

# Discipleship Essentials Pathway



# **Discipleship Essentials Pathways**

**NEW VISION** 

#### **DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS PATHWAY**

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- 06 INTRODUCTION
- AUGUST
  Spiritual Growth: Becoming More Like Jesus
- 20 SEPTEMBER

  Holy Spirit: Empowering, Equipping, and Encouraging our Growth
- 26 OCTOBER
  Spiritual Disciplines: Habits to Help Us Grow
- 32 NOVEMBER

  Baptism: A Declaration of Discipleship
- 38 DECEMBER

  The Lord's Supper: An Act of Remembering
- 44 JANUARY
  Prayer: How We Talk with God
- **FEBRUARY**Worship: Loving, Honoring, and Praising God
- 56 MARCH
  Studying the Bible
- 62 APRIL

  Knowing and Following Jesus
- 68 MAY Obedience
- 74 JUNE
  The Church: God's Gathered People
- **80 JULY**Tithing: Giving in Response to What God Has Given

# System Map

#### **LEGEND**

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- College





# **Discipleship Essentials Pathway**

## **Detailed Overview**

## **Elementary Schoolers**

- Kindergarten: The Bible
- First Grade: God
- Second Grade: Humanity
- Third Grade: Jesus
- Fourth Grade: Salvation
- Fifth Grade: Spiritual Growth

#### **Middle Schoolers**

- Sixth Grade: The Holy Spirit
- Seventh Grade: Identity in Christ
- Eighth Grade: Holiness

# **High Schoolers**

- Ninth Grade: Evangelism and Missions
- Tenth Grade: The Church
- Eleventh Grade: Stewardship
- Twelfth Grade: Apologetics

## **College Students**

- Freshman: Spiritual Design & Health
- Sophomore: Relationships
- Junior: The End Times
- Senior: Work

# Introduction

To be a follower of Jesus means that we are to lead others to follow Jesus too. Contrary to the spirit of the famous "The Buck Stops Here" placard on President Harry S. Truman's desk, Jesus' desk placard might have said something like "You're One Link in a Long Chain." To be a *disciple* of Jesus is to be a *discipler* of others, just as Jesus told us in what is known as the Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end." – Matthew 28:18–20

Often, when we think of people discipling to fulfill the Great Commission, we think of men and women discipling other men and women at coffee shops, a collegiate minister discipling students at the student union, or perhaps a church staff discipling its members on the church campus. All of that is true, of course, but one of the most important places for discipleship is our homes. As a Christian, God has called you to disciple others; as a Christian parent or guardian, He has called you to disciple your children. This is the central point of what God told His people, the Israelites, through Moses:

"The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. Make sure your children learn them. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6–7).

This is your highest calling as a parent and family—and it's what we want to help you with through the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*.

# How to Use the Discipleship Pathway

The Discipleship Essentials Pathway is built on a framework of seventeen modules to be used one per year. This book includes Module 6: Spiritual Growth and is designed to be used with fifth graders. Modules 1–6 are to be used for kindergartners through fifth graders. Modules 7–9 are to be used with sixth through eighth graders. Modules 10–13 are to be used with ninth through twelfth graders. And finally, Modules 14–17 are to be used with college students. Throughout the seventeen modules, you will have the opportunity to engage with the core doctrines of the Christian faith and explore many practical aspects of following Jesus.

Each module contains twelve units, one for each month beginning in August and ending in July of the following year. Here's how to use the *Pathway*:

# The First Week of August

#### **STEP ONE**

Choose a day and time when it is easiest to block out about fifteen minutes for a family devotion each week. Many families find dinner time or bedtime as the ideal times for family devotions. Of course, if you already have a regular family devotion time, that would be the best time to choose.

#### **STEP TWO**

During your family devotion time in the first week of August, open the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book to August's content.

#### **STEP THREE**

Begin by reading the catechism to your family. A catechism is a method of instruction based on a question-and-answer format that has been used throughout church history. The catechism provides the main idea your family will focus on for the month. You may notice definitions or further inspections provided. These are provided to help your child learn these important terms or dive deeper into the topic.

#### **DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS PATHWAY**

#### **STEP FOUR**

Next, read the Bible story to your family either from the *Pathway* book or from a Bible. The NIrV is used in Modules 1 through 6.

#### **STEP FIVE**

Now, it is time to read the devotion to your family.

#### **STEP SIX**

Next, find the memory verse and prayer prompt for week 1. These will provide your focus for the rest of the week. Begin by reading the memory verse a few times, inviting your fifth grader to say as much with you as they can. Then, close your devotional time in prayer, using the prompt as a guideline for what to pray about. Of course, you can pray about more than that, but be sure to at least pray about the topic provided.

#### That's it! You're done.

You will notice that each unit concludes with a next step, challenging thought, or reflection questions. If you choose, you can use these during the week and on the rest of the family devotion days of the month.

During the week, look for opportunities to talk about the main ideas of the catechism, Bible story, and devotional you covered. This is in the spirit of Deuteronomy 6:7's calling to talk about God throughout the day in our homes. The goal is to help your child keep God at the top of the mind and deep down in the heart. Also, continue working on memorizing the memory verse and praying for the topic of the prayer prompt. Bedtime each day might be the ideal time for this.

# The Second, Third, and Fourth Weeks of August

#### **STEP ONE**

During your family devotion time on the second, third, and fourth weeks of the month, go over the catechism again, perhaps inviting your child to memorize it too, along with the memory verses.

#### **STEP TWO**

You do not need to read the Bible story or devotion again, but of course, you can if you want.

#### **STEP THREE**

Spend more time working on the memory verse. Many of the memory verses are part of the verse to make it more accessible for children. But if your child has mastered the verse, consider sharing the rest of the verse to memorize it as well.

#### STEP FOUR

Close your time in prayer, once again using the prayer prompt as your baseline.

# The First Week of September

Once the calendar flips to September, it's time to move on to the next unit, repeating the process. Then, once July arrives, it will be time to get Module 7 to begin using that next August.

#### **A FEW FINAL TIPS**

If you have multiple children going through different modules, that's awesome! As a family, go through the lesson with the youngest child in the first week, and move to the second youngest the next week, and so on. As you move to the new lessons, review the others together as needed, and turn your prayer prompts into a prayer list!

#### **DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS PATHWAY**

If you miss a family devotion one week, that's okay! Give yourself grace and pick back up next week. Consistency over the long term is the key to family discipleship.

As you and your family grow more comfortable using the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*, try to encourage questions from your child. Dialogue is always better than monologue when it comes to discipleship.

If you are just starting your journey using the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* with this Module, you might consider using what you have missed during Christmas break, Spring break, or the summer as a short-term intensive, covering one unit per day instead of per month, and forgoing memorizing the memory verses. Of course, there's also nothing wrong with starting right where you are and moving forward without looking back!

If you already have a family devotion plan or find one along the way, feel free to couple it with the *Pathway*. Do both on the same day or choose a second day to stretch your discipleship efforts further throughout the week.

# The Gospel Message

In the beginning, God created the universe (Genesis 1:1). He formed light and darkness, land and sea, fish and birds, plants and animals. But on the final day of creation, He saved His best work for last: He made people. God created us in His image (Genesis 1:27) and designed us to love, trust, worship, and follow Him.

However, God didn't force us to love Him; He gave us a choice. We can choose to trust and obey Him or we can go our own way. When we choose to go our own way instead of God's way, that's called sin, and sin breaks our relationship with God. The Bible tells us: "Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory" (Romans 3:23). The bad news is that our sin separates us from God, and we cannot fix this problem on our own. We need help.

