

**WHAT JESUS WANTS HIS
DISCIPLES
TO
KNOW AND DO**

**A DISCIPLESHIP TRACK
FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
FOR USE WITH STORYING GROUPS
IN WEST AFRICA**

*A Sequel to **Sharing the Message Through Storying***

By LaNette W. Thompson

PREFACE

God is working in a tremendous way throughout West Africa. Testimonies abound of people coming to faith in Christ through the use of storying, chronological Bible teaching. People have not just heard the Gospel, they have understood it and are now embracing the Good News that they can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Many storyers have come to me with questions. "What do I do now that I have finished the Evangelism Track and have a group of believers?" they ask. "How can I continue to use the storying method to disciple these new believers?" This manual is one suggestion. More discipleship tracks need to be developed, and I encourage those who are working on such tracks to share their work with others.

May God be glorified.

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To Marvin...

Who shows me by example

What it means

To be a disciple.

This first edition is intended for field testing. Please share all comments, suggestions, and testimonies with the author.

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INTRODUCTION

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God.” *Philippians 1:9-11*

Pastor Issiaka’s hand trembled as he lay his Bible on the bench beside his other papers. He had just completed the final lesson in the storying Evangelism Track. For a year, he had faithfully told the Bible stories to the group of villagers gathered under the mango tree. At each session, he had asked the questions that brought out the themes. Conducting the sessions had not been easy. Interruptions were constant. Sometimes, the questions he asked were too difficult, and instead of responding, the people had just stared at him. Other times, he had had to repeat the story several times before the people learned it. Still, he had continued, week after week, watching the people’s faces. First, he saw their sadness as they realized they were lost. Then, their hope as they heard about the Promised One from God, Jesus. Today’s lesson had been the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The people had listened, enthralled, as they heard how God unleashed his power on his disciples. Now, the story was over. Issiaka had asked the questions, and they had responded. “Jesus Christ is the only Savior,” they had said. The people sat quietly, watching him, waiting.

Issiaka prayed silently as he looked at the lined faces of the old men, the eager faces of the young. The people knew the stories. They knew the characteristics of God and the definition of sin. They knew about Jesus. They now knew what they had to do to accept God’s gift of salvation.

Issiaka faced the people, his hands outstretched. “You can have forgiveness of sin, become God’s children, and receive eternal life,” he said. “Believe in God. Repent of your sins. Accept the death of Jesus as your sacrifice, and follow Jesus.” One by one, he boldly searched the people’s faces. He felt the Holy Spirit’s power as he called in a loud voice. “Who is ready to do this today?” A rustling was heard through the entire group as each turned to his or her neighbor. Suddenly, all eyes turned as Soungari, one of the elders, slowly rose to his feet. His back was bent from years of labor in the field, his eyes almost shut with age and disease.

“I am ready,” Soungari said quietly. “I want to follow Jesus.” One by one, the group members rose to their feet.

“I am ready,” Minata called.

“Me, too,” cried another.

Issiaka watched as one by one the people stood before him. He raised his hands to heaven, tears streaming down his face. The Holy Spirit was moving among them, and in heaven, the angels were rejoicing. Suddenly, the instructions Jesus had given to his disciples rang in his mind. “Go and make disciples,” he had said. “Teach them,” Jesus had commanded. Issiaka looked from one to the other of the group members standing before him. Make disciples...he thought. These people have never been inside a church building, have never heard of Sunday School. His stomach tightened as he looked at the joyful faces in front of him. Now, I must teach them to be disciples, he thought. But how?

The Discipleship Track from the Gospel of John can be used immediately following the Evangelism Track. It is designed for those who have made decisions to believe in and follow Jesus as well as for those who have not yet made a decision but who want to know more about what it means to follow Jesus.

Eleven lessons based entirely on the Gospel of John compose the Discipleship Track. The track is basically one story, the story of Jesus teaching his disciples. Besides the overarching story, each individual lesson is based on a particular story concerning Jesus and his disciples. These stories reveal Jesus' teachings. Jesus' fervent prayer for all his disciples in John 17 assures us that believers today need to know these special teachings that John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, recorded so well.

One purpose of this track is to help new believers and those who want to know more about what it means to follow Jesus to understand some of the teachings Jesus gave his disciples. These teachings, the Discipleship Track themes, are divided into two groups. They are **TRUTHS** Jesus wanted his disciples to **KNOW** and **THINGS** Jesus wanted his disciples to **DO**. Each lesson includes several teachings concerning discipleship. These teachings are either practices Jesus modeled (prayer), specific commands (love one another), or truths learned from Jesus' words (we are saved from sin and free in Christ).

During the introductory story of the first lesson, you will share the ten truths that Jesus wanted his disciples to know and thirteen things that Jesus wanted his disciples to do. The people will not remember this list. However, by hearing, for example, that Jesus' disciples are loved but will also be persecuted, the believers will begin to grasp what discipleship means – that it is relationship, not ritual. Most of the themes will be repeated several times throughout the series of stories, giving the group adequate opportunity to understand each concept.

Jesus' prayer (John 17:11, 20-23) was that his disciples would be one, that they would be brought to complete unity. Thus, another purpose of this track is to build unity by leading believers to put Jesus' teachings into practice in their own lives and in their relationships with each other as fellow believers. Ephesians 4:11-16 states:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will be no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Believers develop unity as they begin to relate together as a body. In this track, believers will begin to praise God through prayer and, if culturally appropriate, song. They will decide as individuals how to apply the truths to their own lives and as a group how to apply the teachings in their relationships to each other. They will be given opportunities to testify to how God is working in their lives, will memorize Scripture, and will pray for each other. They will begin to show love to each other by ministering to those who are fellow believers in the group, the body. By showing love to one another, unbelievers will know the believers are Jesus' disciples.

The emphasis in this Discipleship Track is on helping the individual believer grow in his or her relationship with Christ as well as helping individual believers relate to each other as a body. Although one of the teachings is that disciples need to testify to others about their faith, issues concerning a believer's relationship to unbelievers have not been addressed. If the body is to develop, it is important that it be given time to do so in order to strengthen its members. Issues concerning behavior in specific situations such as what to do when one is wronged by a fellow believer have also not been addressed. If a specific situation that needs biblical guidance arises, you, the storyer should prepare a specific storying lesson to address that issue.

Another issue that has not been addressed specifically in the track is tithing. This is a necessary practice and a part of worship. The Lord loves a cheerful giver. Telling the new believers they must now give ten percent of their income to the "church" when they are not yet operating in unity as a body may cause them to be suspicious of your motives or give them the false impression that they are buying favors from God. The gathering of a tithe creates other issues. Who will keep the money? Where will it be kept? What will be done with it? Will leaders expect to be paid? During the time in the storying session when the body prepares for ministry, the group will discuss ways in which it can meet the needs of widows or the needy in the group. The question of funds will come up at that time. Instructions on how to address this issue are given in the section entitled, "Tasks of the Storyer." Specific lessons on tithing will appear in future tracks.

Because of the preconceived ideas the individuals in the group and in their community may have of a "Christian," that term is not used in this series of lessons to refer to a follower of Jesus. Whichever term was used in the Evangelism Track to identify Jesus' disciples should be used throughout this series of lessons. Just as it is best not to use the term Christian, one should wait to talk about Christianity, a denomination, or even church. This track illustrates that a true disciple enjoys a personal relationship with Jesus as well as with fellow believers. A new convert who believes he or she is entering a religion, a denomination, or a church will be more concerned with the traditions of these entities than with examining his or her own life in the light of biblical truths.

The term "body" is used throughout the lessons. The "body" is composed of believers in the storying group who realize they have a common faith and relate to each other as brothers or sisters in Christ. They may or may not be baptized. Although baptized believers functioning in this way could definitely be termed a church, that term will be introduced in later tracks to avoid the issues with which the term may be associated in the minds of believers, such as equating "church" with "building."

During this Discipleship Track, you, the storyer, must decrease while the body increases. The group should be gradually prepared to function on its own. Instructions on ways this can be encouraged during the storying session are given in the section entitled "The Tasks of the Storyer." There is another issue that every storyer must face - the issue of literacy. We do not want to return to dependence upon literacy for evangelism and discipleship. The group must not choose its leaders based on their educational level but on the teachings they will learn in the stories as well as the leadership of the Holy Spirit. As these leaders are called, the storyer should help them either to become literate or to find one or more persons who will read to them. Access to literacy will help the group become independent more quickly. Literacy is obviously not necessary for spiritual growth, maturity, or independence, however.

Believers and/or new leaders should also be trained in the Evangelism Track in order for them to continue to reach out to others. This training should be at a separate time from the Discipleship Track and should include training in memorizing the Evangelism Track stories as well as the pertinent questions.

If believers were not baptized following the Evangelism Track, a baptism should be scheduled at the end of this series for those who have made the commitment to be true disciples. Some who were seeking information may have turned away now that they understand what it means to be a true disciple just as many turned away after initially following Jesus. Others may have decided to accept Christ. As unity develops, the body develops, and the church is formed.

THE STORYING SESSION IN THE DISCIPLESHIP TRACK

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.”
Psalm 96:1-3

“But, I don’t understand,” Julien said. “Now that the people have accepted Christ, why don’t you just have them come to the church where you pastor. Their village isn’t that far from yours. They could learn what it means to be a church and worship with you until they are ready to function on their own.”

“These people have never been inside a church building,” Issiaka replied. “They aren’t familiar with our music or the way we worship. Because of their previous beliefs, they consider drums to be pagan. I don’t know what they would think if they heard our drums beating as the choir sings.”

“They have to be taught what it means to be a church,” Julien said. “How else are they going to become involved in our union of churches? Besides, if you want them to remain separate, unless they organize into a church and start having services in the same way we do, they will never get the funds they will need to build a building. There are already several groups ahead of them on the list for this area.” Issiaka shook his head as he sat on the bench beside his pastor friend. They had just finished a pastors’ meeting where they had discussed their calendar of activities for their area for the coming months. During the testimony time, Issiaka had shared about the response of the people in his storying group. Many of the pastors were using storying in their communities. Others felt more comfortable with the evangelism methods they had always used. All of the pastors had been excited and encouraged by Issiaka’s news. When the meeting had ended, Julien had come to sit beside Issiaka to discuss the future of Issiaka’s group. Julien was the union representative for their area and was always excited about the possibility of new churches.

“Remember what Daouda said at the storying conference he taught last year?” Issiaka asked. “Those who have become believers through storying may never feel comfortable in a church building or worshipping in the same manner as we do. We need to lead them to develop their own worship style.”

“I remember what he said,” Julien replied. “I’m just not sure I agree with him. We have to cooperate together, Issiaka. There is strength in numbers.”

“I know,” Issiaka said. “But these are new believers. I want them to know that a church is a body of baptized believers working together in unity for the cause of Christ. How many of our present churches are working together in unity? How many of our current church members really know what it means to be Jesus’ disciples? We need to encourage discipleship before we start talking about church membership. There has to be a way to help new believers grow into a church slowly, with the Holy Spirit leading.”

Just then, Issiaka felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Daouda. Daouda’s eyes were shining as he greeted the two men. “Issiaka,” he said. “I was so excited when you told us of the decisions many in your storying group have made. These next few months are very important to their development. Can you stop by my house on your way home? I want to show you a series of storying lessons based on the Gospel of John. It’s a Discipleship Track designed especially for groups like yours.”

Julien rose slowly to his feet. “I will support you in whatever you decide to do, my friend,” he said to Issiaka. Julien looked over the small groups of pastors who were

gathered talking throughout the room. “Discipleship in our churches has always been one of our weaknesses. Every pastor here will admit that. Just don’t shut us out, Issiaka. Let us know what you’re doing. We can learn from each other.”

