



Confident discipleship

a course for 7-11 year olds as part of the
Canterbury Diocesan Year of Discipleship





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for 7-11's

Lent Course Children's Sessions

This material has been prepared for use by groups of children between the ages of 7 and 11 meeting for 35 – 45 minutes during a Sunday service. In the 'Welcome' section of each session there is a choice of activity which is intended to introduce the subject for that day, but if you have more time you may wish to include both activities. Your choice could also be governed by the setting in which your group meets and accordingly there are some potentially noisy activities requiring more space suggested alongside quieter and more sedentary activities. Please be encouraged to adapt these materials to suit your particular group.

It is my prayer that;

- you will find them a helpful tool.
- It will allow you (and your children) to learn more about God and His ways
- You (and your children) will get to know Him and follow Him more closely

so that we may all be brought into God's presence as mature people in Christ.

If you have any practical queries about using this material, please feel free to contact Chris Leach (01303 250805, chrism.leach@tiscali.co.uk) for help or advice.



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Session One - Come

Welcome

If the group are new to one another ask them to talk to one other person in the group and interview them with questions like:

- Where were you born?
- What's your favourite food?
- What's the worst film you've ever seen?
- Tell me about something amusing that has happened to you.

Then introduce your partner to the whole group.

Or **Friendly Dominoes** – one person from the group stands up to start a line. Ask the group to think whether they have anything in common with the person standing there e.g. got to the same school, both wearing trainers etc. When someone has thought of something, they stand next to the person, without telling the rest of the group why. Another person then must join the line, until the whole group are standing there. Once the whole group have joined you can go down the line and ask for the reasons why people stood next to others.

You might like at this stage to agree some ground rules for the group, for example listening to one another, accepting other people's views, confidentiality, respect, and so on.

Word

Read Matthew 4:18-22 and John 1:35-51

These passages are about lots of different people beginning to follow Jesus.

On a large piece of paper make a list of the characters involved. For each one identify the way they became followers of Jesus.

Eg Andrew – John the Baptist told him Jesus was the Lamb of God v36 & v 40

Simon – His brother Andrew took him to meet Jesus.

What about you? Who has been important in helping you to get to know Jesus?

Possibly the leader could give some of their own testimony or maybe a group member could be primed to tell their story.

If you would say you are a Christian how did it happen?

Apparently 35-40% of Christians have a datable 'conversion experience' and 60-65% say it was a process, or that they can't remember a time when they didn't believe. What about you?



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Prayer

Pass a small cross round the group. When it gets to you, say thank you to God for one person who has been important in getting you to know Jesus.

Reflection and Worship

Create a focal point for this time eg a cross on a table or a large piece of paper with a footpath drawn on it. Give each group member an A4 piece of paper and ask them to draw round one of their feet and cut out a footprint shape (or if time is short give everyone footprints you have made before the session).

Say 'In this course we are being invited to take more steps on our journey with Jesus. Are you willing to do this?' Then give people the option to place their footprint on the path or by the cross as a way of indicating their willingness to set out on this journey.

Listen to or sing *Father God I wonder*

Round this section off with a prayer asking God to help us as we set out on the journey through this course.

Where?

Having come to Christ, in what ways do you find yourself living differently from others around you? Is there anything your church could provide to help you live out your Christian life more effectively?



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Session 2 - Confidence

Welcome

Take two minutes each to tell the group about a special journey you have made at some point in your life – maybe a holiday, a school trip, a visit to special relatives ...

What was so important about it?

Or, if possible set up an obstacle course in the room where you meet and provide a rucksack filled with cushions or light but bulky objects. Ask the group to see who can get through the course in the fastest time? Use a stop watch or two identical courses.

What would help us to get through faster still?

Repeat the exercise but this time without the baggage.

Word

Last time we thought about Jesus' call to us to come to him: this week we move on to think about what following Jesus has meant to us since then, and what it will continue to mean into the future.

Read Matthew 4:18-22, 8:18-22, John 6:66-69

- Lots of people would say that they believe in Jesus but only some that they follow Him. Do you think that there is a difference?
- Why do you think that following Jesus (as opposed to merely believing in him) is such a challenge?
- What things did Jesus' first followers have to leave behind? Is there anything you've left behind?
- Where has Jesus taken you?
- What have been your most exciting adventures and hardest/darkest times?
- What has been most surprising?
- As you look forward, how do you feel about continuing to follow Jesus? Excited, anxious, hanging on by your fingernails ...? Do you know why?
- In what kinds of ways do your fellow-disciples help you to keep following?
- Is there anything specific the church can do to help you follow?