The good news is that God, in His great love, made a way for us to be forgiven through Jesus. God sent His one and only Son Jesus to live a perfect life and take the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross (John 3:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21). But He didn't stay dead. On the third day, He rose again, defeating sin and death so we could have new life in Him. Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

God now offers each of us the opportunity to turn from sin and be restored to a right relationship with Him. This requires us turning away from sin and choosing to follow Jesus. By placing our faith and trust in Jesus, we receive forgiveness and are saved from the power and punishment of our sins.

So, how can a person be forgiven of sin and follow Jesus? The Bible tells us: "Say with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord.' Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

# If you're ready to follow Jesus, here's what you need to do:

01 02 03

Admit that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness.

Believe that Jesus is God's Son, who died for your sins and rose again. Confess Jesus as your Savior and Lord, choosing to follow Him daily.

The following is an example of what to pray if you are ready to put your faith and trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord today. The words themselves aren't special. It's your heart behind them if you believe it.

#### Dear God,

I know that You created me in Your image to love, trust, and follow You. But I confess that I have sinned against You. I have chosen my own way instead of Yours, and my sins have separated me from You. And I know that I cannot fix this problem on my own.

Thank You for loving me so much that You sent Your Son Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. I believe that He paid my punishment, and I believe that He rose from the dead, defeating sin and death so that I could have new life in Him.

Today, I turn away from my sin and I surrender my life to You. I ask for Your forgiveness and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Please change my heart, help me to follow You daily, and give me the strength to live for You.

Thank You for Your love and the gift of salvation.

In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

#### FIFTH GRADE

If you just prayed that prayer for the first time, don't keep it to yourself, share it with someone! Tell a parent, guardian, pastor, or trusted Christian friend. They would love to celebrate with you, encourage you, and help you to take your next steps in following Jesus.

# Spiritual Growth:

Becoming More Like Jesus



#### How do I grow as a follower of Jesus?

To grow as a follower of Jesus means to become more like Jesus in every area of our lives. It all begins with putting faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Then, we grow by staying connected to Jesus.

## **Further Inspection**

Spiritual Growth is the process of gradually becoming more like Jesus. It's about growing in your faith, deepening your relationship with God, and allowing the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside out. Spiritual growth is a lifelong journey that brings us closer to God and helps us live in a way that honors Him.

## **Bible Story**

<sup>1</sup> "I am the true vine. My Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch joined to me that does not bear fruit. He trims every branch that does bear fruit. Then it will bear even more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me."

<sup>5</sup> "I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me. <sup>6</sup> If you don't remain joined to me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and dries up. Branches like those are picked up. They are thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain joined to me and my words remain in you, ask for anything you wish. And it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> When you bear a lot of fruit, it brings glory to my Father. It shows that you are my disciples."

- John 15:1-8

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- 02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- ①3 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Have you ever seen freshly cut flowers? They're beautiful aren't they? But how about a week or two later? They don't look quite as good, do they? The reason is simple: a freshly cut flower has been cut off from its plant and roots. And without that, it can't get the nutrients it needs. You see, a healthy flower doesn't grow all on its own. It needs to be connected to the plant, which has strong roots buried deep down in good soil. The same is true for followers of Jesus, but we're not talking about being connected to a plant. To grow spiritually, we need to stay connected to Jesus and allow God to work in us so we can live in a way that brings Him honor and glory.

In John 15, when Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches, He taught us that we can't grow as His followers on our own. Just like a flower needs to be connected to the plant to receive water and nutrients, we need Jesus to grow us in our faith. The Bible calls this "remaining" in Jesus. Staying close to Jesus helps us grow stronger in our relationship with God.

But sometimes growing involves pruning. When a plant is pruned, a gardener cuts off parts of the plant to help what remains grow better and stronger. In the same way, God removes things in our lives that are not of Him—things that hurt our relationship with Him and keep us from growing spiritually. It might feel painful in the moment, but we have to trust that this spiritual pruning is part of God's loving work to make us more like Jesus.

There's one more big idea about this that we need to understand. Growing as a follower of Jesus doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and effort. God has told us specific things through His Word that can help us along in this journey. To grow as a follower of Jesus, we can (1) pray to God, (2) worship God, (3) study the Bible, (4) trust and obey what God says, and (5) fellowship with other followers of Jesus.

As followers of Jesus, God wants us to grow in our relationship with Him. He wants to make us more like Jesus, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us. As we grow spiritually, we can become more like Jesus in how we think, how we act, and how we love others.

## WEEK ONE





#### **Memory Verse**

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory belongs to him both now and forever. - 2 Peter 3:18

#### **Prayer**

Thank God for growing you to be more like Jesus.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

"I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me." - John 15:5

#### Prayer

Praise God for being the source of your spiritual growth and for giving you Jesus, the true vine.

#### WEEK THREE









#### **Memory Verse**

Like newborn babies, you should long for the pure milk of God's word. It will help you grow up as believers. — 1 Peter 2:2

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to give you a love for reading and obeying the Bible.

#### WEEK FOUR







#### **Memory Verse**

You received Christ Jesus as Lord. So keep on living your lives in him.

- Colossians 2:6

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you stay connected to Jesus in all you do so you grow strong in Him.

# **Next Steps**

Think back from the time when you first trusted in Jesus to now. Take a piece of paper and a pencil and make three equal-sized columns. Label the first column "What I Know," the second column "What I Feel and Think," and the third column "What I Do." In the first column, list as many things that you know about God and the Bible now that you didn't know when you first trusted in Jesus. In the middle column, list what you feel and think about God now. And in the last column, list how you live differently than before. If you have trouble with any of these columns, that's okay! You can also think about what you want to know, feel and think, and do as you continue to grow.



# Holy Spirit:

Empowering, Equipping, and Encouraging our Growth



#### How does the Holy Spirit help us grow?

The Holy Spirit <u>empowers</u> us by giving us the strength, courage, and ability to do what God calls us to do. When we become a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us.



#### **Definition**

**Empowers:** The act of giving power and ability where it was absent before.

Empowering isn't just making something more powerful or stronger; it is going from having no power, strength, or ability to having it. When we choose to follow Jesus by trusting in Him as Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us, empowering us to live for God, tell others about Jesus, and become more like Him.

# **Bible Story**

<sup>8</sup> "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and from one end of the earth to the other."

- Acts 1:8

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- 02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- ①3 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Have you ever seen a flashlight that doesn't have any batteries? No matter how hard you press the button or shake it, it just won't work. But the moment you put the batteries in, the flashlight lights up and shines brightly! It finally does what it was created to do. In the same way, the Holy Spirit gives followers of Jesus the power to live the way God created us to live. We are able to have a relationship with God, share Jesus' message with others, and be more like Jesus. Without the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't have the power to live for God the way He wants us to.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus was about to leave earth and return to heaven, but before He did, He told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power. This power wasn't for their own personal gain; it was to help them tell people about Jesus everywhere they went-from their hometowns to the ends of the earth. This was an incredible promise because before this, the disciples felt scared and weak. But when the Holy Spirit came, they were boldly able to share the good news about who Jesus is and what He had done. They were even able to perform miracles in His name to prove that the gospel message of Jesus is real!

The Holy Spirit continues to work in the lives of Jesus' followers today. He empowers us to:

Live like Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives us a new heart and helps us grow in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23).

Make the wise choice. The Holy Spirit guides us to follow God's ways instead of us giving in to sin's temptation. He gives us the wisdom to know what we are to do and what we are not to do.

#### Tell other people about Jesus.

Just as the disciples shared the gospel of Jesus boldly, we can trust the Holy Spirit to give us the words and the confidence to share our faith, even when it may be hard or scary.

Carry out God's mission: The Holy Spirit directs us to go where God leads us as He also equips us with spiritual gifts to build His kingdom as a part of the body of Jesus, called the church (1 Corinthians 12:4–11).