“I will, Julien,” Issiaka said. “Our methods are not in competition with each other. I just want to help this group have the best chance possible for a good beginning. That’s what I’ve prayed for, Julien.”

“Why don’t you stop by my house, too, Julien,” Daouda said. “You may be able to use this Discipleship Track in your Sunday School. As Issiaka said, our storying groups and our existing churches are not in competition. We just have to let the Holy Spirit lead us.”

“You’re right,” Julien said. “I suppose storying is new enough to cause some of us old-timers to be uneasy. We just need to give it time, to see how God leads. After all, we all want the same thing, to see every person in West Africa and the world know Christ as personal Savior.”

“Amen,” Daouda and Issiaka replied. The three men left the building together, each with his own thoughts. Issiaka’s mind was on the Discipleship Track that Daouda had mentioned. Would it be very different from the Evangelism Track, he wondered. Julien was right. Storying was new enough to cause many of the pastors to be uneasy. The Evangelism Track had been a new experience for Issiaka. But, he had seen firsthand what could happen when people really understand the message of the gospel. Now, what new things awaited him with the Discipleship Track?

PARTS OF THE STORYING SESSION IN THE DISCIPLESHIP TRACK

Introductory Session: This session takes place before the Bible story.

Opening Conversation: The time when the group gathers, news is shared, and the storyer begins turning the conversation to spiritual things.

Prayer and Praise Time: Short time of praise and thanksgiving through prayer and, if culturally appropriate, song.

Review of Memory Verses: Previous memory verses are recited by the group in response to the key question linked to the verse.

Review of Previous Lesson: The themes from the previous story as well as the story itself are reviewed.

Testimony Time: Group members are given the opportunity to testify to how the Holy Spirit has helped them put the knowledge they gained in the previous lesson into practice in their daily lives and in their relationships with each other.

Understanding Difficult Concepts: During this time, the storyer leads the people to discover the meaning of difficult concepts in the current story by using examples from their everyday lives.

Transition Story: A few statements linking the previous session’s story with the current story.

Bible Reading: A few verses or the entire story for the current lesson is read aloud from the Bible. This reading signals that the story that follows is from God's Word.

The Story: The storyer tells the story in his or her own words or reads with expression the story from the Bible then paraphrases the reading. A visual aid is used at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: The part of the storying session where the story is fixed in the mind of the group, truths are gleaned from the story, and the body determines how the truths can be put into practice in their individual lives and in the life of the body.

Review the Story: A group member is asked to repeat the story. The storyer and other members aid when necessary.

Story Questions: These are factual questions as well as interpretive questions that help the people discover the truths in the story.

Questions for the Body: There are two types of questions in this section. First, there are questions for individuals that will help them determine how they will put newly learned truths into practice in their daily lives. The second type of question is designed to be discussed by the body until a consensus is reached. These questions center around ways in which the body will put into practice what they have learned as they relate to each other as believers within the body. The body, not the storyer, determines these practices, as they should be culturally appropriate. For example, the body will discuss, "How should we, as children of God, relate to one another?" The group will determine specific examples of appropriate behaviors.

Prayer for the Body: Prayers are voiced asking for understanding of the truths learned in the current story and strength to put these truths into action as believers live daily. Intercessory prayer for any members of the body with special needs is also offered.

The Memorization of God's Word: The group members will hide God's Word in their hearts so that they might not sin against him. They will learn a key question that is linked to each verse to aid in recall.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: The body makes plans to visit those in the body who have new babies, are sick, or are grieving. They make plans to help widows who are members of the body and are in need. The entire body or a representative group makes these visits, and individual members are charged to make visits during the week. Group members who are no longer attending storying sessions should also be visited. These actions are important to demonstrate the group's love for one another to the unbelieving community.

Closing Prayer: A closing prayer is voiced to terminate the session.

THE TASKS OF THE STORYER

In the Evangelism Track, your task as storyer was to present the biblical story in as accurate a manner as possible, giving the people an oral Bible. You were also to use questions to facilitate the discovery of the truths necessary for one to understand salvation. These two tasks, presenting an oral Bible and facilitating the discovery of truths, are also tasks in this track. However, new tasks have been assigned. All of these new tasks are *facilitating* tasks, not *leadership* tasks. Once new converts testify to their faith, you will be tempted to return to familiar expository teaching methods to do discipleship. Resist this temptation.

Just as it is more likely for the driver of a vehicle rather than a mere passenger to remember landmarks when driving through unfamiliar territory, your group will remember more if they are allowed to drive rather than go along for the ride. An important rule to remember in this track is that you must decrease while they increase. One of the truths the group will discover during this track is that Jesus calls some to serve others and help others to be true disciples. These three characteristics, Christ's call, a desire to serve, and a desire to facilitate others' spiritual growth will be the characteristics the group should seek in a leader. The following are your primary tasks.

- 1) **Facilitate Opening Conversation.** Just as in the Evangelism Track, you will want to catch up on the news of the group. A difference exists in the Discipleship Track, however, in that you may ask questions of a spiritual nature such as, "How has God blessed you this last week?" Such questions help the believers to look for God's activity in their lives.
- 2) **Facilitate Prayer and Praise Time.**
 - a) Three prayer times have been included in the session. The first is at the beginning of the session and is a prayer/praise session. Once the believers have gathered, read a few praise verses from the Psalms and/or voice thanksgiving for what you heard in the opening conversation. Individual believers may wish to voice thanksgiving. Model giving praise to God using short, simple sentences. Praise songs may be sung if it is culturally appropriate. Group members should lead this time as they gain experience and show a desire to do so.
 - b) The second prayer time takes place at the end of the discovery time and is a prayer for strength and direction on how to put the new truths into practice. Pray specifically. "Rasha has said she has wanted to show that she is a child of God by not showing anger to her co-wife. Give her strength to do this." This time also includes a time of intercessory prayer for those in the body. Include your prayer needs so they can pray for you.
 - c) The last prayer is a closing prayer after ministries for the week have been determined. As the people feel comfortable, encourage them to voice the prayers. Keep your own prayers short and simple so that you do not intimidate others. Point out that in the stories Jesus never shouted at God. Suggest that we should do as Jesus did, not as we may see others do.

- d) The body may soon realize the need to meet at other times other than the storying session for times of encouragement, prayer, and praise. They should be encouraged to do so, even if you are not present.
- 3) **Facilitate the Recitation of Previous Memory Verses by Asking Key Questions.** With each succeeding lesson, each new verse should be added to the review. You may wish to have the people stand as they recite God's Word. After several lessons, reciting God's Word could be a spontaneous time with different group members asking a key question and the group responding. Be careful that this part of the session does not become too long. If the people are having difficulty reciting Scripture, arrange for them to schedule a time to practice their verses during the week. If they are having a very easy time, add more verses with appropriate key questions.
 - 4) **Facilitate the Review of the Previous Lesson.** Ask someone to repeat or summarize the previous lesson. Ask, "What did we learn in our last session that Jesus wants us to KNOW? What did we learn that Jesus wants us to DO?"
 - 5) **Facilitate the Testimony Time.** Ask group members to share with the group how the knowledge they gained in the previous session affected their lives. For example, how did learning they are a child of God affect their behavior? Is there something they didn't do that they normally would have done? Is there something they did that they normally would not have done? Did they feel the Holy Spirit giving them strength? The people may at first be hesitant to share openly. Keep asking the questions. They may be answering in their hearts. Model a testimony by giving a concise, current example of how God has helped you put the truths into action in your own life. Share your failures as well as your victories.
 - 6) **Facilitate the Understanding of Difficult Concepts.** When Jesus was with the crowds, he spoke in stories. When he was with his disciples, however, he often explained concepts that were difficult for them to understand by either speaking plainly or using analogies to their everyday lives. In these lessons, there may be some concepts, such as "grace," or "the good shepherd," that need some clarification. The key here is not to *explain* the concept as much as it is to provide analogies to the people's everyday lives so that they can *discover* the meaning of the concept. Some suggestions have been made, but it is best if you use illustrations that are culturally appropriate. This facilitation task takes place during the introductory session, NOT during the story in order to preserve the presentation of the oral Bible.
 - 7) **Tell the Transition Story.** Prepare a few statements to link the previous session's story with the current story. Review briefly the overarching story of Jesus teaching his disciples, stressing that there are certain truths Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW and certain things Jesus wants his disciples to DO.
 - 8) **Read Aloud from God's Word.** Just as in the Evangelism Track, you may wish to read a few verses or the entire selection. Suggested verses are given in the lessons.
 - 9) **Tell the Story, Using a Visual Aid at the Appropriate Time.** Tell the story in your own words or read it expressively. Wherever there is dialogue in the story,

include it to provide interest. You may want to have group members act out the story.

10) Facilitate the Discovery Time.

- a) Questions for the discovery time are divided into two sections. Story questions are designed to fix the story in the minds of the listeners as well as to draw out the truths inherent in the story. These are the types of questions that were asked during the Evangelism Track. However, this question time should be easier than that of the Evangelism Track for two reasons. First, whereas in the Evangelism Track the listeners were required to infer truths from story events, in the lessons of this Discipleship Track, Jesus speaks very plainly to his disciples and the answers to the questions are more evident. Second, those true believers in the group now have the Holy Spirit within them helping them to understand the truths.

- b) The second section of questions in the discovery time is for the body. One type of question has to do with an individual's relationship with Christ. Questions such as, "What things in your life will you need to change now that you know you are a child of God?" (Lesson One) call for an individual response. Members of the group may or may not be willing to share their answers before the group. You may model appropriate sharing by talking about the changes that need to be made in your own life. Let the Holy Spirit lead. Another type of question is aimed at drawing out culturally appropriate responses to scriptural directives. Although some answers are suggested in the lessons, most of the questions are designed as discussion topics for the group. In the beginning, you will lead these questions in order to provide a model. Soon, however, a group member should facilitate the discussion until the group reaches a consensus on the proper response to a question. For example, the question in lesson one, "How should we act toward our brothers and sisters in Christ in our community?" is designed to elicit specific examples of behavior in their particular community rather than generalities such as "show love to one another." Seek specific examples that are culturally appropriate of how they can show love to one another and specific behaviors that can be put into action immediately. The body will then be encouraged to put these ideas into practice and report on their activities at succeeding meetings.

11) Facilitate the Memorization of God's Word.

- a) Following the instructions of Psalm 119, the believers should begin to hide God's Word in their hearts. Be sensitive to the needs of the nonliterate. You should not write the verse for the group to read unless all group members are literate. Suggested procedure for group memorization is a responsive chant. During your preparation time, divide the memory verse into short phrases that can be uttered rhythmically, if possible. During the session, begin with the first phrase and have the group repeat the phrase after you. You should repeat this first phrase responsively at least three times. Go to the second phrase and repeat it responsively three times. Combine phrases one and two, and have the people repeat the combination responsively until they can say the combined phrases easily. Each succeeding phrase should be repeated responsively by itself at least three times before adding it to the preceding phrase combination. Every time a new phrase is added to the preceding ones, the entire new

combination is repeated responsively until the people can repeat it easily. When the group can respond to your recitation of the entire verse, stop the responsive repetition. Introduce the key question and recite the entire verse along with the group as a response to the question. When the group is reciting the verse easily, ask for volunteers to recite the verse. If a group member volunteers, ask that person the key question and then have him or her respond with the verse. Be patient. The group may need some time to think about the verse before being able to recite it easily. If the group is having difficulty, assign each phrase to a different individual, making certain that person knows his or her phrase by heart and where the phrase fits in the verse. These individuals can then teach their phrases to the others during the week until everyone knows the verse.

