



Living the Faith – Step 4

Missionary Discipleship

Aim

To discover the meaning of discipleship using scripture and tradition and see the effects this has on our everyday lives.

Resources needed

Leaders

- *Come and See notes*
- *PPT laptop and projector or TV*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Bible or Scripture Text*
- *Role cards, sheets of paper and pens*
- *Songs*

For Young People

- *Journals*

Prayer Focus

Green Cloth – *Ordinary time*

Shamrock plant or *leaves cut out in paper*

Candle – *three wick, white, cream or green*

White cloth – *symbol of being clothed in Christ at our Baptism*

Dove of Peace - *cut outs for each person*

Catechism – *the wisdom and tradition of the Church*

Liturgical Link

As children of God we are called to continue the work of creation. Baptism brings us into the family of God and confirms us as disciples of Jesus.

Overview

- Three into one
- Discipleship
- The 3-fold Mission of Jesus
- Living as a Missionary Disciple
- Prayerful Reflection

Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarity with content and resources*
- *Be ready to share experiences and opportunities for exercising ministry*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

Scripture Passages

- Eph 4:29-32 *Be kind, and forgive*
- Heb 1:1-3 *Priest, Prophet, King*
- Jn 14:1-31 *Last discourse part 1*
- Jn 17:1-26 *Last discourse part 3*

Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- Three Persons, one God
- Missionary Disciples
- Jesus the way, truth and life
- The role of Priest, Prophet and King
- The Power of the Holy Spirit

Gathering:

- **Welcome and Overview:**

- Thank the young people for coming back, give a brief reminder of key points from the previous gathering.
- Provide the overview and aim for today.

Introductory activity - *Three into one*

- The last step involved identification of gifts. Today we think about ourselves as being more than what might be first seen.
- Hand each person three of the different colour / shaped pieces of paper; each has the name of a different role a person might hold, (*see 12-15 C&S LtheF Step 4 Roles in my life*).
- Individuals are invited to look at the three roles given and discern which are true for them.
- Group members then move around meeting others, sharing the roles that fit and try to trade any that don't, in the hope of creating a perfect trio. Demonstrate as needed. Allow a few minutes then:
 - Invite the young people to place their papers on the floor / table in front of them in a circle, if all fit, or a triangle to show which do and do not.
- Ask each to comment on 'how well do the words help to depict you'?
- gather feedback and respond as appropriate to help explain the mystery of the Trinity – three persons in one God.

- FF** - The three wick candle symbolizes the Trinity. Candles are a sign of Christ's presence, the three wick candle reminds us that Jesus, the Father and the Spirit, though represented here as three flames, are indeed one, as is the candle.
- We too have lots of different roles and relationships in life, none of which lessens the others.
 - It is the spirit within us and our relationship with Jesus and the Father, that helps us make sense of all these. Keeping our relationship with God at the centre of our lives is therefore really important if we are to fulfil our role as disciples.
 - Our opening prayer acknowledges this and the truth about the eternal nature of God.

Opening Prayer

- **Prayer focus:** *refer to other items and their significance here and as appropriate later*

In the opening responses we acknowledge the nature of our triune God and in song praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Prayerful acknowledgement: *adapted from A Wee Worship Group, Wild Goose Publication*

Leader In the beginning before time, before people, before the world began

All God was

Leader Here and now among us, beside us, enlisting the people of earth for the purposes of heaven,

- All** God is.
- Leader** In the future, when we have turned to dust and all we know has found its fulfilment.
- All** God will be.
- Leader** Not denying the world, but delighting in it, not condemning the world, but redeeming it, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- All** God was, God is, God will be.

Song: Trinity Song: Father we adore you <https://youtu.be/wMp5Cfku7R4>
or other

Missionary Disciples

- **Activity: What is Discipleship?**
 - At the start of this journey we explored the notion of Missionary Discipleship. Hopefully over time the understanding of this has grown.
 - In Pairs group members share: what they remember about the term and what it means for baptised Christians today?
 - Invite general sharing from the group and help to clarify.

- FF**
 - Being a disciple of Jesus is not an easy task, especially in a world that is so focused on materialism and the generation of personal wealth. Graces we receive from the Holy Spirit, the Sacraments, our connection with scripture and the Church Community help us to overcome the difficulties.
 - The mission of the Church is to make God's love known through the message of the Gospel; the Good News that Jesus restored the relationship between God and humanity, to secure the promise of eternal life.
 - Followers of Jesus are called to be disciples, the people who continue Jesus mission.
 - The Church has long since referred to the baptised as Disciples and Missionaries, more recently Pope Francis, in 'The Joy of the Gospel' uses the term Missionary Disciple.
 - Being a disciple is challenging, so not easy. To the best of our ability, each of us must help to promote inclusion and equality for all, just as Jesus did, even though we know our words and actions might be unpopular with some and seem at odds with much of society. Such is the role of a Missionary Disciple today.