Worship

Use a hymn or song such as *Will you come and follow me, I'm special* or *History Maker* either by meditating on the words, listening to a recording or singing together. Match the words to your own experience.

Using the cross again, say a simple prayer of thanks to God for somewhere – even this group! – where he has led you in your life. You could end by praying the Lord's Prayer together.



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Share any other ideas for becoming more aware of him, and maybe promise to pray for each other in the group each day this week.

Where?

Jesus promised to be with us wherever we go, but how aware are we of his presence 24/7?

What would it be like this week to live more consciously in the presence of Jesus, at home, at school, wherever we go? How can we help one another with this?

Make/ give each child a small card to go into their pencil case with Joshua 1:9 "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Meditation – picture yourself sitting in your place in your class at school. Imagine Jesus walking into that classroom. Does He come to sit next to you? How would that feel? Where would He be? What would He do? Can you hold a helpful picture of this in your head? You could remember that picture every time you see the card in your pencil case this week.

At what times and in what places do you pray? Do you pray with others or on your own? Tell the group about your prayer experiences day by day, and about how they help you.



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Session Three – Learn

Welcome

Take two minutes each to tell the group about what your favourite subject at school is/was, and why you enjoy(ed) it so much.

When was the last time you learnt to do something new? How exactly did you learn this skill?

Challenge the group to make paper cups that they could have a drink of water from. Individuals can either follow your instructions as they copy a prototype or they can have a go at coming up with their own design. Which ones are best at holding water? Can anyone actually drink from their cup?

Discuss:

- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- What do you want to be like as a Christian when you're grown up?

Word

Read Col 1:25-29 NCV

I became a servant of the church because God gave me a special work to do that helps you, and that work is to tell fully the message of God. This message is the secret that was hidden from everyone since the beginning of time, but now it is made known to God's holy people. God decided to let his people know this rich and glorious secret which he has for all people. This secret is Christ himself, who is in you. He is our only hope for glory. So we continue to preach Christ to each person, using all wisdom to warn and to teach everyone, in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature person in Christ. To do this, I work and struggle, using Christ's great strength that works so powerfully in me.

- Why do you think the author was so keen and worked so tirelessly to 'bring each one into God's presence as a mature person in Christ'?
- What do you think a 'mature' Christian's character and behaviour would be like? What would an immature Christian's character and behaviour be like?

Make two lists on flip chart paper and compare them.

One writer suggests that becoming a disciple or follower of Jesus involves growing in five different areas:

- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Knowledge – how much we know about our faith, the Bible, the Church, and so on,- Understanding – how much we are able to see things from God's point of view rather than a merely human one,- Passion – how deeply and enthusiastically we feel about God and particular aspects of following him,- Skill – the practical abilities needed to work for Jesus in his church,- Character – who we are as people, and how much of Jesus' character is growing in our |
|--|



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

- Do you think this plan would help someone to grow into a mature disciple? Is there anything you'd add or take away from it?
- Is it a question of starting at the top of the list and working through the points one after another, or do we grow in different areas at the same time? How do you think you are doing?
- Sometimes others can see growth in us more easily than we can see it in ourselves. Talk for a while about one another and how you have seen each other growing, maybe it would be helpful to continue this discussion with people at home during the week.

Read Mt 5:1-12, Mt 17:14-21, Mt 14:13-21

- As you read or listen ask yourself the question how did Jesus' followers learn here?
- Can you identify any occasions when Jesus gave feedback to his disciples? How do you respond to feedback from parents or teachers, and what kinds do you find helpful?
- Can you think of any other gospel stories which provided learning experiences for his disciples?
- How do you learn most easily?
- What things have particularly helped you to learn, and what helps you translate new knowledge into action?
- What new skills have we learnt/do we need to learn to make us more effective disciples of Christ?

Worship

Listen to a song such as *Fill me up Lord* by Nigel Hemming ©2001 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire).

Can you identify one thing you've learnt so far on this course? Tell the group about these, and pray for one another.

Where?

Of the five areas of growth (knowledge, understanding, passion, skill and character), list which areas your church does 'most' well and 'least' well.

