

A-Z of Discipleship Course

6 weeks

Before You Start

This 6-week course will take us on a whistle-stop journey through the basics of discipleship. Ensure you have a Bible.

We'll be guided by Matthew's simple book, *A-Z of Discipleship*. You will get the most out of this course if you've read or listened to the relevant chapters before-hand. However those who haven't will still be able to engage with the material.

To purchase the *A-Z of Discipleship* book online, [click here](#).

To watch or listen free to *A-Z of Discipleship* being read online by Matthew, [click here](#).

Each weekly session is designed to take 70 minutes (ie. 1 hour and 10 minutes), so do make time for this. This allows 10 minutes for discussion on each section, which is not long. So the leader should be mindful of this in leading, prayerfully considering when it's right to move on, or whether it's important to stay a little longer on a particular section and shorter on another.

WEEK 1 - INTRODUCING DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is the daily practice of following Jesus. It's an exciting adventure to which all Christians are called. Discipleship is something we do every day, and it requires practice. At its heart is a person - the person of Jesus Christ. That's why Jesus is mentioned on most pages in Matthew's book: *A-Z of Discipleship*.

This is the first week of the 6-week *A-Z of Discipleship Course*. Today we will introduce the topic of discipleship.

Preparation

Before you meet, read chapters A and B of *A-Z of Discipleship* and, if you have time, any of the Foreword, Preface and Introduction.

Begin (15 mins)

The leader should ensure that everyone is welcomed. Go round the group and make sure everybody knows each other's names. Then go round the group again and ask people to share a fascinating fact about themselves. Now go round one final time, and ask everyone to share a word or phrase that comes to mind, when they think about Jesus.

Talk about this course. The leader should make it clear that we don't have to have read the relevant sections in *A-Z of Discipleship* to be able to engage with this discipleship course, but that it helps. The most important thing is that we put the material in this course into practice. That's the way to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus.

Start by reading John 13:35, and then pray for everyone, that together the group would be marked by love - as the group grow in love for each other, and for Jesus Christ.

Introduction (20 mins)

Talk in pairs or threes, sharing your hopes for this course. Then look at this definition of discipleship (on p.1 of *A-Z of Discipleship*): 'Discipleship is the daily practice of following Jesus.' Talk about that definition. What is exciting about it? And what is challenging?

Now get people back into one group. Feedback to each other about your conversation. In particular talk about what it means to really 'follow' Jesus: to let him lead, direct and guide your life.

At the end of the Preface, Matthew says he hopes people will 'capture a vision for a lifetime of discipleship that's not only personally fulfilling but, more importantly, changes the world.' What do you make of this? Is this what you want?

Discussion (20 mins)

1. *A is for Abba*

Followers of Jesus worship God, who is described in the Bible as 'Abba' - which is the intimate name a son or daughter in near-eastern culture would call their father. As we get to know Jesus, we get to know his Father, who carefully made us and, unlike human fathers perfectly loves us, and mercifully sent Jesus to die for our forgiveness. Spend some time talking about this good God and how Jesus reveals the love of God the Father. Look at bible verses such as Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:14-16 and John 14:9. Are you starting to get to know this Father, as you follow Jesus? Are you sensing the presence of his Spirit, pouring the Father's love into your heart?

2. *B is for Bible*

The Bible is very important to disciples because it is the message of God's love and is alive (Hebrews 4:12). As we are prayerful and open our lives to Jesus, so his Spirit communicates with us, especially through the Bible. Look through the index of a Bible, noticing the Old Testament and New Testament and seeing how it fits together. Then read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and see what the Bible says about itself. What do you make of it being 'God-breathed?' How does it say it is useful? What has God said to you recently as you have read the Bible? Why is it good to read the Bible every day?

Pray (15 mins)

End by spending some time in worship and prayer.

First ask if there is anyone who isn't yet a follower of Jesus, but who would like to be. If so, make time to lead them in a prayer to start following Christ - eg. *thanking* God for sending Jesus to die for them; saying *sorry* for all the wrong in their lives, and *asking* God to forgive them, and fill them with his presence and love. Encourage them that they are now a follower of Jesus, and adopted into God's family.

Then encourage everyone to participate in prayer, praying from the heart to Jesus, even if it's just a short sentence or two. They might like to pick up phrases from the Bible that have been looked at earlier. Together you could use a '*thank you, sorry, please*' model of praying (as above). So encourage everyone to *thank* God being a good Father. Then say *sorry* for selfishness, praying, as Jesus taught his disciples: 'forgive us our sins' (Matthew 6:12). Then ask if anyone has any particular prayer needs, and pray for each other. End by *asking* that the Spirit of God would speak as each one as they read the Bible in the coming days.