



Vision and Commitment 2018  
**A year to focus on discipleship**

**Every day, in**  
**everything**  
&  
**everywhere**

## Discipleship Series Youth - Getting Together (Gathering)

### Key message

From the beginning of his ministry to the end, Jesus gathered his disciples and shared his life with them; teaching them, encouraging them, supporting them and loving them both as individual friends and as a group of believers. He left his Holy Spirit with them so that they would be equipped to continue their discipleship and carry out his work. Coming together is a key part of discipleship, we're not called to make this journey on our own, but rather in the joyful and encouraging company of friends, family and fellow believers.

### Key Scriptures

Mark 1:16-20, Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-36

### Resources

- Bibles - or print outs of the Scripture passages
- Pens/paper
- A device on which you can watch YouTube videos
- Drawing material
- Plain wallpaper
- Scriptures printed out for prayer activity.

### Welcome

Split into two teams. Tell the group that you are going to call out a word, and that they must make a human model of the word using every member in their team. You could also require that the model be able to move to add an extra layer of team work! Award a point to the team that have made the best human model. The team with the most points at the end of the game is the winner. Use any of the examples below, or make up your own:

- Giraffe
- Tea pot
- Wheelchair
- Doughnut making machine
- Washing machine
- Bicycle
- Spider
- Church
- Aeroplane





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## Word

a) Read:

*'One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him.*

*A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.'* (Mark 1:16-20 NLT)

*'They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together. Everyone was amazed by the many miracles and wonders that the apostles worked. All the Lord's followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved.'* (Acts 2:42-47 CEV)

*'The group of believers were united in their hearts and spirit. All those in the group acted as though their private property belonged to everyone in the group. In fact, they shared everything. With great power the apostles were telling people that the Lord Jesus was truly raised from the dead. And God blessed all the believers very much. There were no needy people among them. From time to time those who owned fields or houses sold them, brought the money, and gave it to the apostles. Then the money was given to anyone who needed it.'* (Acts 4:32-36 NCV)

b) Watch any, or all, of the following video clips from The Simpsons:

- The Simpsons, Homer the heretic, funny part  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kutEPUDBsXw>  
Watch from the beginning up until 37 seconds
- The Simpsons No Church for Homer!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rg-AjdCpsvo>  
Watch from the beginning up until 32 seconds
- In Marge We Trust (part 1)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WT08Osm9PXA>  
Watch from 1min 30 - 3 min 46





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### c) Group discussion

- What is the point of church?
- Is it important that we gather together with other Christians? Why or why not?
- Homer says *'What's the big deal about going to some building every Sunday... isn't God everywhere?'* Do you agree or disagree with this?
- How does reading about the way the early church lived inspire you to live in community today?
- Acts 4:32 states that all the *'believers were united in their hearts and spirit'*. Why is unity important in the church today? How have you seen this modelled in your own community?
- What encouragement have you found in your own discipleship through other people?
- Is it possible to grow as a Christian on your own? Why or why not?
- How has your church community helped support your discipleship and spiritual journey?

Jesus didn't call just one disciple - he called a group of disciples. He called Andrew and Peter together; he called James and John together. He developed a personal relationship with each one of them, but he also worked with them as a group. This wasn't incidental, or merely for efficiency's sake - it was intrinsic to his discipleship plan. He disciplined them in the context of community. He taught them together, he prayed with them together, he sent them out two by two, he created group learning opportunities. Like a master coach, he developed them as individuals by forming them into a team.

The bottom line is this. When you respond to Jesus' call to be his disciple, he calls you into real community with other Christians. There are no exceptions to this rule. It is not possible for you to develop as a healthy and productive disciple of Jesus with only minimal and/or large meeting interaction with other disciples. To say 'I want to follow Jesus, but I can do this alone' is simply wrong-headed. A huge amount of Jesus' personal guidance, correction, encouragement, and character development is designed to come to you through the network of close Christian friendships he calls you to form.

d) There are a host of metaphors/images in the New Testament that can help us understand the community nature of discipleship and our role as the church. Three of these are given below. (Descriptions from Nicky Gangemi: <http://fevr.net/bible/five-ways-the-bible-describes-the-church>)

Split into three groups and ask each group to consider one of the metaphors below. Ask them to consider their own church community and the specific people that are part of it. Provide some drawing materials and ask each group to create a picture that represents their church as the metaphor e.g. as a family, as a body or as a temple. Ask them to include the names of as many people as possible on their picture. Then share the pictures with each other and discuss what you have learnt.





