



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

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

## Discipleship Series Children - Putting First (Prioritising)

This resource is to enable children to unpack the theme of discipleship. It's the first of a six part series looking into six rhythms in the journey with Jesus, exploring Jesus as the model of discipleship and what we can learn from him.

### Aim

- To understand that as a disciple the first thing is to stay connected to God, to seek him, to listen to him and speak to him.
- To understand that we need to set aside time to get to know God and understand what he wants us to do as his disciple.
- To explore and understand prayer.

### Preparation

- Packets of Skittles, enough for experiment and prayer activity and a non-transparent bag to hold the Skittles (check for children's allergies with parent/carer) - Appendix 1.
- Ceramic plates (depending on if you wish every child to take part, one each or one or two to repeat the experiment a few times) and access to hot water (not hot enough to scald, but hot enough to make the colour run in the Skittles!).
- A4 cards with A, C, T, S written on them - Appendix 2.
- Pencils and coloured pens
- A4 paper
- Music suitable for background noise and facilities to play music.
- Print copies of Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 (one for each child.)

### Background for leaders

Read Mark 6:45-46 (NLT).

Mark shows how amidst the busyness of his ministry, Jesus took time to seek his Father, finding time to be alone in his presence. In the events leading up to that moment, Jesus had returned to his home town of Nazareth where they refused to believe who he was (Mark 6:1-6), and his beloved cousin John the Baptist had been beheaded by Herod Antipas (6:14-26). Seeking a remote area to be alone, Jesus and his disciples travelled in a boat to a solitary place. However, upon arrival, they found crowds waiting for Jesus. Filled with compassion, Jesus did not send them away. This is where we read about the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:30-44).





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When we read Jesus 'insisted' that the disciples get into the boat, it is understandable how powerful his actions were. He knew the importance of spending time with his Father, seeking his will, refocusing and understanding through his Father's eyes what was happening around him. Most importantly, he taught others to do the same.

So what does this say to us? There are times in our lives where there is so much happening around us, influences affecting us and decisions to be made. It is important to take time to step back, reflect and spend time with the Lord. Waiting, listening and receiving from him is vital in our journey as a disciple.

Why is it that at certain times we find it so hard to do this? Do we fall out of the habit, do we limit the time we spend in prayer or do we only search for him in our hour of need? Thankfully we have a God full of grace who loves us dearly and is patient with us. Take a moment to consider what that means for you.

When we appreciate Jesus' rhythm of life and participate in it, relying on his spirit of grace, it changes everything about our life.

## Icebreakers

### Eyes Up

Ask the children to stand in a circle. Ask them to put their heads down with their eyes closed and on the count of three to lift their heads up and look at someone in the circle. If the person they are looking at is looking at them, both children are out of the game. Continue until there are only two people left, they are the winners.

Explore that as disciples we need to always have our eyes on Jesus, knowing that he will help us to live the way he wants us to, to be like him.

### Count Up to 21

Ask the children to stand in a circle. Explain that everyone follows on and counts up to 21. Each person can say up to three number sequences at a time. For example '1, or 1,2 or 1,2,3'. The next person follows on the next number either '2, or 3, or 3,4' and so on. The person that says the number 21 is out of the game. Repeat until the last person left in the circle is the winner.

Ask the children how it made them feel when they knew they had to say the number 21? As disciples, sometimes things do not go the way we thought they would. Maybe we have acted or spoken in a way we shouldn't have because of what was happening around us. We were doing it without thinking. As a disciple, when we have days like this, Jesus still loves us and forgives us.





## Lesson

Throughout Jesus' life he spoke to many people and shared his life with them. He told them many parables (stories) from everyday activities that were taking place in the lives of the people around him (e.g. the lost sheep, the lost coin - Luke 15). These parables helped people understand the way God wanted people to live and how God would help them.

Jesus spent his time teaching and helping people to understand the best way to live - God's way. Another way that Jesus showed us how to live was by the way he acted and the way he treated people. Also by the way in which he spoke to anyone and everyone, how he took time to listen to people, how he loved everyone and how he took time to prayer to his Heavenly Father.

Let's read Mark 6:45-46 (NLT):

'Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home. After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray.'

Jesus 'insisted'. What does insist mean?

Has someone ever insisted you do something? I insist you tidy your room. I insist you do your homework. *Encourage children to share some examples.*

- I wonder how you felt during these situations? How did you react? Did you do what was being asked? Did you get help with the task?

Jesus insisted that the disciples go into the boat; it sounds like some of them did not want to obey him.

- I wonder how the disciples felt going into the boat?
- I wonder why Jesus needed them to do as he asked?

He made sure that they got in the boat. I wonder if, like the disciples, there was a time you knew you had to do something but didn't want to do it? Perhaps homework or tidying your room? *Encourage the children to share some examples.*

- I wonder how it made you feel?
- I wonder if you got help to do what was asked of you?
- I wonder how the disciples felt getting into the boat?
- I wonder why Jesus had to insist for the disciples to get in the boat and cross over to Bethsaida?