#### FIFTH GRADE

The Holy Spirit's power is available to all who trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. He is our helper, our guide, and our source of strength. Through the Spirit, we can live in a way that brings honor and glory to God, and that spreads the message of hope and

salvation through Jesus. God loves us so much that He is with us to help guide us and empower us to live the way we were created to live. The Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift of God to believers!

#### WEEK ONE







#### **Memory Verse**

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other." — Acts 1:8

#### **Prayer**

Praise God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers and equips you.

#### **WEEK TWO**









#### **Memory Verse**

God gave us his Spirit. And the Spirit doesn't make us weak and fearful. Instead, the Spirit gives us power and love. He helps us control ourselves. — 2 Timothy 1:7

#### Prayer

Thank God for His presence and guidance through the Spirit.

#### WEEK THREE









#### **Memory Verse**

But the Father will send the Friend in my name to help you. The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you. - John 14:26

#### Prayer

Ask God to help you listen to what the Holy Spirit teaches you, and then to live it out.

#### **WEEK FOUR**







#### **Memory Verse**

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself.

Galatians 5:22–23

#### Prayer

Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit's power so you can share God's love and live like Jesus.



# **Reflection Questions**

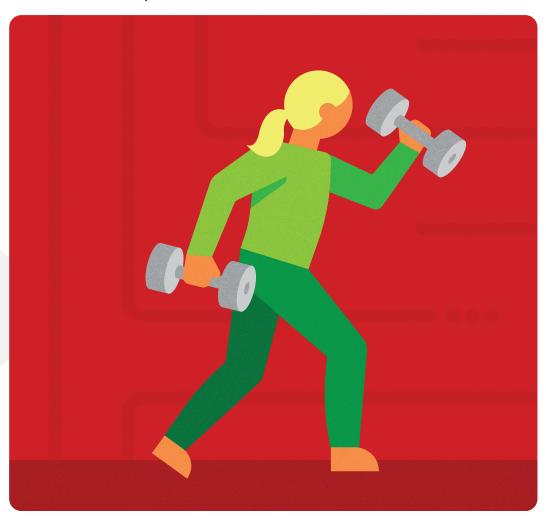
**01** What is one way that you want the Holy Spirit to help you live differently? Ask Him to do that.

Who is one person that you can tell about Jesus? Write that person's name on a card and place it on your bathroom mirror. Every time you brush your teeth, pray for that person and for the chance and courage to tell them about Jesus.

What is one characteristic of Jesus—like His love, or His humility—that you want the Holy Spirit to help you grow in? Write down ways you think you can live that change out.

# **Spiritual Disciplines:**

Habits to Help Us Grow



#### What are spiritual disciplines?

Spiritual disciplines are practices or habits that help followers of Jesus grow in their relationship with God and become more like Jesus. They are specific ongoing behaviors that God wants us to take to help us know Him better, love Him more deeply, and live for His glory.

# **Bible Story**

- <sup>7</sup> Don't have anything to do with godless stories and silly tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly.
- <sup>8</sup> Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.
- 1 Timothy 4:7-8

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- **02** What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- **03** Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### Devotion

Have you ever seen an athlete train for a big event, like a race or a game? They follow a strict plan of exercising, eating healthy food, practicing, and getting plenty of rest so they can do their very best on the big day. Just as athletes train their bodies, followers of Jesus are called to train spiritually through what are called spiritual disciplines.

Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God and become more like Jesus. These habits don't earn us salvation (which is a gift from God we only receive through faith in Jesus and what He has done), but they help us live in a way that honors God and grow us to become more like Jesus.

Here are a few key spiritual disciplines every follower of Jesus can practice:

- 1. Reading the Bible. God's Word is like food for our souls. Reading and studying the Bible teaches us more about who God is and what He wants for our lives. The Bible teaches us how to love God and love others. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to transform us from the inside out.
- **2. Praying.** Prayer is talking with God. It's how we share our thoughts, feelings, and requests with Him.

But prayer is also listening to God and trusting Him with our lives. Prayer helps us grow closer to God.

- 3. Worshiping. Worship is showing God how much we love Him and honor Him. We can worship through singing, giving thanks, or even the way we live each day. Worship keeps our hearts focused on God instead of on ourselves.
- 4. Fasting. Fasting is giving up something like food or entertainment for a time to focus on God. It's a way to remind ourselves that we need God more than we need anything else. Fasting also intentionally reminds us to spend time seeking Him.
- **5. Fellowshiping**. Spending time with other followers of Jesus is an important part of spiritual growth. When we gather with other believers, we can encourage, pray for, and learn from one another.
- 6. Serving and Giving. When we serve others and give generously, we reflect God's amazing love. These two disciplines help us put others first and remind us that everything we have comes from God to be used for His glory.

To be clear, spiritual disciplines aren't about checking boxes or trying to be perfect. They aren't about trying to earn God's love or forgiveness either. We already have that fully because of Jesus! Instead, they're about us drawing closer to God and letting Him change our hearts and our lives. We do these things not to make God love us more, but because we love

God and want to know Him more. Just like training for a race or a game, the spiritual disciplines take time and effort, but the reward is worth it! When we practice these disciplines. we grow stronger in our relationship with God and experience the joy of knowing our wonderful God more deeply.

#### WEEK ONE







#### **Memory Verse**

Don't just listen to the word. You fool yourselves if you do that. You must do what it says. — James 1:22

#### Prayer

Praise God for giving us His Word, the Bible, to help us grow closer to Him.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all those things will also be given to you. - Matthew 6:33

#### Prayer

Ask God to help you put His kingdom first in all that you do.

#### **WEEK THREE**







## **Memory Verse**

Never stop praying.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

#### **Prayer**

Thank God that He wants us to talk with Him and that He is always available to hear from us.

#### WEEK FOUR









#### **Memory Verse**

Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.

- 1 Timothy 4:8

#### Prayer

Ask God to help you be faithful in practicing spiritual disciplines with a heart that loves Him.



# **Next Steps**

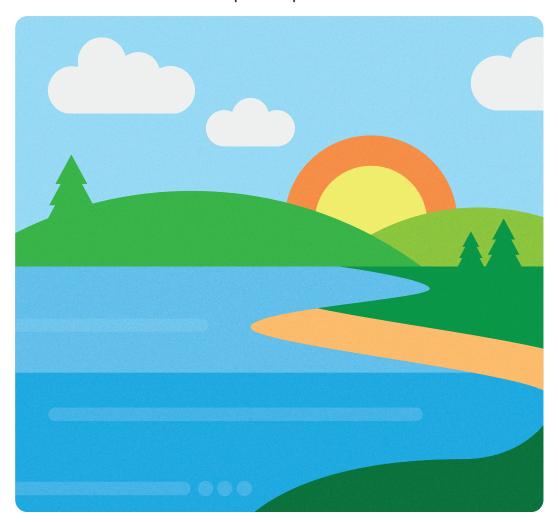
Using a scale from 0 to 10, rate how well you think you perform in each of the six spiritual disciplines mentioned in this devotional.

A O means you've never tried it, whereas a 10 suggests you believe you do it exceptionally well. Discuss what small step you can take in each discipline that isn't a 10 to progress to the next number.

Notes:

# Baptism:

# A Declaration of Discipleship



#### What is baptism?

<u>Baptism</u> is an outward expression of an inward decision a follower of Jesus has made. It is an act of obedience toward God symbolizing that the person being baptized has placed their faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. When a person is baptized, they are declaring that they have turned from sin and follow Jesus.

# **Definition**

Baptism: Baptism comes from the Greek word baptizo and means to dip or immerse. It is not used anywhere else in the English language except for within the church. Outside of the Bible, it is used in ancient Greek writings to talk about a ship sinking.

