



## Living the Faith – Step 4

### Missionary Disciples

#### Aim

To explore the meaning of discipleship through scripture and tradition, the developed wisdom of the Church, and discover its impact on our lives.

#### Resources needed

##### Leaders

- *Come and See notes*
- *PPT laptop and projector or TV*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Large clover cut outs & pens*
- *Songs*

##### For Young People

- *Journals and hand out*

#### Prayer Focus

Expressions of our belief:

**Green Cloth** – *Ordinary time*

**Shamrock Plant or** – *paper leaves*

**Vine leaves or grapes** – *Jesus the*

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

**Catechism** – *the wisdom and tradition of the Church*

**Dove of Peace** - *cut outs for each person*

#### Liturgical Link

Though all the baptised share the role of priest, prophet and king, only those ordained ministers can confer the sacraments. The most important role of the priest is to share God's Word.

#### Overview

- Three into one
- Missionary Discipleship
- Jesus three-fold Mission
- Living the Mission today
- Prayerful Reflection

#### Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarity with content and resources*
- *Be ready to share about personal gifts and unexpected events*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

#### Scripture Passages

- Hebrews 1:1-3 Priest, Prophet, King
- John 14:1-31 Last discourse part 1
- John 15,16:1-33 Last discourse part 2
- John 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

## Gathering:

- **Welcome & Overview:**  
Thank the young people for coming back, give a brief reminder of key points from the last gathering. Give overview and aim for today.
  - **Introductory activity - *Three into one*** - The last step involved identification of gifts. Today we think about ourselves as being multi-dimensional.
    - Hand out to each person three of the clover cutouts, different colours if possible.
    - Invite group members to choose three different aspects of their lives eg, family, student or worker, friendship group, club member or volunteer. Having written these on the leaves they then identify three different roles played in each context. Provide examples if needed.
    - Invite the young people to place the leaves on the floor / table in front of them and to consider: in which of the roles am I most me? and are there any I can dismiss as unimportant?
    - Gather feedback and respond as appropriate to help explain the mystery of the Trinity – three persons in one God.
- FF**
- Use of the shamrock leaf to explain the mystery of the Trinity to the Irish is attributed to St Patrick. The three-wick candle symbolizes the Trinity. Candles are a sign of Christs' 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.
  - As the information on the leaves depicts, we too are complex individuals. We have lots of different relationships and take on a variety of roles in different contexts. What helps us make sense of all these is the spirit within us and our relationship with Jesus and the Father.
  - Keeping our relationship with God at the centre of our lives is necessary if we are to fulfil our roles as Missionary 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 Book, 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>

## Missionary Disciples

- **Activity: What is a Missionary Discipleship?** At the start of this journey we explored the notion of Missionary Discipleship. Hopefully over time the understanding of this has grown.
  - Working in pairs, invite group members to consider the meaning of the term Missionary Discipleship, and the impact it has on the life of Christians.
  - Invite general sharing amongst the group and help to clarify as necessary.
  - Remind all present that while a daunting prospect, the call to discipleship is achievable through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Sacraments, our connection with scripture and the support of the Church Community.

- FF**
- 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, won victory over death securing the promise of eternal life.
  - Followers of Jesus are called to be disciples, the people who continue Jesus mission.
  - For Jesus discipleship meant radical inclusion and radical equality. Each person is called to take on the role to the best of their ability, all contributions are valid, valued and contribute to the whole.
  - The Church has long since referred to the baptised as Disciples and Missionaries, but it was Pope Francis, in 'The Joy of the Gospel' who brought to light the term Missionary Disciple.
  - Discipleship is challenging and so costs. Disciples need to be prepared to go against the flow.
  - Jesus went into other people's spaces. He challenged them and invited them to move into new spaces. That is the role of the Missionary Disciple today.

**Reflection activity:** working in 2's or 3's young people consider, within our society today:

- What are major flaws in society that the Church needs to contend with?
- What, or where, are the spaces into which the Gospel message needs to be taken?