- b) If the group is nonliterate, teaching them the scripture reference will have no meaning. In order to help them apply scripture to their lives and be able to respond to others' needs with God's Word, a suggested key question has been given with each verse. For example, in lesson one, the memory verse is: "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." The key question for this verse is "*What right does Jesus give to those who receive him?*" Once the group can recite the verse responsively, ask the key question, indicating that the verse itself is the response. Encourage the people to practice the question and its response with each other during the week. In Muslim settings, boys in Koranic schools go from courtyard to courtyard in the evening, repeating their lessons. This practice should be encouraged among the believers. They should teach the verses and the key questions to their children and have them recite them in the courtyards of other group members. In future sessions, during the introductory time, review previously learned verses by asking the key question. By using this process of question and scripture response, nonliterate can actively participate in worship experiences. Ritual is an important part of African culture. Having the group stand when reciting God's Word and the use of question and scripture response is one way for the group to incorporate ritual into worship practices. By the end of this Discipleship Track, the worship leader or any member of the group should be able to ask a key question and receive a scriptural response.
- c) Research has shown that body movement such as rocking or moving one hand in a rhythmic motion aids in memorization, especially of long passages. Chanting or singing are also memory aids. Determine what is culturally appropriate for your group. The group may wish to put the verse to music, using the key question as the title of the song.
- d) If there are members of the group who are literate, you will, of course, want them to have the scripture reference for the memory verse. They should memorize the scripture along with the key question as the others do, however. If it is appropriate, the literates may help the others practice the verse during the week if they can do so without taking control or being condescending.

12) Facilitate the Preparation of the Body for Ministry.

- a) In John 13:35, Jesus says that others will know that we are his disciples if we love one another. It is important for believers to show love for one another in a manner that is visible to the larger community. At the close of each session, facilitate the discussion of particular needs within the group. Has someone had a new baby? Has someone lost a family member? Is someone sick? Is there a widow who is a member of the group and in need? The body should discuss how they can show love throughout the week to these people. They should go as a body to visit and pray for these individuals at the end of the session. If it is not possible for the entire group to make the visits, representatives of the group should be sent. The body should decide which members of the group will make more visits during the week.
- b) If there is a widow who is a believer and a member of the group, the body should be led to see its responsibility to care for her. It is important that the body itself determines these ministry actions. Make sure the group realizes that their opinions and practices may change as they mature as believers, that they are not necessarily making permanent decisions but are always subject to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
- c) The group should be allowed to act in culturally appropriate ways as long as their practices do not interfere with scripture. It may be the older men or just the eldest man who makes the decisions regarding ministry actions. Men and women may form two groups with only women visiting new babies, for example. Whatever the body decides, facilitate the process but do not control its development. That is the job of the Holy Spirit. If someone in the group suggests a practice that is not scripturally sound or leans toward syncretism, allow the group time to correct the group member. If it appears the group is going along with the suggestion, ask what Bible stories speak to this issue, or offer suggestions of Bible stories that speak to the issue. Ask questions to prompt their thinking. Allow the group to self-correct, rather than saying "You cannot do that," if at all possible. Because the Evangelism Track is based primarily on the Old Testament, some issues, such as polygamy may appear to be scripturally sound. It is probably best to wait to discuss such issues until the people have more New Testament knowledge (future tracks on Acts and the Epistles, for example) so that they can have more information on which to base their decisions.
- d) The body will probably quickly determine that money is needed to help with some of the ministries, such as helping a widow in need. As the group sees the need to meet together during the week for encouragement and prayer, other expenses such as lantern fuel may arise. If an offering is taken, you should contribute but not more than the others. When the body has determined the need for finances, you may wish to introduce the concept of the tithe and offerings as a natural response to their need and as an act of worship. Actively seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit regarding this issue. You may wish to tell the story of God addressing the Jewish people in Malachi 3. Briefly telling the story in Malachi in response to their need for direction will reinforce the use of biblical stories as guides for daily living. It must be clear in the people's minds that bringing tithes and offerings is an act of worship, not an attempt to win

God's favor or influence his acts. They must also realize that, unlike sacrifice, the offerings are not an atonement for their sins. Any money offerings or items to be given, such as soap, grain, etc., should first be brought before the group and placed together. The items should be pooled with the explanation that they are intended for distribution but first, the items are going to be dedicated to God and God's blessing is sought for their use. In some areas, sacrifices are made with the idea that if God does not come down and take it himself, the items can be used by those present. The people must understand that the process of dedication is an act of worship, not a presentation to God for his personal consumption. As the body develops, giving should also develop naturally.

- e) Part of facilitating the preparation of the body for ministry includes addressing issues in the body as they occur. In a future track, the task of facilitating the body to relate to the unbelieving community will call on the storyer to lead the body to determine proper behavior in rites and rituals, such as initiation, wedding, and funeral rites. However, if during this track, a group member dies, for example, the group should be called upon to determine appropriate behavior. Be very sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leadership. If the people are not yet spiritually mature enough to make decisions, do not force them to do so.

THEMES FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them.
- They are God's children and belong to him.
- They are saved from sin and free in Christ.
- Jesus has conquered Satan.
- They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan.
- They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light.
- They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus.
- Their failures are forgiven when they repent.
- Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve others and help them to be true disciples.

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Trust in Jesus.
- Pray.
- Love Jesus.
- Obey Jesus' commands.
- Be free from the slavery of sin.
- Follow Jesus and remain in him every day.
- Have peace and not be afraid.
- Have a full and joyful life.
- Love one another.
- Serve others.
- Confess their faith and testify to others.
- Bear much fruit (Bring other people to Jesus).
- Be in unity with other believers.

STORY TITLES, TEXTS, AND MEMORY VERSES

Lesson One: Jesus' Disciples are God's Children

Text: John 1:1-5, 10-14, 16-18

Memory Verse: *To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)*

Key Question: What right does Jesus give to those who receive him?

Lesson Two: Jesus' Disciples Do Not Walk in Darkness

Text: John 8:12-36, 42-47

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)*

Key Question: Do Jesus' disciples walk in darkness?

- Lesson Three: Jesus' Disciples Have a Full and Joyful Life in Jesus
Text: John 10:1-30
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28)*
Key Question: What does Jesus give his followers?
- Lesson Four: Jesus' Disciples Confess their Faith and Testify to Others
Text: John 12:20-37, 42-50
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me." (John 12:26)*
Key Question: Whom does God honor?
- Lesson Five: Jesus' Disciples Love and Serve One Another
Text: John 13
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34)*
Key Question: Should Jesus' disciples love one another?
- Lesson Six: Jesus' Disciples Have the Holy Spirit in Them
Text: John 14
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:16-17)*
Key Question: Do Jesus' disciples have the Holy Spirit?
- Lesson Seven: Jesus' Disciples Will Be Persecuted
Text: John 15
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)*
Key Question: What can Jesus' disciples do apart from him?
- Lesson Eight: Jesus' Disciples Have Peace and Should Not Be Afraid
Text: John 16
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)*
Key Question: Why should Jesus' disciples not be afraid?
- Lesson Nine: Jesus Disciples' Pray
Text: John 17:1 – 18:3
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." (John 16:24)*
Key Question: Why should Jesus' disciples pray?

- Lesson Ten: Jesus' Disciples Are Saved and Free in Christ
Text: John 18:1-18, 25-27
John 19:16-18, 25-27, 30, 38-42
John 20:1-10, 19-22, 24-31
Memory Verse: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*
Key Question: Who can have eternal life with God?
- Lesson Eleven: Jesus' Disciples Are Forgiven Their Failures When They Repent
Text: John 21
Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)*
Key Question: How will others know we are Jesus' disciples?
-

"I'm supposed to use this manual in the same way I used *Sharing the Message Through Storying*?" Issiaka asked.

"That's right," Daouda replied. "Choose the questions you want to ask or add other questions depending upon the needs of your group." David's wife Sarah brought the men glasses of water that they accepted thankfully.

"This track isn't very long," Issiaka said, as he placed his glass on the table beside him.

"No, just the eleven lessons," Daouda replied. "But feel free to add other lessons as needs arise in your group."

Issiaka thumbed through the manual as Julien looked over his shoulder.

"I like the fact that there is a praise and prayer time as well as a testimony time," Julien said. "Scripture memorization is a good idea, too." He grinned, "All you have to do is take an offering and we could call it church." They all laughed.

"Do you feel better about it now, Julien?" Daouda asked.

"Yes," he said. "I see what you're trying to accomplish. You're right. The new believers need to grow and mature in their faith before we add the responsibilities of union membership."

"I may use some of these ideas in my church as well as with the new believers in the storying group," Issiaka said. "I finished the Evangelism Track stories with my church members a long time ago."

That afternoon, as Issiaka pedaled home, he thought of the new tasks before him. He felt much more confident than he had at the beginning of the Evangelism Track. He smiled. It would be exciting to watch the new believers grow in their faith. The sun beat down upon his head as he laughed out loud. It was a beautiful day.

LESSON ONE

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES ARE GOD'S CHILDREN**

PREPARE THE LESSON

The purpose of the Evangelism Track in *Sharing the Message Through Storying* was to give the unbeliever the chance to hear and understand the gospel by starting in Genesis and storying through the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Those who accepted Jesus following the Evangelism Track now need to understand Jesus' teachings concerning discipleship. They also need to build unity by putting Jesus' teachings into practice in their own lives and in their relationships with each other as fellow believers.

Those who completed the Evangelism Track heard a story from Luke entitled "Jesus and his Disciples." They also heard several stories from the Gospel of John such as "Jesus and Nicodemus," "Jesus Heals a Blind Man," and "Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead." This first lesson in the Discipleship Track from the Gospel of John is an introductory lesson to the entire track. A sample introductory story is included to help you introduce the Gospel of John and tell the overarching story of Jesus and his disciples. Since group members are aware of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples, they should have no difficulty fitting this series of stories into the chronological framework that they now have of Jesus' life. Each lesson is a separate story set within the overarching story of Jesus' concern that his disciples understand certain truths and practice certain behaviors that will help them mature as believers. Because group members now know the "end" of the story, they will have greater insight into the stories. They know that Jesus will be crucified and resurrected. They will identify with Jesus' concern that his disciples learn everything they can before his departure.

You will notice that in today's introductory story, the themes for the discipleship track are listed. Unlike the themes in the Evangelism Track, most of the themes in the Discipleship Track are quotations from Scripture. Thus, by listing them, you are not teaching your interpretation but are simply giving believers a preview of what is to come. Group members who are believers have the Holy Spirit working within them to explain the story truths. There may be a theme that a believer will hear today that the Holy Spirit will use to encourage or convict him or her. The group will not be able to remember all of the themes that are shared. However, by hearing them all at once, they will begin to develop a sense of what true discipleship means. Each theme will be repeated throughout the track, giving group members adequate opportunity to understand each theme.

Because in the Discipleship Track your tasks as storyer have increased, your preparation time should also increase. Read carefully the section in the Introduction entitled, "The Tasks of the Storyer," to help you as you prepare. In this first session, you will introduce new parts of the storying session such as a prayer and praise time, the giving of analogies to facilitate the understanding of difficult concepts, and the asking of discovery questions designed to help believers mature. You will also facilitate the memorization of God's Word and the preparation of the body for ministry. Be certain to adequately prepare for each new task.

Today's story text is a summary story of Jesus' mission. As believers who have completed the Evangelism Track, the group should be able to understand the figurative language. References to John the Baptist have been left out in order to

avoid confusion between John the Apostle and John the Baptist. If you decide to include those verses, be certain to distinguish between the two men during the discovery time.

