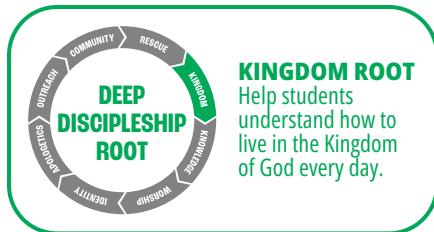


MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ follow Jesus no matter what.

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 4:18–22, LUKE 5:27–32



MESSAGE

POINT 1: Following Jesus is life-changing

Read or have someone in your group read Matthew 4:18–19

It is likely that Peter and Andrew grew up fishing. It's possible these brothers learned to fish from their father, who learned from his father. Fishing would have been something they were very familiar with and probably planned to do for the rest of their lives. Then Jesus invited them to follow him.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a **personal story** about something that changed your life. (Example: becoming a parent or being called into ministry.)

After Jesus' invitation, Peter and Andrew would never be the same. They would no longer be fishermen but fishers of men. Jesus changed everything. They became a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) with new values, a new purpose, and new lives.

This choice to follow Jesus didn't give these brothers a one-time change. The more time they spent following Jesus, the more they changed as Christ molded them to become more like him. They heard authoritative teachings that only Jesus could speak (Matthew 7:28–29) and witnessed miracles only the Son of God could perform (Mark 2:12). Every moment with Jesus had the potential to be life-changing.

POINT 2: Disciples give up everything for Jesus

Read or have someone in your group read Matthew 4:20–22

When Jesus walked up on James and John fishing, they were with their father, Zebedee. At Christ's invitation to follow him, the brothers dropped their nets and "immediately" (v. 22) left everything behind—their business, their home, and their family.

EXAMPLE: The prophet Elisha left his family to replace the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19:19–21).

While following Jesus will always require sacrifice—us surrendering our ways for his—this does not mean we are called to leave behind our home, family, or all our worldly possessions. But following Jesus does mean that God should be more important and precious to us than anything else in our lives (Matthew 10:36–39; Matthew 13:44–46).

POINT 3: Disciples leave the known for the unknown

Read or have someone in your group read Luke 5:27–28

As a tax collector, Matthew (also called Levi) probably had a routine for his job. Start work at *this* time in *this* location. Collect *this* amount of taxes for *this* reason. Repeat day in and day out. At the very least, Matthew would have been familiar with his job and lifestyle. There was probably a feeling of comfort to the routine, to the familiar. Then Jesus invited Matthew to join him. Jesus offered a call to leave the routine, to leave his comfort zone.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a **personal story** about a time you moved from something you were familiar with to something that was completely unknown. (Example: moving from the town you grew up in to someplace new for college or your parent's job.)

EXAMPLE: Abraham left everything that was familiar to him so he could step out into the mystery of God's calling (Genesis 12:1–4).

It is not uncommon that following God involves us stepping into the unknown—areas where we are required to trust God more than we trust ourselves. It is an act of faith.

POINT 4: Disciples try to make disciples

Read or have someone in your group read Luke 5:29–32

After Matthew's encounter with Jesus, he quickly threw a party where Jesus was the guest of honor. Matthew also invited all his friends so that they, too, could meet and have an encounter with Jesus. As we follow and grow in our relationship with Christ, we will want others to know him, too.

As Jesus prepared his disciples to carry on the ministry that he started, he gave them a final command, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20a). Making disciples is a natural response to being a disciple.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION

- When have you had to give something up you liked in order to pursue something better?
- Why do you think following Jesus requires sacrifices?
- What do you need to give up today to follow Jesus more closely?
- When have you experienced the benefits and joys of following Jesus?
- Why do you think some people follow Jesus “immediately” and some are more hesitant?
- If you are a Christ-follower, what are some sacrifices you’ve made for Jesus?
- Who is helping you grow in your relationship with God?
- Who are you helping grow in their relationship with Jesus?
- Sometimes following Jesus feels easy. Sometimes it will be extremely difficult. What can you do this week to encourage a fellow Christ-follower who might be struggling to keep following Jesus?

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.

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