## **Bible Story**

- <sup>13</sup> Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. He wanted to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to stop him. So he told Jesus, "I need to be baptized by you. So why do you come to me?"
- <sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, "Let it be this way for now. It is right for us to do this. It carries out God's holy plan." Then John agreed.
- <sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened. Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. <sup>17</sup> A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him."
- Matthew 3:13-17

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- **Q2** What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- ①3 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

What do sports teams, firefighters, police officers, soldiers, and pilots all have in common? They wear special uniforms. And that's important. The uniforms these people wear show that they are part of a team. It shows that they belong and that they are together in their mission to win a game, put out a fire, protect the community, protect the nation, or fly a plane. The uniform says a lot about the person wearing it. This is a lot like being baptized.

Baptism shows the deep change within the heart of a follower of Jesus. When we go underwater, it symbolizes burying our old life filled with sin. When we come out of the water, it represents our new life in Christ, just like Jesus rose from the dead.

In the book of Matthew, we read that Jesus was baptized. But Jesus didn't need to be baptized like we do. That's because Jesus had no sin! Instead, Jesus was baptized to follow God's plan and to set an example for us. After Jesus was baptized, the Bible says that the heavens opened, and God the Father declared His love and approval of His Son Jesus.

At the same time, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove.

Before Jesus left the earth and ascended back to heaven, He gave important instructions to His disciples (Matthew 28:16–20). Jesus told them to go and tell other people about Him and what He had done. And then, once a person puts their faith in Jesus as their Savior and Lord, they should be baptized to show the world that they have made that life-changing decision. Their baptism shows that they are now part of a team called the church!

To be clear, baptism doesn't save us or wash away our sins. Only Jesus can do that. But baptism is still quite important as an early step of obedience that shows a person has chosen to follow Jesus. It's also a celebration of what God has done in our lives. Through baptism, we tell the world that Jesus has changed us and that we are part of God's family.



#### **Memory Verse**

So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to give you opportunities to help others grow in their faith.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

Peter replied, "All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." — Acts 2:38

#### **Prayer**

Thank God for forgiving your sins, which the act of baptism pictures.

#### WEEK THREE









#### **Memory Verse**

But Philip announced the good news of God's kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ. So men and women believed and were baptized. — Acts 8:12

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you to have deep joy whenever someone is baptized.

#### WEEK FOUR









#### **Memory Verse**

This is because all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. You have put him on as if he were your clothes. — Galatians 3:27

#### Prayer

Pray for those who are considering baptism, that they would take this important step.

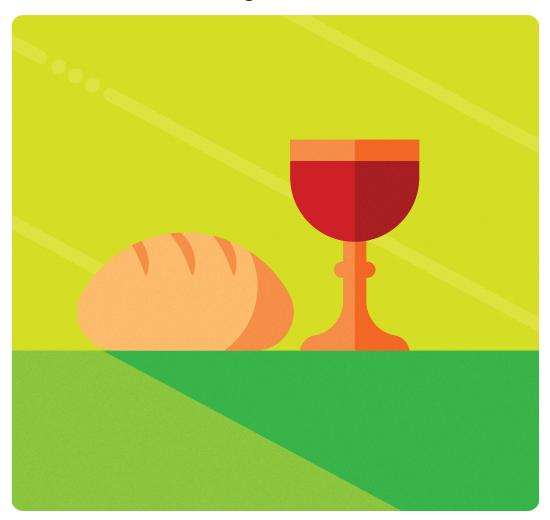
# **Next Steps**

If you have trusted in Jesus but haven't been baptized yet, schedule a time to talk with a leader at church about baptism. If you have been baptized, draw a picture of when and where it happened! Under the water, write down sins that you have committed that were buried. Above the water, write down different ways you can live like Jesus.



# The Lord's Supper:

An Act of Remembering



#### What is the Lord's Supper?

It is a special act of worship that involves eating bread and drinking from a cup, symbolizing Jesus' body and blood sacrificed for us. The Lord's Supper reminds us of Jesus' love, brings us together as His followers, and helps us look forward to His return.

# **Further Inspection**

The Lord's Supper is also called "Communion." Communion means common union, a common meal, or sharing. Communion celebrates and helps us remember Jesus's sacrifice, which unifies followers of Jesus.

## **Bible Story**

- <sup>14</sup> When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles took their places at the table.
- <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "I have really looked forward to eating this <u>Passover</u> meal with you. I wanted to do this before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> I tell you, I will not eat the Passover meal again until it is celebrated in God's kingdom."
- <sup>17</sup> After Jesus took the cup, he gave thanks. He said, "Take this cup and share it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup> I tell you, I will not drink wine with you again until God's kingdom comes."
- <sup>19</sup> Then Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to them and said, "This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do this in memory of me."
- <sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup. He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. It is poured out for you."
- Luke 22:14-20

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- 02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Do you have a picture that reminds you of a special moment? Maybe it was a birthday, a vacation, or just a fun time with friends. Pictures are a great way to help us remember things that are important to us. The Lord's Supper is a lot like that. It's a very special way to help followers of Jesus remember His love and sacrifice for us.

On the night before Jesus was arrested and crucified, He shared a special meal with His disciples called the Last Supper. During the meal, Jesus used bread and a cup of wine to teach His disciples about what was going to happen to Him on the cross. He said that the bread represented His body, which would be broken on the cross. The cup represented His blood, which would be poured out on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus told His disciples to eat the bread and drink from the cup to remember Him and what He would do. Christians have done the same ever since. We gather regularly to celebrate the Lord's Supper as a way to remember and honor Jesus and His sacrifice.

The Lord's Supper is more than just remembering though, it's also a time to celebrate and give thanks. When we take the Lord's Supper, we thank Jesus for dying on the cross so we could be forgiven. We also remember that Jesus didn't stay dead; He came back to life, and one day He will return to make all things new and perfect, the way they were meant to be.

When we partake in the Lord's Supper as followers of Jesus, it's very important for us to stop and reflect on our relationship with God. It's also a time to confess any sins we may have committed, thanking God for His love and forgiveness as we renew our commitment to follow Him.



#### **Memory Verse**

Then Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to them and said, "This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do this in memory of me."

- Luke 22:19

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you love and appreciate Him more every time you participate in the Lord's Supper.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

We give thanks for the cup at the Lord's Supper. When we do, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ? When we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 10:16

#### **Prayer**

Thank Jesus for giving us the Lord's Supper as a way to remember Him and celebrate His love.

#### WEEK THREE ( ) ( )









#### **Memory Verse**

You eat the bread and drink the cup. When you do this, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

- 1 Corinthians 11:26

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you remember that each time you celebrate the Lord's Supper, you proclaim the gospel to others.

#### WEEK FOUR







#### **Memory Verse**

Then Jesus said. "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry. And whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." – John 6:35

#### Prayer

Praise God that through the sacrifice of Jesus, we have all we will ever need.



# **Reflection Questions**

Read Exodus 12 about the first Passover meal and God's instructions for His people to eat this meal regularly from then on.

01 What questions come to mind about this meal, the act of placing blood on the doorframes, or how God brought the Hebrews out of Egypt?