Text: John 1:1-5, 10-14, 16-18

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes. Review the questions you will ask during the discovery time of the storying session in order to include the answers to those questions in your story. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. You may wish to find a visual aid to use when you tell the story.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (1:16-17)
- They are God's children and belong to him. (1:12)

Visual Aid: Lantern or flashlight – to be lit when talking about Jesus being the light of the world.

Prayer and Praise Time: Because this is the first Prayer and Praise Time, it is very important that you be well prepared. Select a short selection from the Psalms such as Psalm 118:24, *“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* Practice quoting it. Select a short, praise song that is culturally appropriate that you can teach to the people.

Testimony Time: Prepare a short testimony to present to the group of how God has worked in your life recently.

Possible Difficult Concepts: “grace”

Search the text for any concepts your people may have difficulty understanding. Prepare culturally appropriate analogies for those concepts. One possible difficult concept is “grace.” A father who does not punish a repentant son even when the son deserves the punishment could be an analogy that illustrates the concept.

Transition Story: Review the suggested introductory story or prepare one of your own. Be certain to include the overarching story of Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that will make them true disciples.

Questions for the Body: Prepare to ask the questions in a culturally appropriate way.

Memory Verse: *To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)*

Key Question: What right does Jesus give to those who receive him?

Prepare to facilitate the memorization of God's Word by preparing the memory verse in the manner indicated in the Introduction.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: As this is a new experience for the people, be certain you understand the instructions in the section entitled, “Tasks of the Storyer.”

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation: Catch up on the news since the last session. Begin building excitement for today's lesson by suggesting that just as those who have accepted Jesus have begun a new life, so the storying sessions will be new.

Prayer and Praise Time: Present what you have prepared.

Testimony Time: Give the short testimony you have prepared.

Understanding Difficult Concepts: Explain that in today's lesson, they will hear the word "grace" (and/or other terms they may have difficulty understanding). Facilitate their understanding of difficult concepts by presenting the analogies you have prepared.

Transition Story: Tell the following introductory story or a similar story you have prepared.

During his time on earth, Jesus taught his disciples as they traveled from place to place. He taught them using stories and by speaking plainly to them. He also taught them by example. For several years, Jesus' disciples followed him and watched him. They saw Jesus teach God's Word and follow God's law. They saw Jesus as he prayed. They watched Jesus as he cared for the sick, the poor, and the widows. They saw Jesus cast out demons and rebuke Satan. Even though the disciples had seen all of these things, Jesus wanted to make sure they understood what it meant to be a true disciple of Jesus. When Jesus was with his disciples, he often spoke very plainly to them. Sometimes he said things that were difficult for them to understand. He wanted them to know that there are some truths a disciple must KNOW and some things a disciple must DO. One of Jesus' disciples was named John. John followed Jesus while Jesus was on the earth. John listened very carefully to Jesus' words.

In the weeks before Jesus was crucified, Jesus was very concerned about his disciples. He knew he would soon leave them. He knew they would be afraid. Jesus spent a lot of time teaching his disciples so that they would be able to follow him, even if he was no longer with them. Right before Jesus was arrested, Jesus prayed for the disciples who had followed him, that God would protect them from the evil one and help them to be true disciples. He also prayed for all of those who would believe on him, those of us who want to be true disciples of Jesus today.

After Jesus was resurrected, God chose Jesus' disciple, John, to write down Jesus' teachings. John wrote down the things he had learned from Jesus. He wrote down the truths Jesus wanted his disciples to KNOW and the things Jesus wanted his disciples to DO. John's writings are in God's Word.

We have already learned some of the stories that John wrote. The story of Nicodemus, the Pharisee who came to Jesus at night, is a story that John wrote. Do you remember what Jesus told Nicodemus? Jesus told Nicodemus that no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. Jesus also said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Jesus said, "Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

In the coming lessons, we are going to listen to stories that John told in God's Word. We can learn many things about how to be Jesus' disciple today by listening to what John wrote. From these lessons, we will learn what Jesus wants us to KNOW

and what Jesus wants us to DO so that we can walk in the light and be a true disciple of Jesus.

Here are some of the truths we will learn from God's Word that Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW.

- Jesus loves them.
- They are God's children and belong to him.
- They are saved from sin and free in Christ.
- Jesus has conquered Satan.
- They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan.
- They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light.
- They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus.
- Their failures are forgiven when they repent.
- Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve others and help them to be true disciples.

Here are some of the things we will learn from God's Word that Jesus wants his disciples to DO.

- Trust in Jesus.
- Pray.
- Love Jesus.
- Obey Jesus' commands.
- Be free from the slavery of sin.
- Follow Jesus and remain in him every day.
- Have peace and not be afraid.
- Have a full and joyful life.
- Love one another.
- Serve others.
- Confess their faith and testify to others.
- Bear much fruit (Bring other people to Jesus).
- Be in unity with other believers.

Jesus wants his disciples to know they no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light. God's Word says, "Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens" (Psalm 119:89). "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105). "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

During our storying sessions, we, too, are going to hide God's Word in our hearts that we might not sin against him.

Our story today is at the very beginning of what John wrote. In this story, we will learn two of the things Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW.

Bible Reading: Hold the Bible in your hand to show that what you are saying comes from God's Word. Because today's text is short, you may wish to read the entire selection and then retell the story in your own words.

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- Who is “the Word?” (Jesus.)
- Why do you think John called Jesus “the Word?”
- In the beginning, what things were made through Jesus? (All things.)
- What does John mean when he says, “In him was life and that life was the light of men?” (Jesus brought humankind out of the darkness of their sin and restored their relationship with God.)
- Why have the people in darkness not understood Jesus? (Satan controls them. They do not believe in Jesus. They do not want to leave their sins.)
- What does God’s Word mean when it says that Jesus came to his own but they did not receive him? (Jesus preached to the Jews and the Jewish leaders, but they plotted to kill him.)
- What right does Jesus give to those who receive him? (The right to become the children of God.)
- What does this tell us about Jesus’ disciples? (They are God’s children and belong to him.)
- What does this tell us about the feeling Jesus has for his disciples? (Jesus loves them.)
- Through whom was the law given? (Moses.)
- What have we, Jesus’ disciples, received from Jesus? (Grace. One blessing after another.)
- How does someone show grace to someone else? (By not punishing them even if they deserve it.)
- How did Jesus show grace to us? (By saving us from our sins and eternal separation from God.)
- What does this tell us about how Jesus feels about us? (Jesus loves us.)

Questions for the Body:

- What truths did we learn in today’s lesson that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. They are God’s children and belong to him.)
- If we are children of God, how should we live? (Seek specific examples.)
- What things in your life will you need to change now that you know you are a child of God?
- Will it be easy to change these things? Can you do it on your own strength?
- Who will give us the power to change these things?
- What can we hide in our heart to keep us from sinning against God?
- If those of us who follow Jesus are all called children of God, what is our relationship to each other? (We are brothers and sisters in Christ.)
- Who are our brothers and sisters in Christ? (All true disciples of Jesus – including those in other ethnic groups and around the world.)
- How should we act toward our brothers and sisters in Christ in our community? (Seek specific examples of how the believers can relate to each other as a body.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Voice a short prayer or allow the people a time of silent prayer for each topic.

- Let us pray, praising God for the light and grace he has given us in Jesus.
- Let us pray, asking God to show us how to live as his children.

- Let us pray for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. (Pray specifically).
- Let us pray for those who walk in darkness, that they will accept Jesus and come into the light.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now, let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorizing of the verse as you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Follow instructions in "The Tasks of the Storyer."

Closing Prayer.

LESSON TWO

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES DO NOT WALK IN DARKNESS**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's story text is a story of Jesus confronting the Pharisees with their unbelief. Those who believed him were told that if they held to Jesus' teachings they would know the truth which would set them free. Because group members know the "end" of the story, they will understand references in the story to Jesus' impending crucifixion.

Text: John 8:12-36, 42-47

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes. Review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time of the storying session in order to include the answers to those questions in your story. Practice reading the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Include the dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees. You may wish to find a visual aid to use when you tell the story.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- They are God's children and belong to him. (8:35, 47)
- They are saved from sin and free in Christ. (8:24, 32, 36)
- Jesus has conquered Satan. (8:42-45)
- They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light. (8:12)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Pray. (8:47)
- Obey Jesus' commands. (8:31-32, 47)
- Be free from the slavery of sin. (8:34)

Visual Aid: Chains or a culturally appropriate object used to denote slavery – to be used when talking about being a slave to sin.

Prayer and Praise Time: Select a psalm to read or a song(s) to sing. You may wish to repeat the previous lesson's psalm and/or song. Do not introduce too many new songs for the people to learn. It is better that they become comfortable with a few rather than exposed to so many that they cannot learn them adequately.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lesson's memory verse by asking the key question.

Review of Previous Lesson: Review the themes and the story from the previous lesson in order to discuss them with group members. This review is important in that the discussion of the previous lesson's themes will lead into the testimony time of how those themes were incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Possible Difficult Concepts: “testify” or “testimony” (John 8:13-19)

In today’s lesson, facilitate the Understanding of Difficult Concepts before having the Testimony Time. As the people understand better the concept of “testimony,” they may be more willing to share. Search the text for any other concepts that may be difficult for your people.

Analogies of “testimony” may include a story of a bush taxi that has an accident with a moto. The people in the bush taxi, bystanders, and the moto driver are all called before the police to “testify” to what happened. Stress that those who were asleep on the bush taxi could not testify, as they had not seen what had happened. The conversation may lead to discussing how many witnesses are necessary in their culture when bringing a problem before those in authority, including any differences between government authorities and social authorities, i.e. chiefs.

Testimony Time: Prepare your own testimony in the event that group members are reluctant to share.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. Each transition story in this series of lessons will include the overarching story of Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that his disciples know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Set the stage for today’s story by asking someone to describe the Pharisees’ attitude toward Jesus. Asking questions about information learned in previous stories will reinforce previous learning as well as help to weave the current story into the web of chronology. Tell group members that Jesus was in the temple with his disciples when the Pharisees challenged him.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God’s guidance as you ask the questions and the conviction of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8.12)*

Key Question: Do Jesus’ disciples walk in darkness?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation: As group members arrive, ask individuals to relate how God has used the truths they learned in the previous session in their individual lives as well as in their relationships with each other. Ask those who have something to share if they would mind repeating their experiences during the Testimony Time.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Understanding Difficult Concepts.