*Encourage recording of responses in journals readiness to share with the group*

- **Christ the beating heart of the Church** The above responses may connect in some way with the sentiments expressed by Archbishop Costelloe, on the feast of the Sacred Heart, 2019. He reminded us that "**Christ is the beating heart of the Church,**" and that each of us is called to put Christ at the centre of everything we do as individuals and as the Church.

The Archbishop also acknowledged that the greatest challenge facing our Church today is to return the Church to Christ and to return Christ to his Church.

This we can only do by being “*the living body of Christ, the living Sacrament of his healing, renewing and saving presence in the world.*” since as Pope Francis reminds us “*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*”.

We now turn to scripture to help us consider what, in practice, this might mean for us as Missionary Disciples.

## Scripture and Reflection

- **The Mission of Jesus –**

**CCC# 871-872** The Catechism makes clear the role of the baptised to be involved in the three fold mission (office) of Jesus.

*“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).*

*Because all share in the baptismal rebirth in Christ, there is a true equality in dignity and activity whereby all cooperate in building up the Body (Canon 208).” From CCC, Simplified*

**Activity – Priest, Prophet and King:**

- Place three large sheets of paper, each with one of the words at the centre, in the shared space.
- Invite group members to bring to mind words, symbols and images relating to each word that might help explain the meaning of this three-fold mission of Christ we share today.
- Notes are added to the sheets, the group then come back together to unpack what is there. Seek clarification where necessary and make a link to the following scripture reading.

- **Hebrews 1:1-3** While there are plenty of references to Christ as Priest, Prophet and King in both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, this short passage in Hebrews identifies all three together.

**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:** having overcome sin Jesus has re-established the link between divinity and humanity.

**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 is not only a rich way to depict the Lord; it is also a description of the role of all the baptised, including us. Catholic theology, makes clear that baptism is much more than a symbolic sign of belonging to the Church.
- Baptism incorporates a person into Christ, so that s/he becomes part of his mystical body, and so share in his office or 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.
- The same still happens today at ceremonies where Kings and Queens are installed.

*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' discourse, his final address to the disciples before the last supper and events that followed.
- **John 14:1-31 part 1 - peace and the Paraclete** Read from 14:1 – 14 during which Jesus tells the disciples he is the way the truth and the life.
  - Aware of the context, invite all present to listen to the reading and to reflect on:
    - The words and images that remain with you?
    - What they sense about the relationship between Jesus and the disciples?
    - The message being conveyed about Mission?
  - Encourage responses to be recorded in journals and then shared with the group

- FF**
- Aware of the troubled times ahead, Jesus begins by saying 'Do not let your hearts be troubled' also interpreted as 'believe in God and in me'.
  - In response to the questions by Thomas and Philip Jesus gives another **I AM** statement, - 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' then makes clear the relationship he has with the Father.
  - 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.
  - Again Jesus promises the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth that will remain with them, and whom we are later told, will teach them everything.
  - In response to another question, Jesus, in the next part of the text, stresses the centrality of love, the disciples must love one another, and be loved by the Father.

*Adapted from the New Testament Nicholas King, Kevin Mayhew Pub*

- **Priest:** As 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 all present to consider if, in their 'priestly role'
    - There are people amongst my current circles for whom I need be a bridge builder?
    - There are changes I need to make to my daily routine to enhance my prayer life and strengthen my relationship with God?
  - Encourage responses to be recorded in journals and then shared with the group

- 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 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.

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

- **John 15,16:1-33 part 2** – *do you belong to Jesus or the world* Read abridged version, from the resources section. Having made clear that he is *the way the truth and the life*, Jesus lays down a serious challenge to the disciples, you either belong to me, or to the world. Make your choice.
  - Aware of the context, invite all present to listen to the reading and reflect on:
    - The words and images that remain with you?
    - Aspects of personal life where pruning might be needed in order to be a true disciple. What will be the cost?
    - What message is being conveyed to you about Mission?
  - Encourage responses to be recorded in journals and then shared with the group.