In which area would you like to grow as a Christian? How could your church help in this?



Session Four - Change

Welcome

Think back to the class you were in last year.

- What did you like doing then that you no longer do in your new class? Eg more time for 'play', less hard work ...
- What can you do now that you didn't do in previous classes? Have more responsibility in the school, wear different uniform ...

Or Playdough game – like *Pictionary* but with playdough instead. Create two teams each with a similar amount of playdough and a list of twelve words. One person from each team is secretly told the first word on your list which they have to make with the playdough in order to get another member of their team to say the word. They are not allowed to use letters or numbers in their models nor to speak but they can answer any questions from their team by nodding their head for 'yes' or shaking it for 'no'. When a person has guessed the first word on the list they repeat it quietly to the leader who gives them the next word. They then return to their team and try to communicate this through a playdough model. The first team to work their way through all twelve words wins.

Or Fishes Game– Be aware of safety issues here, you need plenty of space. Ask all the group to sit on chairs in a circle facing outwards. Go round the circle and give each person a name of a fish eg cod, halibut, plaice so that the group is divided into three. The leader calls out the name of a fish and all that group stand up and begin to run round the circle in a clockwise direction, if they get back to their seat they may sit down. However the leader may shout 'change' at any point and then the group all have to turn and run in the opposite direction. The leader can shout 'change' as many times as they like. The last fish to make it back to their place is out and turns their chair into face the inside of the circle. The game continues with a different group running until all but one person have turned their chair inwards. The remaining person is the winner.

Word

Last time we thought about growth. Growth often leads to change as we thought about in our introduction.

- Why do you think people sometimes find change difficult?
- Is change always for the better?
- Can you identify from your own experience one change which was a loss, a change for the worse, and one which was a gain and a change for the better?

Read James 1:17 and/or Hebrews 13 verse 8. How do you respond to these verses?
Do you find them a comfort? If so, what in particular do you find helpful?

Give everyone a lump of playdough and ask them to fashion a head. Admire the creations. Then give them a mould of some kind eg a cap from a bottle and ask them to squeeze their playdough into the mould.



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Read Romans 12:1-2

(If you are using a version that talks about being transformed you may need to explain that you are not talking about 'Transformers', the film where cars mutate into fighting robots!)

- What do you think this passage means?
- How do we 'change to be like the people of this world'?
- Do you feel that 'being transformed' is an easier idea for people than 'change'? If so, why?
- What can help us feel excited about change, rather than fearing it?
- How have you changed for the better over recent months? How has your church?
- How do you think the church can help people accept change more easily?

Worship

Give everyone a sweet in a wrapper eg Roses, Celebrations. Be aware of allergies.

Explain that we will be eating the sweets but first we are going to use them to help us respond to what God may be saying to us today about change in our lives. Give them a quick outline of the next five minutes.

Begin by reading from Romans 12 'Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking.

Say a prayer asking God to show individuals any particular way in which they are being shaped by this world.

Allow a few moments of quiet for people to listen to God.

Invite the group to open their sweets and to throw the wrapper into the bin as it is passed round as a sign that they are willing to get rid of any wrong ways of being shaped by the world that God has shown them during this time.

Then invite the group to eat their sweet and as they do so to enjoy it and welcome the good things that will come as their new way of thinking is developed by the Holy Spirit.

Listen to or join in with a suitable song such as *I am a new creation*, *Fill me up Lord* or *Lord I come to You*.

Round the whole time off with a prayer.

Where?

Decide that you're each going to change something this week. Maybe you'll try a new pattern of prayer or Bible-reading. (It may be helpful to have some appropriate Bible reading notes that group members could take away with them.) Maybe it'll be a new kind of food, or some sort of a make-over. Maybe you'll decide *not* to do something. Notice how it feels so that you can tell people about it next week.



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Session Five – Go!

Welcome

- What did you decide to change during the last week?
- How did it feel? Will you be making the change permanent?

Talk to one another around this area. In particular, what did you notice about the *process* of change?

Rescue off the Island Game – Divide the group into 2 teams which line up at one end of the room. Each player needs a carpet square or piece of A4 paper. At the opposite end of the room you need one person from each team or a teddy if your group is small on a piece of paper representing an island. Tell them that between the two there are shark-infested waters. The members of each team have to work with one another to move across the divide by passing a carpet tile/piece of paper from the back to the front and shuffling up together. The first team to arrive back at the start with their teddy/team member successfully rescued is the winner.