Testimony Time: Give group members the opportunity to share. Include responses to their ministry visits during the week. Ask questions to draw out responses. If people are reluctant to share, give the short testimony you prepared.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 8:12

The Story: Tell today’s story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- What truth did Jesus want his disciples to know concerning walking in darkness? (They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light)
- Why do Jesus' disciples no longer walk in darkness? (Because Jesus is the light of the world.)
- What reason did the Pharisees give for their statement that Jesus' testimony was not valid? (He was appearing as his own witness.)
- What was Jesus' response? (He testified for himself, and the other witness was the Father who sent him.)
- When Jesus said he was going away and that they would lift him up, what did he mean? (That he would be crucified and resurrected.)
- Did the Pharisees believe that Jesus was who he claimed to be? (No.)
- According to what Jesus told the Pharisees, what will happen to those who do not believe that Jesus is who he claims to be? (They will die in their sins.)
- What does this tell us about those who do believe in Jesus? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ.)
- What did Jesus tell the Jews who believed in him that they needed to do to be true disciples? (Hold to Jesus' teachings. Obey Jesus' commands.)
- When Jesus' disciples obey Jesus' commands and know the truth, what did Jesus say the truth would do for them? (It would set them free.)
- What does this tell us about those who believe in Jesus and obey his commands today? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ.)
- Did the Pharisees think they were slaves? (No.)
- What kind of slaves did Jesus say they were? (Slaves to sin.)
- What is sin? (Sin is failure to do what God wants, whether by rebellion or ignorance.)
- Does God want his children to be slaves to sin? (No.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his followers to do in order to be true disciples? (Be free from the slavery of sin.)
- Does a slave have the same status as a son in a family? (No.)
- If those who believe in Jesus and follow him are no longer slaves to sin, to whom do they belong? (They are God's children and belong to him.)
- What does Jesus' statement that if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed tell us about those who believe in him and follow him? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ.)
- To whom did Jesus say the Pharisees belonged? (To their father, the devil.)
- Why did Jesus say they belonged to Satan? (Because they did not hear what Jesus said. They wanted to carry out Satan's desires.)
- How did Jesus describe Satan? (He was a murderer from the beginning. There is no truth in him. He is a liar and the father of lies.)
- Was Jesus afraid of Satan? (No.) Why not? (Jesus has conquered Satan.)
- Concerning hearing what God says, what is the difference between those who belong to God and those who do not? (Those who belong to God hear what he says.)
- Why do they hear what he says? (They are God's children and belong to him.)
- How do God's children communicate with him? (Through prayer.)
- What does Jesus want his disciples to do in order to hear God's voice? (Pray.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (They are God's children and belong to him. They are saved from sin and free in Christ. Jesus has conquered Satan. They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light.)
- What does it mean to walk in darkness?
- Who is the Father of Lies? (Satan.)
- If Satan is the Father of Lies, what does this tell us about how he tries to get people to obey him? (By telling them lies.)
- What lies does Satan tell you?
- Can you walk in darkness and in the light at the same time?
- What things in your life are still in darkness?
- What must you do in order to walk fully in the light?
- How does committing a sin make us its slave?
- Are you a slave to a particular sin?
- What must you do to be free from this sin?
- What things will you do before the next session to help you be free from this sin?
- Can you be free from sin on your own strength?
- In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray. Obey Jesus' commands. Be free from the slavery of sin.)
- Why should God's children pray?
- Why should God's children pray for each other?
- Does anyone want the group to pray that God will give him or her the strength to be free of a specific sin?
- How can our group obey Jesus' commands concerning prayer? (Seek specific examples of when, how, where, and with whom.)
- What things can we do as a group to put these ideas into practice before our next storying session?

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON THREE

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES HAVE A FULL AND JOYFUL LIFE IN JESUS**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's story text continues the story of Jesus confronting the Pharisees with their unbelief. In today's story, Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd who cares for his sheep.

Text: John 10:1-30

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Include the dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees. You may wish to find a visual aid to use when you tell the story.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (10:14-15)
- They are God's children and belong to him. (10:3-4, 14, 27-30)
- They are saved from sin and free in Christ. (10:9)
- Jesus has conquered Satan. (10:10, 28)
- They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus. (10:28-29)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Trust in Jesus. (10:27)
- Pray. (10:3, 27)
- Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. (10:4-5, 27)
- Have a full and joyful life. (10:10)

Visual Aid: A sheep or something to do with a sheep.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Possible Difficult Concepts: "good shepherd" (John 10:11)

This story introduces the concept of Jesus as the good shepherd. Determine the worldview of your group concerning sheep and the role of the shepherd. You may wish to compare the role of a shepherd in Jesus' day to a Fulani cattle herdsman in West Africa today. Use the Understanding Difficult Concepts part of the Introductory Session to discuss their views on sheep and shepherds and to make the comparisons to

the Fulani in order to facilitate their understanding of Jesus' words. You may wish to ask the following questions. Are sheep valued? Are they allowed to run wild? Where do they go at night? Who normally cares for them? Is the role of shepherd seen as a role for a child? What would be the difference in how a child cares for sheep and how an adult cares for sheep? Does a hired person care for the sheep as well as the sheep's owner? What dangers do sheep encounter? Do sheep know they are in danger?

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Today's story is a continuation of Jesus challenging the Pharisees' unbelief.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28)*

Key Question: What does Jesus give his followers?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation: Be certain to ask those who share about how God is working in their lives to share again during the Testimony Time.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Understanding Difficult Concepts.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 10:1-5

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- Who is the Good Shepherd? (Jesus.)
- Who are the sheep Jesus talked about? (His disciples. Those who believe in him and follow him.)
- How does the Good Shepherd feel about his sheep? (He loves them and cares for them.)
- What does this tell us about how Jesus feels about those who believe in him and follow him? (Jesus loves them.)
- When Jesus says the sheep belong to the shepherd, what does it tell us about Jesus' followers? (They are God's children and belong to him.)
- How do the sheep know whom to follow? (They know the voice of the shepherd and listen to it.)

- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do in order to hear his voice? (Listen to his voice. Pray.)
- What do the sheep do when they hear a strange voice? (They run away.)
- What do the sheep do when they hear the shepherd's voice? (They follow him.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Follow Jesus and remain in him every day.)
- Do the sheep always know where the shepherd is going to lead them? (No.)
- Do they still follow him? (Yes.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do when he leads them in new directions? (Trust in Jesus.)
- What did Jesus mean when he said he was the gate? (Whoever believes in him will be saved.)
- What does this tell us about those who believe in Jesus and follow him? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ.)
- Why did Jesus say that he came to earth? (That those who follow him, his sheep, might have life, and have it to the full.)
- Does this mean that Jesus wants his followers to be sad? (No.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Have a full and joyful life.)
- Who is the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy? (Satan.)
- Does Satan want people to have full and joyful lives? (No.)
- What does the fact that Jesus can give his followers full and joyful lives in him tell us about Jesus' relationship with Satan? (Jesus has conquered Satan.)
- What does the good shepherd do when he sees his sheep in danger? (He lays down his life for the sheep.)
- How did Jesus lay down his life for us? (He was crucified for our sins. He became our sacrifice.)
- What does this tell us about how Jesus feels about his followers? (Jesus loves them.)
- What gift does Jesus give those who follow him? (Eternal life.)
- What does this mean for Jesus' followers? (They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.)
- Can Satan snatch Jesus' followers out of God's hand? (No.)
- What does this tell us about the relationship between God and Jesus' followers? (They are God's children and belong to him.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. They are God's children and belong to him. They are saved from sin and free in Christ. Jesus has conquered Satan. They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.)
- What are your feelings when you think about the fact that Jesus loves you?
- How does the fact that Jesus has conquered Satan affect your life?
- Can Satan take you away from Jesus? (No.)
- What did we learn from the last lesson concerning the way Satan tries to influence people? (He tells them lies.)
- Does Satan want you to have a full and joyful life? (No.)
- Since he cannot take you away from Jesus, what will he try to do? (Tell you lies so you will not have a full and joyful life.)

- What does it mean to you to know that you have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus?
- In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Trust in Jesus. Pray. Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. Have a full and joyful life.)
- What does it mean to have a full and joyful life in Jesus?
- Do you have a full and joyful life? (Why or why not?)
- What things do you need to change in your life in order to have a full and joyful life? (Thoughts? Desires? Attitudes? Actions?)
- What things will you do before the next session in order to help you have a full and joyful life?
- What things can the group members do to help each other so that each can experience a full and joyful life in Jesus? (Seek specific examples.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON FOUR

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES CONFESS THEIR FAITH AND TESTIFY TO OTHERS**

PREPARE THE LESSON

In today's story, Jesus speaks of his impending death as he speaks plainly to his disciples and challenges the Pharisees' unbelief.

Text: John 12:20-37, 42-50

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Include the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples as well as between Jesus and the crowd. You may wish to find a visual aid to use when you tell the story.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- They are saved from sin and free in Christ. (12:47)
- Jesus has conquered Satan. (12:31)
- They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus. (12:25, 50)
- They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light. (12:46)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Trust in Jesus. (12:36)
- Be free from the slavery of sin. (12:25)
- Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. (12:26)
- Confess their faith and testify to others. (12:42-43)

Visual Aid: Kernel of wheat or other grain, a lantern or other form of light.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Possible Difficult Concepts: "glory," "glorify" (John 12:23, 28)

"Glory" is what happens when God's perfection and divine characteristics are displayed. Thus, to glorify is to recognize that God is God, to place something in the same state as God's perfection, to exalt it to God's level. "Glorify" can also mean to worship or give honor and praise. In John 12:23, Jesus stated that the hour had come for him to be glorified. Was he to be worshiped and praised? No. By his act of sacrifice he would be exalted to God's level, he would show that he was God. In John 12:28, troubled by what lay before him and certainly concerned for his disciples,

Jesus asked for God to display his divine characteristics. God, in a supernatural display of a voice from heaven, replied that he had done so and would do so again. Jesus told the crowd that the voice was for their benefit. It was a reminder that God is all-powerful.

The biblical concepts of glory and glorify may not have synonyms in your group's language. Explore all the meanings of a term before deciding to use it. You may wish to use the English or French words, or, you may choose to make up terms in the group's language. As it will be difficult to find analogies for these terms from everyday life, briefly explain the terms, then illustrate them using the Bible stories group members know. Stories from the Evangelism Track such as the Ten Commandments, Elijah and the Prophets of Baal, and the Birth of Christ all contain references to the concept of God's glory.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. In today's story, the tension mounts between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus has made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He realizes that his crucifixion is imminent. His concern for his disciples grows.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."*
(John 12:26)

Key Question: Whom does God honor?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Understanding Difficult Concepts.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 12:44-48

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- What did the Greeks ask Philip? (They wanted to see Jesus.)
- What did Jesus reply when he heard that there were people other than the Jews who were interested in him? (The hour had come for the Son of Man to be glorified.)

- What did Jesus mean when he said that when a kernel of wheat dies it produces many seeds? (It is planted in the ground, but by dying, gives birth to a new stalk of wheat.)
- To what was Jesus referring in this illustration? (His own death.)
- What did Jesus mean when he said the man who loves his life will lose it but the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life? (If one loves his life so much that he or she will not give it to Jesus, he or she will not have eternal life with Jesus.)
- What truth does this tell us that Jesus wanted his disciples to know? (They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.)
- If someone loves his life and rebels against God, to what is he a slave? (Sin.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do in giving up their lives? (Be free from the slavery of sin.)
- What did Jesus tell his disciples they must do in order to serve him? (Follow Jesus and remain in him every day.)
- When Jesus said that the prince of this world would be driven out, what did he mean? (Jesus has conquered Satan.)
- What did Jesus say about the man who walks in the dark? (He does not know where he is going.)
- What truth did Jesus want his disciples to know concerning where they walk? (They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light.)
- Why did Jesus tell his disciples to put their trust in the light? (So that they would become sons of light.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Trust in Jesus.)
- Why did some of those who believed in Jesus not confess their faith? (They were afraid they would be put out of the synagogue. They loved praise from men more than praise from God.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do in order to be praised by God? (Confess their faith and testify to others.)
- Did Jesus say he came into the world to judge it? (No.) Why did he come into the world? (To save it.)
- What truth, then, does Jesus want his disciples to know? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ.)
- Who is the judge for those who reject Jesus? (God.)
- Where does God's command to follow Jesus lead? (To eternal life.)
- What truth does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to know? (They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ. Jesus has conquered Satan. They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus. They no longer walk in darkness but walk in the light.)
- In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Trust in Jesus. Be free from the slavery of sin. Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. Confess their faith and testify to others.)
- Why were some who believed in Jesus afraid to let the Pharisees know of their faith?
- Are you afraid to confess your faith and testify to others? Why or why not?
- What does Jesus want us to do?