- **Christ the beating heart of the Church** Archbishop Costelloe, on the feast of the Sacred Heart, 2019, spoke of the need to return the Church to Christ, and return Christ to his Church.
 - Living as true disciples is the way to achieve this. Disciples are people who help bring healing into the lives of others. Quoting Pope Francis, the Archbishop said:

"we are called by God to be not inflictors but healers of people's wounds; not destroyers but warmers of people's hearts, for this is exactly what Jesus was and still seeks to be in and through His Church".
 - Scripture can help us to see what in practice this might mean.

Scripture and Reflection

- **Ephesians 4:29-32:**

- Speaking to the early Church in Ephesus, the plea of St Paul can apply equally to Pope Francis and the Church today.
- As you hear the passage read note the words, phrase or images that remain with you?
- Invite each person to speak aloud their response, gently and without any explanation or response from others.
- Then invite individuals to quietly reflect on the questions below:

Ponder:

- In my everyday conversations how well do I build up others?
- Is there anyone to whom I have spoken sharply, loudly, or with real anger?
- Am I carrying bitterness or resentment towards any person or situation?
- All are then invited to offer these ponderings to God and ask for help through this short prayer:

Lord, show us your loving kindness, help us to live in the light of your presence.

- **The Mission of Jesus**

The passage from Ephesians stresses the need to become more God like, to be kind and tender-hearted, to forgive others as God has forgiven us. Such attributes are very evident in the life of Jesus all through the Gospels. He understood and worked tirelessly to fulfil his three-pronged mission as priest, prophet and king. The same mission is shared by all the baptised, as the Catechism makes clear:

*“The Christian faithful, incorporated into Christ by their Baptism and made members of God's People, share in Christ's threefold office as **priest, prophet, and king**. They are called to exercise God's mission for his Church according to their state.” (Canon 204).
CCC# 871-872*

Activity – Priest, Prophet and King:

- Divide the group into three and give each a large sheet of paper with one of the three words priest, prophet and King. Ask each group to identify:
 - ways in which the word is used in society today
 - any roles and responsibilities associated to the word
 - any connections between these roles and responsibilities and the mission of the Baptised.
- bring the group together to share their findings and the link to the Mission of Jesus is part of our role as modern day disciples.

- **Hebrews 1:1-3**

While there are plenty of references to Christ as Priest, Prophet and King in both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, a brief passage in Hebrews identifies all three together.

- Listen to the words and allow them to speak to you.

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

FF **Priest:** by overcoming sin Jesus re-established the link between the divine and human state.

Prophet: as prophet, Jesus speaks and embodies the divine truth

King: as king, Jesus leads us on the right path, giving guidance to all human projects

A simple way of understanding this is by remembering Jesus saying, I am the way, (as king), the truth, (as prophet) and the life, (as priest).

- This threefold office or mission describes Jesus, as Lord; and the role of the baptised.

- The Church believes baptism to be far more than a sign of belonging to the Church.

- Through baptism we become one with Christ, and his mission.

- It is for this reason that baptism includes the anointing with oil; just as, in the Old Testament, priests, prophets, and kings were anointed upon assumption of their offices.

Adapted from Catholic News Agency article by Bishop Robert Barron 2014

Going Deeper

- **Living the Mission today**

To help us explore what this mission looks like let us return to St John's Gospel and Jesus' final address to the disciples before the last supper and the events that followed.

John 14:1-31 part 1 - peace and the Paraclete

- Jesus tells the disciples he is the way the truth and the life and that he will send the Spirit.

- Aware of the context, invite group members to listen to the reading and see what resonates with them.

- Read from 14:1 -14:

The Priestly Role:

In response to the questions by Thomas and Philip Jesus says 'I am the way the truth and the life.' Jesus leads us to the Father he is the bridge builder: a term used in ancient Roman times to describe the role of the Priest.

- Invite the group members to reflect on the following questions, recording responses in journals and being ready to share an aspect of their reflection with the group.

Ponder

- Jesus begins by saying 'Do not let your hearts be troubled' - what causes trouble in your life, and amongst families and communities you know?

- Are there people in your current circles for whom you need be a bridge builder?

- What changes might you need to make to your daily routine to improve your prayer life and strengthen the relationship with God?
- In the Church, or society in general, what do you believe needs to be challenged
- About which of these challenges do you feel most passionate, and would be willing to take action on?

FF - 'Do not let your hearts be troubled' is also interpreted as 'believe in God and in me'. By saying 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' Jesus assures that those who truly believe in him will be able to follow his ways and continue the Mission: – anything they ask in his name will be given.