**02** What connections do you see between it and the Lord's Supper?

**03** Why do you think Jesus wants us to celebrate the Lord's Supper until He comes for us again?

# DECEMBER

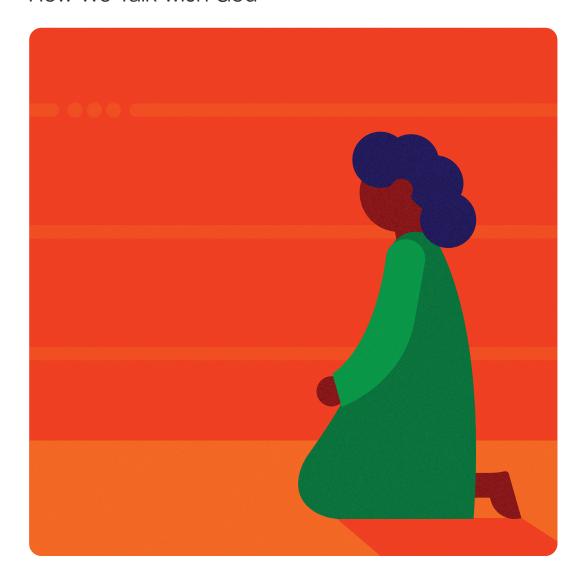
### **Definition**

Passover: The Passover celebration was a meal that the Jews ate every year to remember God delivering the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt, which we read about in the book of Exodus. The centerpiece of the meal was a lamb, which reminded the Jews of how the ancient Hebrews had sacrificed a spotless lamb and covered the doorframes of their home with its blood to protect their oldest son from dying.

# **Notes:**

# **Prayer:**

# How We Talk with God



#### What is prayer?

Prayer is talking with and listening to God. It is how we share our thoughts, feelings and needs with Him.

# **Further Inspection**

Prayer is how we share our thoughts, feelings, and needs with God and listen for His comfort and guidance. Prayer helps us grow in our relationship with God, trust God more, and remember who He is and who we are in Him.

### **Bible Story**

- <sup>9</sup> "This is how you should pray. 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored.
- <sup>10</sup> May your kingdom come. May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven.
- <sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.
- <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our sins, just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.
- <sup>13</sup> Keep us from sinning when we are tempted. Save us from the evil one."
- Matthew 6:9-13

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- 02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Do you like talking on the phone? Who do you usually like to call? Maybe you enjoy talking to your grandparents or a special friend. A phone is a great way to stay connected to people you care about. Even if you can't see them, you can talk with them anytime. Prayer is like having a direct telephone line to God. The best part? You don't need a phone number or even a phone to talk with Him! You also don't have to worry about if He will answer. He always will, no matter what time of the day it is! When you pray, it's like picking up the phone and talking with God. He's always there to listen. You can call Him anywhere, anytime, and about anything.

One day, Jesus was with His twelve disciples, and they asked Him how to pray. Jesus responded by teaching what we find in Matthew 6. He began by saying, "Our Father in heaven."

This reminds us that God loves us as our perfect Father. We can come to Him with anything because He cares so deeply for us. Jesus then focused on praise ("may your name be honored"), trust ("may your kingdom come"), and dependence ("give us today our daily bread").

He also included asking God for forgiveness for sin and for strength to resist sin's temptation.

While we don't have to pray for each of these things every time we pray, Jesus gave us a model for what we can pray about when we do. When we pray, we remember that God is in control and that we can trust Him no matter what. We give thanks for what God has done and ask for His help each day. We open our hearts to God and grow closer to Him. Prayer isn't about using fancy words or saying the "right" things; it's about being honest with God.

Prayer also reminds us to care for others. When we pray for other people, we put them and their needs above our own. We can pray for our family, friends, people we don't know, and even people we have a hard time getting along with. This is a great way to love others the way God loves them.

Sometimes, it's hard to know what or how to pray, even with the model Jesus gave us. But the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit can help us pray, even when we don't have the words

(Romans 8:26). Whether we're happy, sad, worried, or thankful, God is always listening. Like any relationship, our relationship with God grows

stronger when we talk with Him. Prayer is a wonderful gift from God, and He wants us to use it and talk with Him!

#### WEEK ONE









#### **Memory Verse**

Don't worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray, and give thanks to him. — Philippians 4:6

#### **Prayer**

Praise God for being a loving Father who always listens when you call to Him.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father, who can't be seen. Your Father will reward you, because he sees what you do secretly.

- Matthew 6:6

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you to pray to Him in humility and genuineness.

#### WEEK THREE ( ) (









#### **Memory Verse**

Pray for one another so that you might be healed. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. Things happen because of it. — James 5:16

#### **Prayer**

Confess any sins you've done recently and thank God for His forgiveness through Jesus.

#### WEEK FOUR









#### **Memory Verse**

So let us boldly approach God's throne of grace. Then we will receive mercy. We will find grace to help us when we need it. — Hebrews 4:16

#### Prayer

Pray for others, asking God to grow their relationship with Him.

# **Next Steps**

Make a prayer journal. Each time you pray, write down the main things you prayed about, such as your requests, what you thanked God for, what you celebrated about God, the sins you confessed, and how you want to grow in trust and dependence on Him. When you pray in the future, look back over your journal to see how God has answered your requests, helped you grow, and more.



# Worship:

Loving, Honoring, and Praising God



#### What is worship?

Worship is showing love, honor, and praise to God. Worship is more than singing songs. It's also living in a way that focuses our hearts and minds on God. Worship helps us put God at the center of all that we do. Through worship, we celebrate God's greatness, thank Him for His goodness, and draw closer to Him.

# **Bible Story**

- <sup>23</sup> But a new time is coming. In fact, it is already here. True worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. They are the kind of worshipers the Father is looking for.
- <sup>24</sup> God is spirit. His worshipers must worship him in the Spirit and in truth.
- John 4:23-24

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- 02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Think about the last time when you were truly and completely in awe of someone or something. Maybe it was when your favorite athlete made a great play, or when you heard your favorite band live, or when you saw a new game for the first time. Or maybe it was when you saw a beautiful sunrise or sunset, or you saw the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, or some other amazing wonder. Chances are, when that moment of awe happened, you were totally absorbed by it.

You probably didn't start mindlessly scrolling on a phone or look around at everyone else. Instead, you were drawn in by what you experienced and became totally focused on that one thing. Worshipping God is kind of like that, but even better. When we worship God, we focus our hearts on celebrating who God is and what He has done for us, especially what He has done for us through Jesus.

In John 4, Jesus teaches us what worship is really about. When He talked with a Samaritan woman, He said that true worship is done in Spirit and truth. This means worship isn't just about saying the "right" words or doing the "right" things. True worship comes from our hearts. It's when we truly love God and acknowledge who He is. This is why worship can look different for everyone. It might include singing, praying, giving thanks, sitting silently, or reading the Bible. But worship is also how we live each day. When we choose to obey God, love others, and make choices that honor Him, we are worshiping.

Worship also reminds us how great and loving God is. When we stop and thank God for His blessings and praise Him for who He is, we grow to trust Him more. Even when life is hard, worship helps us remember that God is in control and always with us.

The truth is that everyone, no matter if they realize it or not, worships something or someone. We were all created to worship. When God created people, He created us to know and love Him. He also created us to worship Him because He is worthy of our worship. God loves us and wants us to love Him, but He won't make us love and trust Him. We have a choice, which means we can choose who or what we worship. But we were made to worship God. That means when we worship God, we do exactly what we were created for!

God doesn't expect our worship to be perfect. He just wants us to come to Him with a sincere heart. Whether singing a song, praying, or serving Him, worship is about showing God that we love Him, trust Him, and that He is worthy of our worship.

#### **Definition**

**Samaritans:** This group was formed during the exile. When most Jews were taken away, some were left behind, and they ended

up having families with Gentiles who came into the area. Because they were no longer fully Jewish, the Jews didn't get along with the Samaritans. The Samaritans stopped going to worship in Jerusalem because of this and set up their own place of worship instead.

#### WEEK ONE







Worship the Lord with gladness. Come to him with songs of joy.

– Psalm 100:2

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to saturate your worship with gladness and joy.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

The Lord is great. He is really worthy of praise. People should have respect for him as the greatest God of all. - Psalm 96:4

#### **Prayer**

Thank God for the many ways He is worthy of your praise.