- Can we confess our faith and testify to others in our own strength?
- Who can we depend upon to help us? (The Holy Spirit.)
- Does someone who has not yet confessed his or her faith because of fear, need to confess his or her faith before the group today?
- Are you afraid of telling a particular person, a family member perhaps, about your faith?
- How can we as a group of believers help those who are afraid to confess their faith?
- How can we as a group of believers confess our faith and testify to others in a way that they can understand? (Seek specific examples.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON FIVE

Discipleship Track: JESUS' DISCIPLES LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's story is the first of several stories of Jesus' teachings in the last days before his death. As Jesus fellowshiped with his disciples, he sets an example of servanthood by washing their feet. He then brings Peter face to face with the knowledge of Peter's future betrayal.

Text: John 13

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Include the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. You may wish to find a visual aid to use when you tell the story.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (13:1)
- They are God's children and belong to him. (13:33)
- Jesus has conquered Satan. (13:2-3)
- Their failures are forgiven when they repent. (13:36-38)
- Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. They are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples. (13:17-18, 20)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Love one another. (13:34-35)
- Serve others. (13:15-17)

Visual Aid: A basin of water and a towel.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Today's story is the first of five stories of Jesus' last teachings to his disciples before his death. Stress that Jesus knew what was going to happen to him. He wanted to give his knowledge to his trusted disciples before he left them.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34)*

Key Question: Should Jesus' disciples love one another?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Understanding Difficult Concepts.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 13:1

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- Why had Jesus gathered with his disciples? (They had gathered for the evening meal.)
- Did Jesus know the time had come for him to leave the world? (Yes.)
- Did Jesus know that Judas Iscariot was going to betray him? (Yes.)
- Why was Judas Iscariot planning to betray Jesus? (Because Satan had prompted him to betray Jesus.)
- Was Jesus afraid of Judas Iscariot? (No.)
- What does this tell us about Jesus' attitude towards Satan? (Jesus has conquered Satan.)
- What did Jesus do with the basin of water? (He washed his disciples' feet.)
- Why do you think Jesus did this? (To show them that he loved them. To be an example and to show them that they should serve one another.)
- What does this tell us about how Jesus feels about his disciples? (Jesus loves them.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Serve others.)
- Who did Jesus say the people were accepting when they accepted the ones Jesus has chosen? (Jesus.)
- What did Jesus choose certain ones to do? (To be an example, to serve others.)
- Who chose them? (Jesus.)
- What does this tell us about how leaders are chosen and what they should do? (Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. They are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples. (13:17-18, 20)
- When Jesus told his disciples that he would be with them only a little longer, what did he call them? (My children.)

- What does this tell us about Jesus' disciples? (They are God's children and belong to him.)
- What new command did Jesus give his disciples? (Love one another.)
- Why did Jesus say they should love one another? (So that others will know that they are his disciples.)
- What did Peter say he would do for Jesus? (He would lay down his life for Jesus.)
- Did Jesus know Peter would betray him? (Yes.)
- Did Jesus know that Peter would be sorry he betrayed Jesus and would ask for forgiveness? (Yes.)
- Would Jesus forgive Peter? (Yes.)
- What does this tell us about what happens when Jesus' disciples repent after they have failed? (Their failures are forgiven when they repent.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. They are God's children and belong to him. Jesus has conquered Satan. Their failures are forgiven when they repent. Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. They are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples.)
- What things did we learn in today's story that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Love one another. Serve others.)
- When Jesus says he wants his disciples to love one another, what does he mean?
- How can we as Jesus' followers show our love for one another? (Seek specific examples.)
- How can we serve one another? (Seek specific examples.)
- Why is it important that those in our community who are not Jesus' followers see us showing love to one another? (So that they will know that we are Jesus' disciples.)
- Why is it important that they know that we are Jesus' disciples? (So that they will decide to follow Jesus also.)
- According to Jesus, what kind of person should lead the other disciples? (One whom Jesus has chosen and who will serve others and help them to be true disciples.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time. Pray that Jesus will begin to choose a leader or leaders for the group, someone who will serve the others and help them to be true disciples. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. Stress the need to show love to one another and to serve others. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON SIX

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THEM**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's story is the second of several stories of Jesus' teachings in the last days before his death. In last week's lesson, Jesus sets an example of servanthood by washing his disciples' feet as they gather for an evening meal. In today's story, Jesus continues teaching his disciples. He speaks of his death and promises the Holy Spirit.

Text: John 14

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Include the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. You may wish to find a visual aid to use when you tell the story.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (14:21)
- Jesus has conquered Satan. (14:30-31)
- They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus. (14:2-3, 19)
- The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. (14:16-18, 23, 26)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Trust in Jesus. (14:1)
- Pray. (14:13-14)
- Love Jesus. (14:15, 21)
- Obey Jesus' commands. (14:15, 21, 23)
- Have peace and not be afraid. (14:1, 27)
- Have a full and joyful life. (14:19)

Visual Aid: A dish with bread in it. Jesus ate with his disciples as he taught them.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Today's story is the second of five stories

of Jesus' last teachings to his disciples before his death. It is a continuation of Jesus' teaching as he eats the evening meal with his disciples. Stress that Jesus knew what was going to happen to him. He wanted to give his knowledge to his trusted disciples before he left them. Remind the group that in today's story, Jesus and his disciples are still together at the evening meal. The disciples are sad because Jesus says he is going away. Jesus tries to comfort them.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:16-17)*

Key Question: Do Jesus' disciples have the Holy Spirit?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Understanding Difficult Concepts.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 14:1-4

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- Why were the disciples sad? (Jesus had said he was going away.)
- Did Jesus want his disciples to be afraid? (No.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Have peace and not be afraid.)
- What did Jesus say they should do? (Trust in Jesus.)
- Where did Jesus say he was going? (To his Father's house.)
- What did he say he would be doing there? (Preparing a place for his disciples.)
- Why was Jesus preparing a place for his disciples? (Because Jesus loves them. Because Jesus is coming back to take them to be with him.)
- What does this tell us about Jesus' disciples and death? (They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.)
- Why was Thomas troubled? (He said he didn't know where Jesus was going, he didn't know the way.)
- What was Jesus' response? (I am the way and the truth and the life.)
- What did Jesus reply when Philip asked him to show them the Father? (Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.)

- What did Jesus say he would do in order to give glory to God, if his disciples asked for something in his name? (He would give it to them.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray.)
- Who did Jesus say would obey his commands? (Those who love him.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Love Jesus. Obey Jesus' commands.)
- What did Jesus say would happen to his disciples because Jesus lives? (They would live also.)
- Since Jesus' disciples are alive in Christ, what kind of life should they have? (A full and joyful life.)
- Who was Jesus going to send to be with the disciples? (The Counselor, the Holy Spirit.)
- Where would the Holy Spirit be? (In his disciples.)
- What is the Holy Spirit to do? (Teach them and remind them of Jesus' words.)
- Why did Jesus tell the disciples about his coming death and resurrection? (He told them before it happened so that when it did happen, they would believe.)
- Why did Jesus say he couldn't speak to them much longer? (The prince of this world was coming.)
- Who is the prince of this world? (Satan.)
- What did Jesus say about Satan? (He has no hold on me.)
- What does this tell us about Jesus and Satan? (Jesus has conquered Satan.)
- Why did Jesus say he had to die? (So that the world would know that he loves God and does what God commands.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. Jesus has conquered Satan. They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan.)
- What things did we learn in today's story that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Trust in Jesus. Pray. Love Jesus. Obey Jesus' commands. Have peace and not be afraid. Have a full and joyful life.)
- How does Jesus know if we love him? (If we obey his commands.)
- Name some of Jesus' commands. (The Ten Commandments. Love one another. Serve others, etc.)
- Are you obeying Jesus' commands?
- What did Jesus promise if we pray in His name? (To give us what we ask.)
- What does it mean to pray in His name? (To pray as Jesus would pray.)
- What was Jesus' prayer? (That he would do God's will. That God would be glorified.)
- What does that tell us about how we should pray? (We should pray for God's will. Whatever we ask for should bring glory to God.)
- What is Jesus preparing for those who follow him? (A place with God.)
- Who did Jesus send to live in his followers? (The Holy Spirit.)
- Is the Holy Spirit in you? (If you are a follower of Jesus, yes.)
- How do we know we have the Holy Spirit? (Jesus promised, and God keeps his promises.)
- What does the Holy Spirit do? (He teaches us and reminds us of Jesus' commands. He helps us not to be afraid.)

➤ Can anyone tell us of a time when the Holy Spirit helped you to remember one of Jesus' commands or helped you not to be afraid?

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time. Pray that the Holy Spirit will remind the people of Jesus' commands. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. Stress the need to show love to one another and to serve others. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON SEVEN

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES WILL BE PERSECUTED**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's lesson is the third of five lessons of Jesus' final teachings. Jesus talks about the importance of having a close relationship with him. He also warns his disciples that they will be persecuted.

Text: John 15

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. In today's story, there is no dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. However, from his words, it is obvious he is speaking directly to them. As you tell the story, use your voice and gestures to add interest. You may wish to find a visual aid to use when you tell the story.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (15:9)
- They are saved from sin and free in Christ. (15:3)
- The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. (15:26)
- They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus. (15:18-20)
- Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples. (15:16)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Pray. (15:16)
- Obey Jesus' commands. (15:10)
- Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. (15:4-9)
- Have a full and joyful life. (15:11)
- Love one another. (15:12-13, 17)
- Confess their faith and testify to others. (15:27)
- Bear much fruit (Bring other people to Jesus.) (15:1-2, 16)

Visual Aid: A vine with several branches on it. Pull off a branch and throw it aside when you talk about a branch that is apart will wither and die. Fruit.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Possible Difficult Concepts: “bear much fruit” (John 15:1-2, 16)

Jesus uses this phrase to tell his disciples they must bring others to Jesus. How do they do that? By remaining in Jesus and following his commands. All they have to do is to allow Jesus to live through them and they will have the fruit (evidence) of the Holy Spirit. When others see this fruit, they will want to know Jesus so that they can have this fruit, too. Thus, the true disciple will draw others to Jesus, which is also “bearing much fruit.”

The group should be very familiar with fruit trees. Use a local fruit tree as an example. Tell the story of a family who had two fruit trees in their courtyard. One bore good, sweet fruit but the other had only a little fruit that had no flavor. Because of the wonderful fruit of the one tree, the children in the neighborhood were always begging to come in and eat the fruit. The family could not keep them away. Soon, everyone in the area heard of the wonderful fruit from this tree. Other families asked for cuttings or seedlings from this tree so that they could plant their own. No one asked for a cutting from the poor tree.