Adapted from the New Testament Nicholas King, Kevin Mayhew Pub

FF - An important aspect of our priestly mission then is to be peacemakers, people who help reconcile divisions amongst families, communities and cultures. When any of these groups rediscover a link to God, they are helped to find an inner peace.

- To take on this priestly role the baptised must be in harmony with God. This comes from devotion to prayer, reception of the Sacraments and a close relationship with the living Christ, in whose name their identity, purpose and mission is found.

The Prophetic Role:

- The prophetic role is about the truth. Our mission is to be us to be true to our faith, and live by it, following the example of Jesus.
- Invite the group members to reflect on the following questions, recording responses in journals and being ready to share an aspect of their reflection with the group.

Ponder: experiences of the prophetic role:

- Has speaking the truth ever got you into trouble when speaking to a family member or friend?
- Have you ever been brave enough to speak up for a person or situation where you saw injustice taking place?

FF - Being a prophet may bring us into conflict with others as at times, since by speaking the truth we may be going against public opinion.

- At times we may need to question the words, motives or actions of others, including those in authority.
- The Hebrew word for **prophet** is 'nabi' which has the overtone of a madman. Many of the Old Testament prophets who speak the divine truth to the misguided and unhinged are inevitably dismissed.
- Jesus made it clear the same would be experienced by the disciples, as also happened to him. Having been illumined, by the Holy Spirit, the disciples, as prophets, will also go out into the world to be beacons of light. We must do the same.

Adapted from the Catholic News Agency article by Bishop Robert Barron 2014

The Kingly Role:

- The Kingly role is concerned with leadership, all good leaders are worthy of respect, and as creator of the universe the respect due to God is immense. So are the responsibilities given to leaders.

John 17:1-26 part 3 – Giving glory to the Son and the Father

- This final section of the address to the disciples is more akin to a prayer to the Father.
- Aware of the context, invite group members to listen and see what resonates with them.
- Read from 17:1 -26:
- Invite the group members to reflect on the following questions, recording responses in journals and being ready to share an aspect of their reflection with the group.

Ponder: experiences of the Kingly role:

- For what generally in society, or amongst people you know, is respect shown or glory given.?
- Which of these do you buy into?
- What are the ways in which your life gives Glory to the Father, and to Jesus?

- FF** - The prayer to the Father gives focus to the mutual glory of the Father and Son; prayers for those who have been faithful to Jesus, and for those who will respond to the message spread by them.
- As in the early chapters, the passage includes several references to the word love.

Adapted from the New Testament Nicholas King, Kevin Mayhew Pub

- FF** - Honour is given to those we respect, not out of fear of duty, but of love and appreciation for all that they are and do. We give honour to God as the creator of all things, the Father, who brought us into being and whose unconditional love sent the Son to redeem us. His actions also command our love and respect.
- In Church terms a king is a leader within a community who helps to direct the community to God. The king needs to coordinate the efforts and talents of many people to help them achieve a common purpose, as Jesus did.
- Using our particular gifts and circumstances each baptized person is charged with the kingly role of nurturing and shaping others to participate in the building of God's kingdom. Far from being a personal set of values and devotions, religion is a way of life that demonstrates belief in and conviction to the God who is for all people. Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa are examples of individuals who boldly and publicly lived out the kingly role of their baptism.

Adapted from the Catholic News Agency article by Bishop Robert Barron 2014

Closing Prayer

- Gather in a circle / semi-circle around the prayer focus.
 - Have gentle music on in the background.
 - Place the trinity candle in the centre of the group and have laid around this small images of a dove (priest), vine leaf, (prophet) crown, (king) real or paper.
- Invite individuals to sit for a few moments and reflect back on the conversations that have taken place.
- Give each person a cut out of a dove
- As song is played, invite young people to recall and offer to God a person or situation where peace and gentle love are needed.

- **You raise me up**, (see inspirational song resources for links to various versions) or other
- We bring these prayers together asking God to hear them and help us on the path to holiness:

We pray

Leader Sun, how can I thank you?

All You've warmed my heart and soul. Washed away the cold Moon.
You've made a dreamer out of me.

Leader I can see, and I think I can feel it when you change your face.

All Please forgive me if I turn away, I'm just a sleeper
I know that you watch my dreams. You're my heavenly keeper.

Leader Heavenly keeper, guide and protect me each day.

All As long as I'm breathing, as long as I can move, help me to remain strong.

Leader Heavenly keeper, please forgive me when I turn from you.

All Though you remain ever present, I'm not always so faithful.
Please forgive me when I'm just a sleeper.
I know that you watch my dreams. You're my heavenly keeper.

Leader Glory be to God who made us, to Christ who saved us and to the Holy Spirit who keeps us in faith.

All As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

Closing Remarks and Next Step

- Invite response to the Step 4 gathering
- Living the Faith Step 5 – Continuing God's Creation
- Encourage personal and prayer support of one another and attendance at Mass