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- **A Family**

The church is often referred to as a family in the Bible. God is our Father, and all the members of the church are our brothers and sisters. There are older Christian brothers and sisters that we can look to for advice on how to live as Christians (much like we'd look to an older brother, sister or a father figure) and there are younger brothers and sisters that we can teach about Jesus (much like you'd teach your own younger siblings). And just as a regular family loves and cares for each other, we too are to love and care for each other with a brotherly and sisterly love that comes from Christ. Let us love and encourage one another as brothers and sisters, because we are family! (See Hebrews 2:11)

- **A Body**

Another metaphor that is used for the church is 'the body', specifically The Body of Christ. This image uses the understanding of a body with head, hands, feet, and other body parts. In this image, Jesus is the head of the body - that's why it's called the body of Christ. And the rest of the body is made up of Christians. The people in the body are different and they have different roles. This body metaphor is helpful because it shows that we are all different and we have different gifts that God has given us to serve in different ways. Let us use our different gifts God has given, to serve him and others because we all have a role to play as the body of Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

- **A Temple**

Another image of the church is also a temple. This imagery comes from the Old Testament. The temple in the Old Testament was a huge, magnificent building where God lived. God's people could go to the temple and know they were near to God. But now, because of Jesus, we don't have to go to some big temple to worship God, instead the Bible tells us that God's people are a 'temple of the Holy Spirit'. This means that God dwells within his people by the Holy Spirit. This image of the church as the new temple is built upon the foundation, the cornerstone of Jesus and each of us are the 'living stones' built together by him into a living building that shows his presence. (See 1 Peter 2:4-5; 9-10, Ephesians 2:19-22.)

## Action

1. Ask each person to draw a timeline of their journey as a Christian so far (you could use pieces of wallpaper for this.) Tell them to think carefully about the people who were around them at different points along their journey and write their names on the timeline. These could be Christian parents, church leaders/youth leaders, Christian school teachers, friends, youth group members, band members etc. If everyone is comfortable doing so, share your pictures with each other and discuss.
2. Ask each person to identify and tell the group about:
  - An older person who has discipled/mentored you on your journey.
  - A friend who has been a great support to you on your journey.





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- Someone who you feel you have encouraged or supported on their journey.

3. You could also take some time here to talk to the group about the different discipleship opportunities that may be available in your corps, such as Life Transformation Groups, a one-on-one discipleship programme, youth cell groups, school Christian Union etc.

## Prayer

Jesus said that where two or three people get together in his name then he'll be there with them (Matthew 18:20). Although we can meet with God on our own, there's a special sense in which God is present when Christians meet together.

1. Write or print out the following Scriptures onto large pieces of paper and spread out around the room. Play some reflective music and ask the group to move around the room, stopping by each Scripture to respond in their hearts and pray.

*'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!'* (Psalm 133:1 NIV)

*'Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all the others.'* (Romans 12:4-5 TLB)

*'Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with you.'*  
(Matthew 18:20 CEV)

*'In response to all he has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good. Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.'* (Hebrews 10:24-25 TLB)

*'Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law.'* (Galatians 6:2 MSG)

2. Ask the group to all stand. Use the following four different themes of prayer. For each theme turn and face a different direction (e.g. north, south, east and west). If your group are confident enough have them all pray out loud at the same time. You may find this easier if you play some background music. If they are not confident perhaps have them pray together in pairs, swapping pairs at each turn. The prayers can be short, maybe only a minute in each direction.

- Thank God for all the people who have had a significant impact in your life or who are walking alongside you on your journey of discipleship now.





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- If you would like a mentor, pray and ask God to bring someone into your life to help you in your Christian walk.
- Pray for your Christian friends and ask God to help you be a strong support and encouragement to each other in your living and growing in Jesus day by day.
- Ask God if there is anyone younger than you in faith who you can be an encouragement to and commit to doing something about it.

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

Make Us One by Jesus Culture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLCdsR3DwbQ>

With One Voice by Stephen Curtis Chapman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKDM75nmWws>

