

session two

f o l l o w e r s b e c o m e l e a r n e r s

FOCUS Disciples mature through basic training — a time for learning the essentials. Jesus is an available and transparent leader. Before disciples can know who they are, they need to know who he is. Only then are they equipped to understand his mission, purpose, methods and expectations.

PRAYER *Pray for wisdom and insight, an openness to learning, growing and being renewed in your relationship with Jesus. Pray for a new sense of personal identity as a disciple of Jesus. Pray for caring attitudes among those who are studying this material together. Pray for your congregation, that others would be open to becoming a congregation committed to a discipleship model for ministry.*

O P E N I N G D I S C U S S I O N

- Describe your most fulfilling experience in working on a team. How would you describe your relationship with the leader?
- What do you count on a leader to do?
- How important are the accomplishments of a leader in determining your level of commitment to a cause?
- What are the benefits of a close, personal relationship with a leader? What can be the downside of that relationship?

S E A R C H I N G S C R I P T U R E *Read Luke 9:18-20 aloud.*

1. The disciples were on hand as Jesus taught the large crowd that had been following him. They had just experienced the feeding of the five thousand with the five loaves and two fish they offered to him and watched him bless. *What do you think the crowds were talking about after the feeding? What might they have been saying about Jesus?*
2. After a time of prayer, Jesus asks them a leading question: “Who do the crowds say that I am?” *What are the answers?*
3. Jesus asks, “But what about you? Who do you say that I am?” *Why is that the single most important question a disciple of Jesus can answer? How would you answer that question? Where would your answer come from?*

4. We will look at what the Word reveals concerning the identity of Jesus. (You might divide into smaller discovery teams to share the exploration of these 14 biblical references.) The question to be answered, after investigating each text, is: *“What does this tell us about who Jesus is?”* Write your responses and share them with the group.

- Luke 1:30-33 Announcement of his birth (*Who is he?*)
- Luke 2:8-12 Proclamation to the shepherds (*Who is he?*)
- Luke 3:21-22 A voice at his baptism (*Who is he?*)
- Luke 4:13 Confronting evil (*Who is he able to face and resist?*)
- Luke 4:17-21 A prophesy (*Who does Jesus claim to be?*)
- Luke 4:34-37 A word from the demons (*Who do they say he is?*)
- Luke 5:18-26 He has power to heal and forgive (*Who can do that?*)
- Luke 6:5 He is Lord of the Sabbath (*Who is he?*)
- Luke 6:20-49 The teaching about the Kingdom (*What is life like in the Kingdom of God?*)

- Luke 7:11-17 His Word brings life to the dead (*Who is he?*)
- Luke 7:40-50 *What does Jesus say about forgiveness and faith?*
- Luke 8:4-15 *How are we to live a productive life?*
- Luke 8:21 *What does Jesus expect of those who are close to him?*
- Luke 8:22-25 *Who is able to stop the winds and the waves?*

K E Y C O M P O N E N T O F D I S C I P L E S H I P

Disciples learn the basics.

1. The disciples begin to learn, through experience and explanation, who Jesus is and his mission — a mission that includes every disciple. Jesus deepens the relationship with his disciples by revealing to them the truth of his identity. Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. He is “God with us.” *How has your understanding of who Jesus is deepened over time? What is the significance of being able to say that Jesus is God’s Messiah?*
2. All who follow Jesus as a disciple need to learn the basics. Only by knowing who Jesus is can we accept his power and his authority. Once we know and accept who Jesus is, we can grow in our ability to trust and follow him. *What does our need to know Jesus and his power have to do with our need to study the Word? How do you as an individual and we as a congregation engage in “basic training?” What could be strengthened or revitalized personally, corporately?*
3. The basics of discipleship offer us a new view of reality. Through the process of learning and observing, disciples begin to glimpse what Jesus was revealing: the Kingdom of God. *What does that new reality have to do with our lives right now?*
4. In accepting this new view of life, we are also leaving something else behind. It is the way we used to view life. This is the beginning of the process of exchanging one view of reality for another. It should come as no surprise that such a change will also include changes in behavior, attitude, habits, self-understanding, motives, etc. *What are some of those changes as you experience them?*
5. Luther expressed the basics in this way: “Christ Alone,” “Word Alone,” Faith Alone,” and “Grace Alone.” *What do those phrases mean to you? Why are they important as we seek to know who Jesus is and who we are as disciples?*

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M O V I N G T O W A R D A C T I O N *Talk about one or more of the following:*

What implications do these have for your life and the life of your congregation?

1. How confident can you be about your basic training? Did you miss some of the fundamentals? What? How can you “catch up”?
2. How well are members of our congregation trained in the basics of discipleship? What classes do we offer to review the basics?
3. What opportunities for learning do we offer? What groups are being served? Which are being missed? How can we reach more with opportunities to learn?
4. What kind of learning opportunities do we offer for those new to the congregation or those new to the faith? What might they be looking for? What more could we do?

C L O S I N G T H I S S E S S I O N

Thank God for calling you to be Jesus’ disciples. Give thanks for the opportunity this study offers to grow and be strengthened in your faith. Invite those who have come to new insights to share them. Let those who may be struggling or who have some confusion ask for support and openness to the teaching and guidance of the Spirit. Pray for the Spirit’s strength to carry through on the changes you think Jesus is inviting you to consider for your congregation as you invite and teach new disciples.

P R E P A R I N G F O R T H E N E X T S E S S I O N

Read Chapters 9-10 in the Gospel of Luke. Make a list of all the ministries of which you are aware currently underway through your congregation. Ask for volunteers to lead the prayers for the next session.

“The disciple is dragged out of his relative security into a life of absolute insecurity (that is, in truth, into the absolute security and safety of the fellowship of Jesus), ... out of the realm of the finite (which is in truth infinite) into the realm of infinite possibilities (which is the one liberating reality).” (The Cost of Discipleship, p. 58)