#### WEEK THREE







#### **Memory Verse**

Come, let us bow down and worship him. Let us fall on our knees in front of the Lord our Maker. - Psalm 95:6

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you humble yourself when you worship Him, remembering that you are in the presence of your Creator.

#### WEEK FOUR







#### **Memory Verse**

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

– Psalm 150:6

#### **Prayer**

Pray for others to know and worship God as their Creator and King.



# **Reflection Questions**

1 How would you define worship in your own words?

**02** What are your favorite ways to worship? Your least favorite?

**03** What can you do to be extra sure that you worship God in Spirit and truth?



# Studying the Bible



#### Why do we study the Bible?

<u>Studying</u> the Bible helps us know who God is, who we are, and teaches us about God's great love for us. It also helps us know how to grow closer to God and how best to follow Him. The Bible teaches us how to live in a way that brings glory and honor to God. When we study the Bible, we gain wisdom and grow stronger in our relationship with God.



#### **Definition**

**Studying:** spending time and attention to learn about, especially involving books.

This is a step beyond simply reading something. Studying involves slowing down and thinking more deeply about what was read. It means considering not just what the Bible says but also why it says it and what difference it should make in your life.

## **Bible Story**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the person who obeys the law of the Lord. They don't follow the advice of evil people.

They don't make a habit of doing what sinners do. They don't join those who make fun of the Lord and his law.

<sup>2</sup> Instead, the law of the Lord gives them joy. They think about his law day and night.

<sup>3</sup> That kind of person is like a tree that is planted near a stream of water. It always bears its fruit at the right time. Its leaves don't dry up. Everything godly people do turns out well.

- Psalm 1:1-3

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- **Q2** What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Have you ever tried to build a tall tower with blocks? How tall did it get before it wobbled and fell over? If you want to build a really tall tower, you need one really important thing: a strong foundation. Without a solid base, the tower will tumble over every time. As a follower of Jesus, the Bible is like a strong foundation for your life. It helps you stand firm in your faith, teaching you who God is and who you were created to be—God's beloved child enjoying a wonderful relationship with Him.

Psalm 1 tells us about a person who loves God's Word. This person doesn't follow the advice of sinners; instead, they find joy in studying and obeying what God says. They set their mind on God's things, thinking about His Word day and night. The psalm compares this person to a healthy tree planted by a stream. The tree is strong and fruitful because it always has the water it needs.

When we study the Bible, we're like that tree. God's Word gives us the spiritual nourishment we need to grow in our faith. The Bible helps us know who God is and what He's like. It teaches us what He has done for us through Jesus. It also helps us know what is true and how to live in a way that brings God glory.

God doesn't want us just to read His Word once in a while; He wants us to think about it often and apply it to our lives every day. Imagine an athlete who practices every day to improve their skills. In the same way, when we study the Bible regularly, we grow stronger in our understanding of God and our relationship with Him.

When studying the Bible, it can be hard to know what to do, how to do it, and even where to begin! The following is a simple method, using the acronym "O-B-S-E-R-V-E," to help you get started with studying your Bible:

**O – Open your Bible.** First, open your own Bible. Having a physical Bible is ideal, but if you don't have one, that's okay. Thankfully, there are plenty of wonderful Bible apps available. It's also a good idea to have something to write with and something to write on.

**B – Begin in Prayer.** Before you start reading anything, stop and pray. Ask God to help you understand what you are about to read and for Him to speak through His Word to you.

- **S Sit in Silence.** Praying isn't just talking. It's also listening to God. Take a few minutes to sit in silence and wait for God to speak to you. You likely won't hear an audible voice when God speaks, but He often speaks in different ways, like thoughts that come to your mind out of nowhere or a feeling you get deep within you.
- **E Engage the Scripture.** Now, start reading the Bible. When you read, it's okay if you don't understand everything. This is how we learn. Read and think about who is talking, who they are talking to, and what they are talking about. What is going on around them? Asking questions like this will help you understand what's happening in your reading. This is also a good time to look up any words you don't know or find out more about people, places, and things in your reading.
- **R Reflect and Record.** Now, stop and think about what you just read. What stood out to you? Was there a big takeaway or main point to the verses you read? Write down these thoughts.
- V Verse by Verse. One of the hardest things when reading the Bible can be knowing what to read or where to begin. It's best always to have a plan. Reading verse by verse rather than jumping around reading a little here and there will help you understand so much more.
- **E Exercise your Faith.** Now, take what you learned and apply it to your life. Our goal isn't just to study the Bible; it's to live it out. Learning something new isn't going to help much unless you actually do something with what you learned. Pray and ask God to help you apply what you learned about Him and His Word to help you grow in your relationship with Him and make you more like Jesus.

The Bible is a gift from God, and it's meant to be treasured and studied. It's like a mapping app that guides us through life and points us to Jesus. The more we study the Bible, the more we will know and love God; the more we do that, the more we will live the way He created us.







#### **Memory Verse**

Brothers and sisters, remain strong in the faith. Hold on to what we taught you. We passed our teachings on to you by what we preached and wrote.

- 2 Thessalonians 2:15

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you believe and do what you study in the Bible.

#### WEEK TWO









#### **Memory Verse**

When your words are made clear, they bring light. They bring understanding to childish people.

- Psalm 119:130

#### Prayer

Thank God for the wisdom and encouragement we receive when we study the Bible.

#### WEEK THREE







#### **Memory Verse**

Anyone who lives on milk is still a baby. That person does not want to learn about living a godly life. Solid food is for those who are grown up. They have trained themselves to tell the difference between good and evil. That shows they have grown up. - Hebrews 5:13-14

#### Prayer

Ask God to help you study His Word and understand what He wants to teach you.

#### WEEK FOUR









#### **Memory Verse**

Blessed is the person who obeys the law of the Lord. They don't follow the advice of evil people. They don't make a habit of doing what sinners do. They don't join those who make fun of the Lord and his law. Instead.

the law of the Lord gives them joy. They think about his law day and night. — Psalm 1:1-2

#### **Prayer**

Pray for people who don't have access to the Bible, and for God to make a way for them to have one.



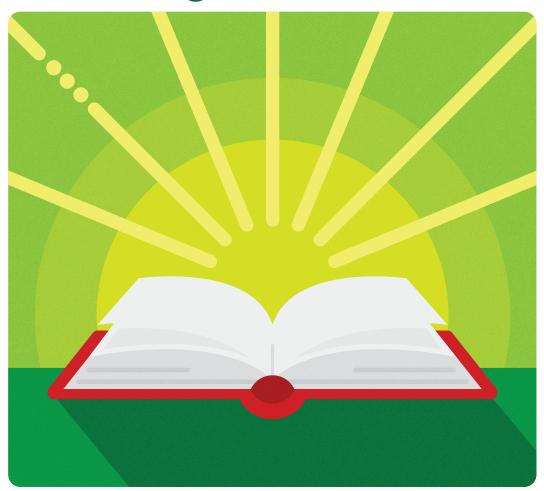
# **Reflection Questions**

01 What questions do you have about the Bible?

**02** What topics, books, or people in the Bible are you most interested in?

03 What book of the Bible do you want to study next?

# **Knowing and Following Jesus**



#### What does it mean to know and follow Jesus?

To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus. This means learning to understand and obey His teaching, which we find in the Bible. But following Jesus is about more than learning to obey Him. Following Jesus means knowing Him—having a deep relationship with Him. That begins with trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord for <u>salvation</u> and continues through our lives as we live more like Him.



#### **Definition**

**Salvation:** being rescued from sin and its consequence, death; being saved. Salvation only comes through faith in Jesus.