- FF**
- The passage begins with the powerful image of Jesus as the vine, which has a double point.
  - Firstly the believer is invited to belong to Jesus, secondly, such belonging requires a pruning that will be uncomfortable, and challenging. It therefore requires sacrifice.
  - While the importance of love and joy are made clear, Jesus makes the link between loving and laying down our lives for our friends.
  - To help the disciples cope with the opposition they are to face, he again promises the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, to enable the disciples to remain in touch with the Father, and bear witness to Christ.
  - The questions asked by the disciples again demonstrate the lack of understanding with regard to what Jesus is saying. Finally the penny begins to drop and they acknowledge belief in Jesus, who 'has come forth from God'.
  - Jesus then warns the disciples that they will run away, and despite the agony that is to come Jesus ends on a positive note 'courage for I have conquered the world'.

*Adapted from the New Testament Nichola King, Kevin Mayhew Pub*

- **Prophet** - Jesus has been trying to explain his role in fulfilling the scriptures as prophesied. 'They hated me for nothing' is a quote from Psalm 35:19.
  - 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 has made it clear this will happen to the disciples, as it has to him.
  - Having been illumined, by the Holy Spirit, these prophets, will also go out into the worlds to be beacons of light.
  - The same applies to the baptized today. In our increasingly secularized society, such illumination is desperately needed, so the baptised must study well and pray, so they too have the courage to speak.

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

- Invite all present to reflect on their 'prophetic role' and consider if:
  - There are people or circumstances close to me, about which I need to speak out?
  - In the Church, or society in general there are concerns to be challenged?
  - There is an issue I feel passionate enough about to engage with?
- **John 17:1-26 part 3** – *Giving glory to the Son and the Father* Read abridged version, from resources section. This final section of the address to the disciples is more akin to a prayer to the Father. Aware of the context, listen to the reading and
  - invite all present to listen to the reading and reflect on:
    - The words and images that remain with you?
    - The ways in which your life gives Glory to the Father, and to Jesus?
    - The message you hear being conveyed about Mission?
  - Encourage responses to be recorded in journals and then shared with the group.

- FF** - The prayer to the Father has distinct areas of focus: firstly the mutual glory of the Father and Son; prayers for the faithful ones who have been given to Jesus: especially for support when the world turns against them; lastly, for those who will respond to the message spread by the faithful.
- As in the early chapters, the passage includes several references to the word love.

*Adapted from the New Testament Nichola King, Kevin Mayhew Pub*

- **King** – Honour is given to those we respect, not out of fear of duty, but out 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.
  - Theologically speaking, a king is someone who orders the charisms within a community so as to direct that community toward God.
  - The king needs to coordinate the efforts and talents of a conglomeration of people in order to help them achieve a common purpose, as Jesus did.
  - Within our own sphere and realms of competence each baptised 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.
- Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa are just three 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*

- Invite the group to take away and ponder, or discuss with others
  - Who are people whose life gives Glory to the Father, and to Jesus? How is this evident?
  - Might the key to the renewal of society be a new understanding of the meaning of baptism as being to create a priestly, prophetic and kingly people?

## Closing Prayer

- Gather in a circle / semi-circle around the prayer focus. Have gentle music on in the background.  
Placing the trinity candle in the centre of the group and have laid around these small images of a dove (priest), vine leaf, (prophet) crown, (king) real or paper. Invite individuals to sit for a few moments reflect back on the conversations that have taken place and choose the symbol that most resonates with them. In turn they offer a prayer that relates to the role of Priest, Prophet or King, laying down the symbol as they do so.
- Song: ***The Kingdom of heaven***: play / sing: or ***City of God***  
[https://youtu.be/kXZTYV1Pq\\_M](https://youtu.be/kXZTYV1Pq_M)
- We bring these prayers together asking God to hear them and help us on the path to holiness:

### *We pray*

**Leader** Lord God we thank you for this day and the time spent together.

**All** We rejoice in it.

**Leader** May the peace of the Spirit rest in us and all we meet.

**All** We will seek and promote peace amongst others.

**Leader** Lord, each day may we strive to do you will.

**All** We will not offer anything that does not cost us.

**Leader** May the leaders of our Church and our society guide with justice and truth.

**All** Enable us to be worthy leaders in our homes, our workplaces and society at large.

**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 word without end. Amen  
*Adapted from A Wee Worship Book, Wild Goose Worship Group, Iona Community*

## 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

DRAFT