Tell the group that in today’s story, Jesus talks about his disciples bearing much fruit. Tell them you will discuss this concept after the story.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Remind the group that Jesus and his disciples have just finished a meal and have now left the room. They are walking along, heading away from the crowds. Jesus stops along the way and gathers his disciples around him as he continues to teach them.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God’s guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)*

Key Question: What can Jesus’ disciples do apart from him?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Understanding Difficult Concepts.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 15:1-4

The Story: Tell today’s story, using the visual aids at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- Who is the true vine? (Jesus.)
- Who is the gardener? (God.)
- What did Jesus mean when Jesus said his disciples were already clean because of his words? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ.)
- What did Jesus mean when he said that his true disciples must bear much fruit? (They must show others what it means to have Jesus living in them so that others will want to know Jesus. They must bring other people to Jesus.)
- Why does Jesus say the gardener prunes the branches? (So that it will bear more fruit.)
- What does this mean? (Jesus helps his disciples to be more like him.)
- What does this tell us about how Jesus feels about his disciples? (Jesus loves them.)
- What does Jesus want his true disciples to do? (Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. Bear much fruit.)
- If we remain in Jesus and his words remain in us, what will he do when we pray? (He will give us what we ask.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray.)
- How can we remain in Jesus' love? (Obey his commands.)
- Why did Jesus tell his disciples to remain in him? (So that their joy could be complete.)
- What does this tell us about the kind of life that Jesus wants for his disciples? (Jesus wants his disciples to have a full and joyful life.)
- What is the command Jesus gave to his disciples? (Love one another.)
- What did Jesus say was the greatest love one could have for another? (To lay down his life for a friend.)
- What does this tell us about Jesus' love? (It is the greatest love there is.)
- Who chose us to be Jesus' disciples? (Jesus.)
- Why did Jesus choose us? (To bear much fruit, fruit that will last.)
- What does this tell us about what kind of leader Jesus wants for his disciples? (Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples.)
- How does the world feel about Jesus' disciples? (It hates them.)
- Why does the world hate Jesus' disciples? (Because they do not belong to the world, they belong to Jesus. The world hated Jesus first. The world does not know God.)
- What does this tell us about how Jesus' true disciples may be treated? (They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus.)
- Who did Jesus send to help his disciples to bear much fruit? (The Holy Spirit.)
- Where is the Holy Spirit and what does he do? (He is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan.)
- What did Jesus tell his disciples they must testify to? (They must testify to Jesus, telling other people about him.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Confess their faith and testify to others.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. They are saved from sin and free in Christ. The Holy Spirit is in

them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus. Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples.)

- In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray. Obey Jesus' commands. Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. Have a full and joyful life. Love one another. Confess their faith and testify to others. Bear much fruit.)
- What does it mean to remain in Jesus?
- What are some specific ways you can remain in Jesus every day?
- Are you bearing fruit?
- What kind of fruit are you bearing?
- Now that you are a follower of Jesus, what are other people's feelings toward you?
- Does anyone feel he or she is being persecuted?
- What should be our reaction to persecution?
- What specific ways can our group help those in our group who are being persecuted?
- Can we have a full and joyful life if we are being persecuted? How?
- If we are being persecuted, what stories from God's Word do we know that can encourage us? (Moses, Joseph, etc.)
- How can we help each other to remain in Jesus every day? (Seek specific examples, such as using the Bible stories to encourage others. Meeting together for prayer, etc.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time such as persecution. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON EIGHT

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES HAVE PEACE AND SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's lesson is the fourth of five lessons of Jesus' final teachings. Jesus talks about the work of the Holy Spirit. He also tells his disciples they should not be afraid but should have joy and peace.

Text: John 16

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Include the dialogue between the disciples as well as between Jesus and his disciples. As you tell the story, use your voice and gestures to add interest. The suggested visual aid is a baby. You may wish to make certain a mother and her baby will be at the session.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (16:27)
- Jesus has conquered Satan. (16:11, 33)
- The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. (16:7-11, 13-15)
- They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus. (16:1-4, 33)
- Their failures are forgiven when they repent. (16:31-32)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Pray. (16:23-24)
- Have peace and not be afraid. (16:33)
- Have a full and joyful life. (16:20-22)

Visual Aid: When it comes to the point in the story when Jesus talks about a woman's pain in childbirth and the joy she has when her baby is born, either point to a baby or take a baby in your arms.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the

things that would make them true disciples. Remind the group that Jesus and his disciples were walking along, heading away from the crowds when Jesus stopped, gathered his disciples around him, and continued to teach them. Jesus saw their grief when he told them he would no longer be with them. Jesus wants to comfort them.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)*

Key Question: Why should Jesus' disciples not be afraid?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 16:1-4

The Story: Tell today's story, pointing to the baby at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- Why did Jesus tell his disciples they would be persecuted? (So that when it happened, they would remember that he had warned them.)
- What does this tell us about what will happen to those who follow Jesus? (They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus.)
- Why do people persecute Jesus' followers? (Because they think they are offering a service to God.)
- Are those who persecute Jesus' followers offering a service to God? (No. They do not know God.)
- What reason did Jesus give for saying it was for the disciples' good that he was going away? (Because when he went away he would send the Counselor, the Holy Spirit.)
- What does the Holy Spirit do? (Convicts the world in regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment. He will guide Jesus' disciples into truth, bringing glory to Jesus by teaching them.)
- What does this tell us about Jesus' followers and the Holy Spirit? (The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan.)
- What did Jesus say had happened to the prince of this world? (He is condemned.)
- Who is the prince of this world? (Satan.)
- What does this tell us about what has happened to Satan? (Jesus has conquered Satan.)

- Why did Jesus say the disciples would grieve and mourn? (Because Jesus was going away.)
- Why would the disciples' grief turn to joy? (Because they would see Jesus again. Jesus would be resurrected.)
- What did Jesus say would happen when the disciples asked for something in Jesus' name? (They would receive it. Their joy would be complete.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray. Have a full and joyful life.)
- Why does God love Jesus' disciples? (Because they love Jesus and believe that he came from God.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them.)
- What did Jesus reply when the disciples said they believed in him? (That they would scatter and leave him alone.)
- What did he know that the disciples did not know? (That they would leave him when he was captured.)
- Did Jesus forgive his disciples after they deserted him? (Yes.)
- What does this tell us about what happens when Jesus' disciples repent after failing to be true to Jesus? (Their failures are forgiven when they repent.)
- Why did Jesus tell his disciples about the Holy Spirit and about prayer? (So that they would have peace.)
- Will Jesus' disciples have trouble in this world? (Yes.)
- Why did Jesus say his disciples should take heart? (Because he has overcome the world.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Have peace and not be afraid.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. Jesus has conquered Satan. The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus. Their failures are forgiven when they repent.)
- In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray. Have peace and not be afraid. Have a full and joyful life.)
- Why is the Holy Spirit important to Jesus' disciples?
- How can we know if the Holy Spirit is working? (If glory is given to Jesus.)
- If someone says they are doing something because the Holy Spirit told them to, but their actions do not bring glory to Jesus, what should we think?
- What are some things that make you afraid?
- Before you became a follower of Jesus, what did you do when you were afraid?
- Does Jesus want us to be afraid?
- Is Jesus more powerful than what you fear?
- If you are a follower of Jesus, what should you do when you are afraid?
- When you are afraid now, are you tempted to return to your old ways?
- What should you do when you are tempted?
- Is there something we can do in our group when one of our group is afraid or is tempted to return to the old ways? (Seek specific answers such as going to someone for prayer.)
- What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name? (To pray as Jesus would, wanting God's will.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time such as not being afraid. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON NINE

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES PRAY**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's lesson is the last of the lessons of Jesus' final teachings before his crucifixion. Jesus shows his disciples the importance of prayer by praying for himself, his disciples, and all believers.

Text: John 17-18:3

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Today's story is somewhat different because it is a prayer. As you tell the story, use your voice to show the emotion that Jesus must have felt as he prayed. You may wish to find a visual aid to use at the appropriate time.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (17:23, 26)
- They are God's children and belong to him. (17:6, 9)
- They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus. (17:2-3)
- The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. (17:26)
- They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus. (17:14)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Pray. (17:1, 9)
- Have a full and joyful life. (17:13)
- Confess their faith and testify to others. (17:18)
- Be in unity with other believers. (17:20-23)

Visual Aid: A weapon such as a machete or sword. The visual aid will be used at the very end of the story, when you talk about the soldiers coming for Jesus.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Remind the group that Jesus has been

comforting the disciples. Now, he knows he will soon be taken from them. He turns to his Father for strength and to pray for his disciples.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." (John 16:24)*

Key Question: Why should Jesus' disciples pray?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 17:1

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- What did Jesus do after he had finished teaching the disciples? (Prayed.)
- For whom did he pray? (For himself, for his disciples, for all believers.)
- What does Jesus' example tell us about what he wants his disciples to do? (Pray.)
- Why did Jesus pray for his disciples and for all believers? (Because Jesus loves them.)
- What did Jesus say was the reason God gave him authority over all people? (That he might give eternal life to the people.)
- According to Jesus, what is eternal life? (Knowing God and Jesus whom God sent.)
- What does this tell us about those who decide to follow Jesus? (They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus.)
- From where did Jesus say his disciples had come? (God gave them to him.)
- What does this tell us about Jesus' followers? (They are God's children and belong to him.)
- What did Jesus ask God to do for his disciples? (To protect them from the evil one.)
- What did Jesus say was the reason he had given his disciples God's Word? (So that they would have joy.)
- What does this tell us about the kind of life Jesus wants his disciples to have? (Have a full and joyful life.)
- What did Jesus say was the reason the world hated his disciples? (Because they are not of the world just as Jesus is not of the world.)

- What does the fact that the world hates Jesus' followers tell us about what will happen to them? (They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus.)
- Where did Jesus say he had sent his disciples? (Into the world.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Confess their faith and testify to others.)
- What was Jesus' prayer for those who would believe because of the disciples' message? (That they would be in unity, be one.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Be in unity with other believers.)
- What did Jesus say was the reason it is important to be in unity with other believers? (So that the world may believe in Jesus and know that God loves them.)
- When Jesus said he would continue to make God known to the disciples and that he himself would be in them, what truth was he telling his disciples? (The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan.)
- What happened when Jesus had finished praying? (He went into an olive grove. Judas led the soldiers to him.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. They are God's children and belong to him. They have passed from death to eternal life with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus.)
- In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray. Have a full and joyful life. Confess their faith and testify to others. Be in unity with other believers.)
- How does it make you feel to know that if you are a follower of Jesus, that Jesus prayed specifically for you on the night before he was arrested?
- How important is prayer in the life of a follower of Jesus?
- What can we learn from Jesus' example about the kind of things for which we should pray?
- Did Jesus' pray according to God's will? How do we know?
- When should we pray?
- Why did Jesus think it was important that all his followers be in unity?
- Does being in unity mean we will never disagree?
- What does it mean to be in unity?
- Are those who are Jesus' followers in our group in unity?
- If we are not in unity, what things do we need to change so that we can be in unity?
- How can we be certain that we stay in unity? (Seek specific examples.)
- What should be the reaction of the group if someone does not want to be in unity?

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time such as the importance of unity. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON TEN

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES ARE SAVED AND FREE IN CHRIST**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's lesson is a review lesson from the Evangelism Track. It is the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The story is still within the overarching story of Jesus teaching his disciples, as we will focus on the disciples' reaction to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. This session is important because some in the group may not have yet made a decision to follow Jesus. During the discovery time, they will be given an opportunity to make a decision. Also, now that many have decided to follow Jesus, they will be able to listen to today's lesson with greater understanding of Jesus' sacrifice.