# **Bible Story**

- <sup>9</sup> As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew. He was sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him. Matthew got up and followed him.
- Matthew 9:9

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- **Q2** What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- ①3 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

### **Devotion**

If you have ever played "Follow the Leader," you know how simple of a game it really is. There's just one rule! Wherever the leader goes, you follow. If you follow them, you're good and still in the game. But if you don't follow them, you're out. It's really just that easy.

The Bible is a big book of 66 smaller books, 1,189 chapters, 31,102 verses, and over 725,000 words. There are so many commands to keep track of, people with odd names, places we've never been to, and cultural differences that can make it all so hard to read and understand, let alone to live out. So what do we do? How can we have a fighting chance to live out the Bible when there's so much of it we can't quite understand?

Simple. We play "Follow the Leader."

In Matthew 9, Jesus called a man named Matthew to become one of His first disciples. Don't miss what Jesus told him: "Follow me." Jesus didn't tell him to memorize the Old Testament first. He didn't give him a quiz on the Ten Commandments. He simply invited Matthew to follow Him. To be sure, Jesus meant for Matthew

to follow Him literally. He wanted Matthew to travel with Him. But as we read the rest of the Gospels and the Bible, it's clear that Jesus also meant this in a deeper sense. He wanted Matthew to come to know Him so that, in turn, he would live like Him. And that's the beautiful. simple way to live out the Bible. All its commands, chapters, verses, and words point us to Jesus. Jesus told us this in Luke 24:27 and John 5:39-40. From cover to cover, the Bible is the story of Jesus. So, when you get lost in the weeds of how to live out the Bible, this is where you want to go: to Jesus. You ask, "How can what I read help me know Jesus more or live more like Him?" Once you answer that question, you do just that! You won't do it perfectly, but you commit to doing your best each day.

There's one other wonderful thought from that single verse in Matthew 9. Matthew was a tax collector. In Jesus' day, tax collectors were Jews who collected taxes for the Romans, the foreign power ruling their nation. The Jews disliked tax collectors because they worked for the Romans and were often dishonest and stole money. And so, Matthew was one of the

#### FIFTH GRADE

least likely people to follow Jesus.
But Jesus saw past that and called
Matthew to follow. You might feel
like you have so little to give Jesus.
You might feel like you can't really
make a difference, even if you are to
live more like Jesus. But learn from
Matthew! Jesus can do much with

everything you have, no matter how small. He can use you to make a huge, forever difference for your friends, neighbors, and family. It's not about who you are—or who Matthew was. It's about who Jesus is and how we can live like Him. Follow Him!

#### WEEK ONE







#### **Memory Verse**

You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. - 2 Timothy 3:15

#### **Prayer**

Praise God for giving us His Word to teach and guide you.

#### WEEK TWO









#### **Memory Verse**

The word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges. It cuts deep enough to separate soul from spirit. It can separate bones from joints. It judges the thoughts and purposes of the heart. — Hebrews 4:12

#### **Prayer**

Thank God for how the Bible reveals what is true and right.

#### WEEK THREE









### **Memory Verse**

Open my eyes so that I can see the wonderful truths in your law.

Psalm 119:18

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you see, love, and live out His truth.

#### **WEEK FOUR**









#### Memory Verse

"Never stop reading this Book of the Law. Day and night you must think about what it says. Make sure you do everything written in it. Then things will go well with you. And you will have great success."

Joshua 1:8

#### **Prayer**

Pray for others who don't have the Bible to be given one so they can learn about God's love.

# **Next Steps**

Make a list of all the wonderful characteristics of Jesus, like His love and humility. Don't include His all-powerful works, like His miracles. Instead, focus on the perfect parts of His human nature. Ask God to help you develop these characteristics as you continue to grow in your faith. Choose one to focus on each week.

#### Notes:

# **Obedience**



#### Why should we obey the rules of God?

We are called to obey God's rules because His instructions are for our good. As our Creator, He loves us and knows what is best for us. We may not always understand God's commands, but we can follow because we know God's ways are always good.

# **Bible Story**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Do not depend on your own understanding.

<sup>6</sup> In all your ways obey him.

Then he will make your paths smooth and straight.

- Proverbs 3:5-6

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- **Q2** What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- ①3 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Have you ever played a game where you were blindfolded and required someone else to lead you through a maze or obstacle course? In a game like that, you must rely on someone's directions and trust what they say as they guide you. The only way to achieve the goal is to listen and obey, even when you don't know exactly where your next step will take you. You believe that your guide knows what is best. Our relationship with God is similar. God wants us to trust Him completely and follow what He says because He knows what's best for us

Proverbs 3 teaches us to trust God with all our heart. That means we believe in God's wisdom more than our own understanding. We trust His rules and instructions; we do what He says in the Bible. Sometimes, we think we know what's best, but God's ways are always better. He sees everything, knows everything, and loves us perfectly.

The Bible also says that we should obey God in all our ways. Obeying God means following what He says in everything we do, whether it's how we treat Him, how we treat others, or how we live in every way. When we trust

and obey God, He promises to guide us and make our paths straight. That doesn't mean life will always be easy, but it means God will always lead us in the right direction—the path that He knows is best.

In the Bible, we see many examples of people who trusted and obeyed God when it didn't make sense, like when Noah built the ark and when Abraham left his home to follow God's call. These people didn't always understand God's plan or know exactly what was next, but they trusted Him and obeyed Him. And then God used their obedience as a part of His greater plan for His glory and our good.

God's instructions are all over the Bible, and He invites us to trust Him enough to follow. We can't only obey when things are easy or when we agree with them; we should obey in every situation. When we trust and obey God, we show Him that we believe in His love and His promises. We acknowledge who He is and who we are—His people loved by Him and in need of Him. God created us, loves us, and always knows best. We just need to trust Him!



#### **Memory Verse**

In all your ways obey him. Then he will make your paths smooth and straight. — Proverbs 3:6

#### **Prayer**

Thank God that His commandments are always for His glory and our good.

#### **WEEK TWO**







#### **Memory Verse**

But Samuel replied, "What pleases the Lord more? Burnt offerings and sacrifices, or obeying the Lord? It is better to obey than to offer a sacrifice. It is better to do what he says than to offer the fat of rams."

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help your worship of Him to line up with your obedience to Him.

#### **WEEK THREE**

- 1 Samuel 15:22









#### **Memory Verse**

So suppose someone knows the good deeds they should do. But suppose they don't do them. By not doing these good deeds, they sin.

James 4:17

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you always obey Him, even when there might not be a clear command in the Bible.

#### WEEK FOUR









#### **Memory Verse**

Live exactly as the Lord your God has commanded you. Then you will live. Things will go well with you. You will live there for a long time in the land you are going to take over.

- Deuteronomy 5:33

#### Prayer

Thank God for the blessings He gives when we obey Him.



# **Reflection Questions**

()1 What other people in the Bible can you think of who trusted and obeyed God in amazing ways? How about anyone in the Bible who didn't trust and obey God?

02 What can you learn from each of these groups of people?

Which of God's instructions are easy to follow?
Which are more difficult?

Notes:

# The Church:

# God's Gathered People



#### What is the church?

The church is not a building; it's a community of people who have put their faith and trust in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. In the Bible, the church is referred to as the Body of Christ. When the members of the church gather together, they worship God, study the Bible, serve one another, and practice the <u>ordinances</u> of the church (baptism and the Lord's Supper). The church is God's chosen way to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world.

### **Definition**

Ordinances: An ordinance is something Jesus instructed His church to do. Jesus commands each of His followers to do much more than these two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper and the church does more than them, too. However, these are two things that should mark every church. A church, then, is more than these two ordinances, but must include them.