Word

To be a disciple or follower of Jesus is about being sent to continue the work of Jesus on earth. In small groups make lists on flip chart paper of the ingredients that made up the ministry of Jesus.

Read Mt 28:16-20

- As he was preparing to leave them what tasks did Jesus give the disciples to continue?
- How many different places do you go to during an average week?
- How many of these do you naturally see as places where you can work for Jesus?
- Can you see any areas in which you are involved which could be seen as carrying on the ministry of Jesus?
- What encouragement did Jesus give to his followers here?
- Have you found your pencil case cards from Session 2 to be helpful at all?

Read Acts 13:1-5

The world of Jesus and his disciples seems a million miles from today's world.

- What does it mean to us to be 'sent out in the power of the Spirit' (as we pray at the end of the Eucharist)?
- What was the ultimate purpose of the 'sendings out' in the two Bible passages we've read?
- As we step out in mission, what might we need to take with us for the journey?
- What do you feel you need which would help you be more effective in 'going'?



Confident discipleship

for 7-11's

Worship

Prepare in advance a supply of footprints (as in Session 1), enough for each individual to have several, and a footpath large enough for all the footprints of the group. Invite people to write a different place where they go week by week on each footprint. Ask them to place the footprints on a pathway and as they do so to pray that God will enable them to go in His name and to bring in His light and love in those places.

Pray for God to fill the individuals with his Spirit for this task and make them aware of His presence with them.

Sing *Shine*

As we come to the end of the course, think for a few moments in silence about what you have found most helpful, most challenging, most difficult, most comforting.

How do you feel you are different from when the course began?

You may like to share these things with the rest of the group, or in pairs.

Use this prayer together to offer yourselves to God:

**Lord Jesus Christ, you call us to be your disciples,
to come to you, follow you, learn from you,
allowing you to change and shape us.
Then Lord, you send us out to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit,
fill us with excitement for the journey ahead,
and keep your promise to be with us every step of the way.
We offer ourselves afresh to you,
that we may be presented fully mature to you. Amen.**

Where?

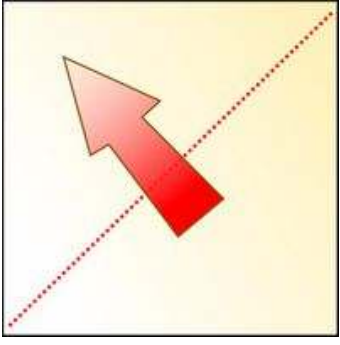
In the Diocesan Year of Discipleship what kinds of resources might the Church (at local or Diocesan level) provide to help

- children needing renewal and encouragement as they continue to follow Jesus?
- children new to faith be more confident?
- children searching for faith?

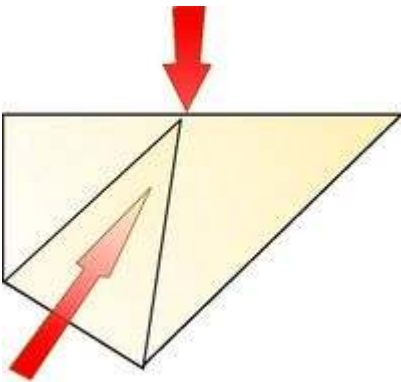
Afterwards:

The Adult groups are being asked to feed back for PCC discussion any ideas which could help people in their journey of discipleship. Once the course is over, it would be very helpful if the children's leaders could get together to reflect on the three questions above, and jot down some notes with your and the children's reflections to add into the PCC discussion material. How might we encourage our church to make use of such resources?

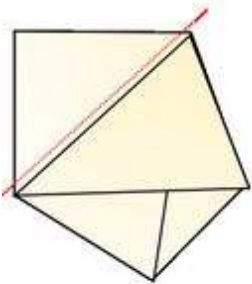
1 **Fold the square diagonally.** It will be in the shape of a triangle after this step.



2 **Find the centre of one of the open sides.** Fold the point from the opposite side to this centre mark.



3 **Repeat with the other side.**



4 **Separate and fold down each of the top flaps to create an opening in your paper cup.** As you do this, tuck the top one of the top flaps into the outer side flap to hold the cup together securely.