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*Give the children time to think of this for themselves, don't be afraid of the silence. If they are sitting quietly it means they are thinking. They may also want to say their thoughts out loud.*

*Here are some possible ideas that might be shared; perhaps they wanted to stay with Jesus, they didn't want to leave Jesus behind, maybe concern that Jesus was tired, why wasn't Jesus coming with them, didn't he want to?*

Jesus also told the people who were there to go home. He sent them away, saying good-bye.

What did he do next? Can anyone read the last part of the verse? '...he went up into the hills by himself to pray'.

Jesus knew how important it was to stay in touch with his Heavenly Father through prayer.

- I wonder why Jesus went by himself to pray?

*Again give time for children to think about it...don't worry about the silence.*

*Here are some suggestions; so that he wouldn't be distracted, so that he could talk without anyone listening, so that he would pray and not do something else.*

So as we have just read Jesus went up in the hills to pray, to speak to his Heavenly Father. Even Jesus needed to pray to God and stay connected to him through prayer.

As disciples prayer is very important. It is how we stay connected to Jesus/God, listening and finding out what he wants us to do. We may sometimes find it hard to do this regularly, but we must try our best to connect with Jesus/God every day.

- I wonder in what ways we could do that?

We are going to explore what prayer is, how it helps us connect to God, and how important it is to listen to God. This is one of the first things we must do as a disciple for it gives us what we need to be able to live how Jesus/God wants us to. We need to pray every day. Prayer helps to guide us, it gives us strength and helps us to know Jesus better and stay close to him.





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## Activities

### Skittles Feelings Game (Appendix 1)

Print Appendix 1. Keep the skittles in a bag so the children cannot see the colour they are picking. Give them time to answer the questions based on the colour of their skittle.

Explore through this activity the fact that we are all different and therefore may pray differently and that is alright.

### Skittles Experiment

Arrange skittles in a circle around the edge of a plate. In the centre of the plate carefully pour some hot water until it touches the skittles, making sure they stay in place. Wait and the skittles will gradually release their colour.

This experiment makes a great statement about what we are asking God to do when we pray. In essence, prayers are a way of joining with God and asking him to have an effect on the world and situations around us. We pray because we believe that our prayers, through God's power, will make a difference to the world. In this activity, colour is released from the sweets into the surrounding water, creating a colourful picture. This is symbolic of how the prayers we raise to God are a way of us joining in with him and his work here on earth.

## Worship

**Song suggestions of songs about speaking to God (all available on YouTube):**

- *Wonderful Lord* by Doug Horley
- *Prayer is Talking With God* by Doug Horley

## Prayers

### ACTS (Appendix 2)

*Show the children each letter and explain its meaning as a model for prayer. Take time to pray with the children based on each letter:*

- **A - Adoration (worship and praise)**

This is a time of telling God what he means to you and how much you love him and how wonderful, good, holy, magnificent and glorious he is, solely focusing on him. Tell him all the wondrous beautiful things about him you love.

- **C - Confession (saying sorry, knowing our faults and the things we do wrong)**

This is when we confess all our sins to God. Ask God to bring to mind things you may have done wrong, whether you are aware of them or not, so that, with his help, you can come clean and be sorry.





- **T - Thanksgiving (to say thank you)**

This is where we count our blessings, thanking and praising God. For example: for all he has given us and done for us in life such as family, friends, food, home, safety, school and health. Thank him for hearing your prayers and for forgiving your sins and for his love for you. Thank him for his promises, for the glory of his handiwork.

- **S - Supplication/Seeking (asking God for help)**

This is the phase of prayer where we come to God asking him to help not only us, but others. For example: to help your brother focus in maths class and to give his teacher the wisdom she needs to present the information in a way he can understand. If you feel led to pray for a certain person but don't know exactly what that person needs, ask God to lead you in prayer. He will.

### **Prayer Hand (Appendix 3)**

In a circle discuss the hand prayer with the children. Explain each finger as you get them to hold it. Wait for them to share their ideas and what they could pray for.

## **Response**

### **Prayer Diary (Appendix 4)**

Print out enough copies for each child. Talk about the different things they can pray for, the different times and locations they can be praying throughout their day. Give the children time to fill in their prayer diary (either writing or drawing) based on the things that were discussed. Encourage them to use it during the coming week.

### **Paper Plane Prayer**

Give each child a piece of A4 paper and ask them to write a prayer on the paper. It doesn't have to be long but their prayers will be read out to the group. Then ask them to fold the piece of paper that they have written their prayer on into a paper airplane - watch this video to learn how: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AljTDb2cyhc>.

Ask the children to line up at the end of the room with their paper planes then on a count of three have a race. See who wins then ask the children to go and stand by a plane (not necessarily their own plane). In turns, ask the children to read out the prayers and share them together.





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## Appendix 1

# The Skittles Feelings Game



**Red** - One thing that makes you **HAPPY**

**Orange** - One thing that makes you **SAD**

**Green** - One thing that makes you **ANGRY**

**Yellow** - One thing that makes you **EXCITED**

**Purple** - One thing that makes you **AFRAID**





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## Appendix 2

A C

T S







Appendix 3





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Appendix 4

# I CAN PRAY EVERY DAY

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WHAT					
WHEN					
WHERE					

