes:

Watch the clip together and discuss what a day living as a disciple of Jesus looks like. Do the young people ever take a moment at the end of the day to think about how they have followed Jesus? Ask the group to consider a daily practice they could adopt to pause and reflect on their discipleship journey. Remind the young people that this practice is designed to encourage growth with God, rather than focusing on how they have failed to follow Jesus. Jesus emphasises that, as we follow him, we are not alone. He promises he will be with us always.

Watch:

What is a good day for a disciple? Active Christianity (3:48)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nv6m63WYH00>

Leader's notes:

To bring this time of reflection to a close, read Matthew 28:18-20.

Read:

¹⁸ Jesus came to them and said: 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth!

¹⁹ Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.'

— (Matthew 28:18-20 CEV)

 **Coda****Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing you will take away from this session about the importance of following Jesus?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.