Text: John 18:1-18, 25-27
John 19:16-18, 25-27, 30, 38-42
John 20:1-10, 19-22, 24-31

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Today's story is somewhat difficult because there are many verses. You will need to summarize the events, paying special attention to verses involving the disciples. Include the dialogue in your story. You may wish to find a visual aid to use at the appropriate time.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- Jesus loves them. (18:8)
- They are saved from sin and free in Christ. (20:30-31)
- The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. (20:22)
- Their failures are forgiven when they repent. (20:26-29)
- Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve others and help them to be true disciples. (20:21)

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Pray. (18:1)
- Have peace and not be afraid. (20:19, 21)
- Have a full and joyful life. (20:20)
- Serve others. (19:26-27)
- Confess their faith and testify to others. (19:38-42, 20:21)

Visual Aid: A wooden cross.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Explain that in today's lesson, even though Jesus is facing death, he is still concerned about his disciples' welfare.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

Key Question: Who can have eternal life with God?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 18:1-3

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- What did Jesus do before he went to the area where he was arrested? (He prayed.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray.)
- When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, what did Jesus tell them to do with the disciples? (To let the disciples go.)
- What does this tell us about how Jesus feels towards his disciples? (Jesus loves them.)
- What did Peter do when the soldiers came? (He took his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.)
- How did Jesus react? (He told Peter to put his sword away, that he must do his Father's will.)
- When Jesus was taken before the high priest, what did Peter do? (He followed and stood outside, warming himself by the fire. When he was asked if he were a disciple, he denied it three times.)

- When Jesus was on the cross, which disciple does God's Word say was standing by Jesus' mother? (The disciple whom Jesus loved, John.)
- What have we learned about John? (He was one of Jesus' disciples. He wrote the stories about Jesus we have been learning.)
- What did Jesus say to his mother and John? (He told his mother that John was her son, and told her that she was his mother.)
- What do you think this means? (That since Jesus would no longer be with her that John should take care of her.)
- Did John do what Jesus asked? (Yes.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Serve others.)
- Who took Jesus' body away after he died? (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.)
- Was Joseph a disciple? (Yes. But he was a secret disciple because he feared the Jews.)
- Do you think Joseph was a "secret disciple" after he took Jesus' body? (No. Others would have known about his faith.)
- What does this tell us about Joseph's decision and what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Confess their faith and testify to others.)
- When Mary Magdalene told Peter and John that Jesus' tomb was empty, what did they do? (They ran to the tomb to see.)
- What did John do when he saw the empty tomb? (He believed.)
- When Jesus appeared to his disciples and saw that they were afraid, what did he tell them? (To have peace.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Have peace and not be afraid.)
- What was the disciples' reaction? (They were overjoyed.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Have a full and joyful life.)
- What else did Jesus tell them? ("That as the Father has sent me, I am sending you.")
- What truth did Jesus want his disciples to know? (Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve others and help them to be true disciples.)
- When Jesus breathed on the disciples, what happened? (They received the Holy Spirit.)
- What truth did Jesus want his disciples to know? (The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan.)
- When the disciples told Thomas what had happened, what did he say? ("Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.")
- What was Jesus' reaction when he appeared to Thomas and the other disciples a week later? (He showed him his hands and side.)
- What did Jesus tell Thomas when he said he believed. (That he had believed because he saw. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet who have believed.)
- What does that tell us about how Jesus feels about those of us who are his disciples today? (Jesus loves them.)
- Did Jesus forgive the disciples for leaving him and not believing? (Yes.)
- What truth does this tell us that Jesus wanted his disciples to know? (Their failures are forgiven when they repent.)
- Why did John write these stories of what Jesus did with his disciples? (That they might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing they may have life in his name.)

➤ What truth does this tell us about those who decide to follow Jesus? (They are saved from sin and free in Christ.)

Questions for the Body:

➤ In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus loves them. They are saved from sin and free in Christ. The Holy Spirit is in them, teaching them and giving them power over Satan. Their failures are forgiven when they repent. Jesus calls some to lead others. These leaders are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples.)

➤ In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Pray. Have peace and not be afraid. Have a full and joyful life. Serve others. Confess their faith and testify to others.)

➤ Why do you think Jesus' disciples left him when he was arrested?

➤ If you had been one of the disciples, what would you have done when Jesus was arrested?

➤ What kind of relationship does Jesus want to have with you if you are a disciple?

➤ What is your reaction to Joseph's decision to be a secret disciple?

➤ Discuss the idea of being a "secret disciple," when it might happen, and why.

(Sometimes women whose husbands are not believers need to be secret disciples for a while, etc.)

➤ What does the truth we have learned that Jesus wants his disciples to confess their faith and testify to others mean for a secret disciple? (Their lives should be their testimony until they can testify openly. They may be called upon, as Joseph and Nicodemus were, to act in a way that will make their faith public.)

➤ Why did John write these stories of Jesus and his disciples? (So that we might believe.)

➤ Is there anyone here who has not yet decided to follow Jesus, and who wants to believe and become one of Jesus' disciples today?

➤ How can our group help each other to be better disciples every day? (Seek specific examples.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today's lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for issues discussed in the Discovery Time such as secret disciples. Pray for those who decided today to follow Jesus. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God's Word: Say, "Now let us hide God's Word in our heart that we might not sin against him." Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today's story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.

LESSON ELEVEN

Discipleship Track: **JESUS' DISCIPLES ARE FORGIVEN THEIR FAILURES WHEN THEY REPENT**

PREPARE THE LESSON

Today's lesson is the last lesson in this Discipleship Track. In it, Jesus meets once again with his disciples, and Peter is publicly forgiven for his betrayal. The story ends with Jesus' challenge that no matter what happens to others, Jesus holds each one of us personally responsible to follow him. In the discovery time, the group will be encouraged to look for the person God is calling to serve the group as leader.

The group should decide how it wants to continue. Do some group members need to be baptized? If so, you may need to do a story on Jesus' baptism as a model. If a leader is called, make plans to meet with this leader to pray and discuss the future. Be certain that you stress that the leader's tasks are to serve others and help them to be true disciples. Decide how you can help the leader fulfill these duties.

Text: John 21

Before you prepare your story, study the themes in the story and review the questions you will ask during the Discovery Time. Be certain to include in your story the verses that relate to the themes as well as the answers to the questions. Practice the verses you will read aloud. Prepare the story and practice telling it in your own words. Include the dialogue in your story. You may wish to find a visual aid to use at the appropriate time.

Themes: Jesus wants his disciples to KNOW that:

- They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus. (21:18-19)
- Their failures are forgiven when they repent. (21:15-19)
- Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve others and help them to be true disciples.

Things Jesus wants his disciples to DO:

- Love Jesus. (21:15)
- Obey Jesus' commands. (21:6)
- Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. (21:22)
- Confess their faith and testify to others. (21:24)

Visual Aid: A fish.

Prayer and Praise Time: Prepare for this part of the session.

Review of Memory Verses: Prepare to review the previous lessons' memory verses by asking the key questions.

Review of Previous Lesson: Prepare to review the previous lesson's themes in order to lead into a testimony time of how those themes have been incorporated into the group members' daily lives.

Testimony Time: Today's lesson is the last lesson in this Discipleship Track. Ask for testimonies of how last week's themes were incorporated into the group members' daily lives. Then, give group members an opportunity to share what changes they have seen in their lives and in others' lives since they began these lessons. What are non-believers in the community saying about the group?

Transition Story: Prepare the transition story. The overarching story is Jesus teaching his disciples because of his concern that they know the truths and do the things that would make them true disciples. Explain that today's lesson is the last story that John wrote about Jesus and his disciples. Jesus would soon be resurrected. Still, he was concerned about his disciples. Jesus loved them and wanted them to know they were to lead others.

Questions for the Body: Review the questions. Pray for God's guidance as you ask the questions, and pray for leadership of the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members.

Memory Verse: *Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)*

Key Question: How will others know we are Jesus' disciples?

STORYING SESSION

Introductory Session:

Opening Conversation.

Prayer and Praise Time.

Review of Memory Verses.

Review of Previous Lesson.

Testimony Time.

Transition Story.

Bible Reading: John 21:1-3

The Story: Tell today's story, using the visual aid at the appropriate time.

Discovery Time: Ask a group member to repeat the story. Aid when necessary.

Story Questions:

- At the beginning of the story, what did Simon Peter and the other disciples decide to do? (Go fishing.)
- What did Simon Peter do to earn money before he met Jesus? (He was a fisherman.)
- Do you remember what Jesus told him when he called him? (He would be a fisher of men.)
- What happened when the disciples obeyed Jesus' command to put the net on the other side of the boat? (It was filled with fish.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Obey Jesus' commands.)
- When the disciples had finished eating, what did Jesus ask Peter? ("Do you truly love me more than these?")
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Love Jesus.)

- When Peter said that he loved Jesus, what did Jesus tell him to do? (Feed his lambs.)
- In one of our previous stories, who did Jesus say his lambs were? (Those who followed him.)
- What do you think Jesus was telling Peter? (That he was to take care of those who followed Jesus.)
- What does this tell us about the truth that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Jesus calls some to lead other disciples. These leaders are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples.)
- How many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him? (Three times.)
- Why do you think Jesus asked Peter this question three times? (Perhaps because Peter denied Jesus three times.)
- Did Jesus forgive Peter for denying him? (Yes.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to know? (Their failures are forgiven when they repent.)
- What did Jesus mean when he said that when Peter was old someone would lead him where he didn't want to go? (He would die because of his faith.)
- What does this tell us about what will happen to those who decide to follow Jesus? (They will be persecuted because they have decided to follow Jesus.)
- What did Jesus tell Peter he must do? (Follow him.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Follow Jesus and remain in him every day.)
- Who wrote these stories we have been learning? (John.)
- Why did John write them? (So we would know they are true.)
- What does this tell us about what Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Confess their faith and testify to others.)

Questions for the Body:

- In today's story, what truths did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to know? (They will be persecuted. Their failures are forgiven when they repent. Jesus calls some to lead others. These leaders are to serve the others and help them to be true disciples.)
- In today's story, what things did we learn that Jesus wants his disciples to do? (Love Jesus. Obey Jesus' commands. Follow Jesus and remain in him every day. Confess their faith and testify to others.)
 - In the stories we have learned, how did Jesus treat his disciples the same? (He loved them. He taught them. He gave them the same commands.)
 - How did Jesus treat his disciples differently? (He gave them different responsibilities. He met their individual needs.)
 - What does this tell us about how Jesus treats each of us?
- When Peter asked about John, what was Jesus' reply? (What is that to you? You must follow me.)
- What did Jesus' words mean? (That we are not responsible for others' actions. We are responsible for our own actions to follow Jesus.)
 - If someone in our group does not follow Jesus' commands, what should we do? (Seek specific examples such as talk to the person, pray for him or her, be certain one is following Jesus' commands himself or herself, etc.)
 - What did Jesus tell Peter he must do with the lambs and sheep? (Feed them and take care of them.)
 - What do you think Jesus meant? (Peter must take care of Jesus' followers.)

- How can one “feed” Jesus’ followers? (By teaching them God’s Word.)
- Does anyone feel God is calling him or her to teach God’s Word or take care of the other disciples?
- If so, do others in the group feel the same way?
- If no one feels called, what should the group do?
- How can we know God’s will in this matter?
- If someone feels called and the group feels the same way, what can we do to help this person fulfill God’s calling? (Seek specific examples.)
- If one or more people are called, does this mean the others in the group do not have to teach God’s Word or take care of the other disciples? (No, everyone must obey Jesus’ commands.)

Prayer for the Body:

Ask what prayer needs there are among the believers in the group. Praise God for the specific truths learned in today’s lesson as well as for strength to do the things Jesus wants his disciples to do. Pray specifically for any individuals who may feel called to serve the group by teaching God’s Word and helping others be true disciples. Pray for specific needs of those in the group.

The Memorization of God’s Word: Say, “Now let us hide God’s Word in our heart that we might not sin against him.” Then, lead in the memorization of the verse that you have prepared. Ask the key question to help them recall the verse.

The Body Prepares for Ministry: Review accomplished ministries. Let the group determine appropriate ministries to group members to be done before the next lesson. One or more group members should be charged with telling today’s story to those group members who are absent. Be certain group members know their individual responsibilities.

Closing Prayer.