## **Bible Story**

<sup>42</sup> The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared their lives together. They ate and prayed together. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was amazed at what God was doing. They were amazed when the apostles performed many wonders and signs. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together. They shared everything they had. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and other things they owned. They gave to anyone who needed something. <sup>46</sup> Every day they met together in the temple courtyard. They ate meals together in their homes. Their hearts were glad and sincere. <sup>47</sup> They praised God. They were respected by all the people. Every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

- Acts 2:42-47

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- **02** What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- ①3 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

### **Devotion**

What comes to mind when you hear the word *church?* Many people imagine a building with a stage and podium, and maybe some chairs or pews. The Bible tells us the church is much more than a place like that though. The church is the family of God, a community of people who have put their faith and trust in Jesus as their Savior and Lord, and who live to glorify Him.

In Acts 2, we learn about the start of the church. After Jesus left Earth and ascended into heaven, His followers came together. They listened to the apostles' teachings about Jesus and the Scriptures, prayed together, and celebrated the Lord's Supper. They also cared for one another by sharing what they had and helping those in need.

The early church teaches us an important truth: the church is about people, not a building. It's a community of believers who grow together in their faith and live it out, especially by sharing the good news of Jesus with the world. Just like a body has many parts that work together, the church is called the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–27). Each believer has a role, whether teaching, helping, giving, or encouraging; all work together to honor God.

The church includes every follower of Jesus from every part of the world, no matter their language or location. We are all united by one thing: our faith in Jesus. When we use the gifts and talents God has blessed each one of us with within His Body, we can tell more people about Him and grow His church.



#### **Memory Verse**

You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.

- 1 Corinthians 12:27

#### Prayer

Praise God for creating the church and allowing you to be part of His family.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

And let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us encourage one another with words of hope. Let us do this even more as you see Christ's return approaching. — Hebrews 10:25

#### Prayer

Thank God for the people in your church who encourage and support you in your faith.

#### WEEK THREE







## Memory Verse

Instead, we will speak the truth in love. So we will grow up in every way to become the body of Christ. Christ is the head of the body. He makes the whole body grow and build itself up in love. Under the control of Christ, each part of the body does its work. It supports the other parts. In that way, the body is joined and held together.

- Ephesians 4:15-16

#### **Prayer**

Thank God for giving each person in the church an important role to play, including you.

#### WEEK FOUR









#### **Memory Verse**

"Where two or three people gather in my name, I am there with them."

Matthew 18:20

#### Prayer

Thank God that Jesus is always with us when we gather as the church.

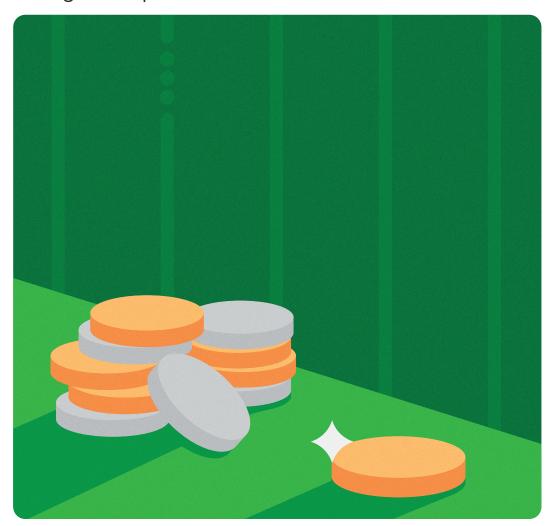
# **Next Steps**

Write a note of encouragement and appreciation to some of the leaders in your church and perhaps some of the other church members. Tell them what they mean to you and how they might have helped you grow in your faith.

Notes:

# Tithing:

# Giving in Response to What God Has Given



#### What is tithing?

Tithing is giving one-tenth of our income or resources back to God as an act of worship and trust. It's a way of acknowledging that everything we have comes from God and belongs to Him. It's also a way to show gratitude to God by supporting His work through the church to help others.

## **Bible Story**

8 "Will a mere human being dare to steal from God? But you rob me!"

"You ask, 'How are we robbing you?""

"By holding back your offerings. You also steal from me when you do not bring me a tenth of everything you produce. <sup>9</sup> So you are under my curse. In fact, your whole nation is under my curse. That is because you are robbing me. <sup>10</sup> Bring the entire tenth to the storerooms in my temple. Then there will be plenty of food. Test me this way," says the Lord. "Then you will see that I will throw open the windows of heaven. I will pour out so many blessings that you will not have enough room to store them."

- Malachi 3:8-10

# **Discussion Questions**

- 1 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- 02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- ①3 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

#### **Devotion**

Imagine you are given ten pieces of candy, and the person giving them to you asks you to give just *one* piece back to be shared with someone else. You still have nine pieces of candy; you have to give just one back. Would you do it? Probably. Giving back one piece of candy is simple, but it's also a way to show that you're willing to share, and that you trust the one who gave the candy to you that there will still be enough for you to enjoy.

In a way, tithing is like giving one piece of everything you have back to God. In the Bible, tithing meant giving one-tenth of what was earned (or in Bible times, what was grown) to God. It was a way to remember that everything they had came from God. It was also a way to thank God for providing for them and to show that they trusted Him to take care of their needs.

In Malachi 3, God tells His people to bring their full tithes to the temple as an act of obedience. The people had been keeping their tithes for themselves, and God called that robbery. God reminds His people that everything they have comes from Him, and tithing is a way to honor Him. He even challenges them to "test" Him by bringing their tithes; He promises to bless them abundantly if they obey.

But tithing isn't just about money; it's about our hearts. When we tithe, we are saying, "God, I trust You. You are my provider, and You are my greatest treasure." It's a way to put God first and rely on Him instead of relying on our worldly possessions.

Jesus also taught about giving. In the book of Mark, there's a true story about a poor widow who gave two small coins worth very little. But Jesus praised her because she gave from her heart, making what she gave worth much to God. She showed that she trusted God even though she had so very little (Mark 12:41–44). Jesus was teaching us that it's not about the amount we give, but rather it's about our willingness to honor and trust God with whatever we have.

Tithing also matters because it helps support God's work through the church. When you tithe to God through the local church, you are helping people in need, spreading the gospel, and teaching others

#### FIFTH GRADE

about Jesus. When we tithe, we are participating in God's mission to love Him and love others.

God is so very good and generous to us. Tithing is a great reminder that God is our ultimate provider.

The greatest gift that God ever provided to us is His son Jesus, who came to make a way to rescue us from sin and bring us back into a forever relationship with God. That's how generous God is!



#### **Memory Verse**

Honor the Lord with your wealth. Give him the first share of all your crops. — Proverbs 3:9

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to help you honor Him with all you have, even if it doesn't seem like much.

#### WEEK TWO







#### **Memory Verse**

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give. You shouldn't give if you don't want to. You shouldn't give because you are forced to. God loves a cheerful giver. — 2 Corinthians 9:7

#### **Prayer**

Ask God to make your heart cheerful as you give to Him.

#### WEEK THREE









#### **Memory Verse**

"Bring the entire tenth to the storerooms in my temple. Then there will be plenty of food. Test me this way," says the Lord. "Then you will see that I will throw open the windows of heaven. I will pour out so many blessings that you will not have enough room to store them." - Malachi 3:10

#### Prayer

Thank God for His promise to provide for us, even as we give as much as we can back to Him.

#### WEEK FOUR









#### **Memory Verse**

Your heart will be where your riches are. - Matthew 6:21

#### Prayer

Ask God to help you guard your heart so you do not come to love riches more than Him.

# **Next Steps**

Ask if you can do extra chores, have a yard sale, or do yard work in your neighborhood to raise some money. Tithe on what you've earned, but also consider going above and beyond and giving as much of it away as you can.

### Notes:

# Memory Verse Tracking Log

