

Discipleship service outlines

Before using this service outline, read the notes on how to use the sessions.

These service outlines explore four key themes of Christian discipleship. They aim to challenge worshippers to consider who God really is, and what it means to be a follower of Jesus in every moment of our lives, not just on a Sunday morning. They are not a series – you can pick up any one without using the others – but they can also be explored together over four weeks.

These outlines are intended for Local Arrangements and pioneer settings.

These notes are only intended as guidance, recognising that you know your context and community best. Pick whichever activity is best for you and the people you're serving. Or just use the theme and songs and create everything else yourself. You can take these notes apart and rebuild them in a way which works best for your situation or use them 'off the shelf' when needed.

The discipleship of disciple making: God for All

The good news to get across

Evangelism is based in authentic relationship and community. Building relationships with spiritual seekers helps us grow as disciples, as well as encouraging them on their spiritual journey. But sometimes God encourages us to step outside of our comfort zones.

Scripture passages

- Matthew 25:14-30
- Matthew 28:18-20

Songs and hymns

Worship songs

- Beyond these walls of worship (*StF* 547)
- Brother, sister, let me serve you (*StF* 611)
- Go to the world! Go into all the earth (*StF* 402)

- [For all he came, for all he lived](#) (website only) (tune: Abridge, StF 436i)
- Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred? (StF 662)
- I, the Lord of sea and sky (StF 663)
- Lord, you have come to the seashore (StF 558)
- What shall I do my God to love (StF 436)

Popular music

- Unspeakable joy (Kim English)
- What if God was one of us (Joan Osborne)
- We pray (Coldplay)
- Sit down (James)
- Testify (HiFi Sean ft. Crystal Waters)
- Your Love Keeps Lifting Me Higher and Higher (Jackie Wilson)

Background notes

Do you believe that God is for All?

If you said yes – do you live it out? Many of us say we want other people to know Jesus, but we're not very good at doing anything about it.

Maybe we're scared to talk about God with other people. We might have had bad experiences of evangelism – as either evangelist or evangelised!

You are not responsible for someone's relationship with God.

We are called to practice evangelism – to walk alongside people in their search for Jesus. That's why three of the twelve practices of [A Methodist Way of Life](#) are about walking with others – we share our faith through our actions, loving the people around us. We live authentically to who God has made us, in a way that reflects something of who Jesus is. And we tell people about Jesus and listen to their faith stories.

This doesn't have to be scary – everything we do should be based in our relationship with God, and with each other. Telling people about God might be as simple as sharing with a friend how you felt a deep sense of peace when you went for a walk in the woods, and listening to how they respond.

Step outside the box

Having said that, God does call us to take small steps out of our comfort zones – think about characters in the Bible called by God who were often asked to do things that seemed daunting. Like when the disciples were sent out in pairs to bring the good news to whoever they met (Mark 6:6-13).

So pray about it, look for opportunities to have conversations that go beyond small talk, and see what happens. When those disciples came back to Jesus, they were amazed at how well their mission trip had gone.

In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, three servants are given a sum of money by their employer, who then goes away. When he comes back, he doesn't reward the one who keeps the money safe, out of fear of punishment if something went wrong, but the ones who took a risk and doubled their money. There are many interpretations of this passage. I wonder if we sometimes treat our faith like this, keeping it safe, not sharing it in case something goes wrong. Maybe God is encouraging us to share the gold of God's gift with the people we love, that they might know it too.

Ultimately, what happens is not up to us. It's God who is at work in people's hearts, and the individual who must decide whether or not to accept God's invitation. Methodists believe that everyone can be saved by God. Sometimes we might journey alongside someone up to and beyond a point where they are ready to 'say yes' to Jesus. But sometimes we might only journey together for a little bit, and their journey with God will go on, but without you.

Share a story of when you've had a good conversation with someone on their spirituality journey.

Evangelism isn't a one-way practice

While we speak of Jesus for the benefit of those who don't yet know him, it's important that we remember that it helps us grow in faith as well.

When we talk to people who aren't Christians about our faith, we find that our faith deepens. Someone might have a fresh perspective on a Bible story that you would never have thought of. Or they might ask a question that makes us think differently about something that we take for granted.

We might fear these conversations, because we might worry that they will cause us to doubt our faith. But God is bigger than our doubt. It's far more likely that we will learn more about who God is. If you do find that you're concerned about this, talk to someone about it – a minister or pastoral worker, for example.

Share a story of when this has happened to you or ask a volunteer to share.

Take courage from Matthew 28 – Jesus commissioned us, under his authority, to share what he taught with others. But he didn't just leave it with us, because he is "with you always, to the very end of the age".

Discussion questions

- Who are the people who have helped you on your spiritual journey?
- What have you learnt about God from other people?
- What's the scariest thing you've ever done in your spiritual journey?
- We are all called to evangelism – what does this look like for each one of us?
- Look at the three MWOL evangelism practices – Live, Share, Tell. Which do you find easier/harder? Which might God be nudging you to give a try?

Hands-on activity

In advance, arrange for someone to share their spiritual journey story with the group. They may wish to simply speak for 2-5 minutes, or you could interview them. Ask them to focus on

how other people have been part of their journey – both the people who helped them to make a commitment to Jesus, and the people they are building authentic relationships with, who walk alongside them on their spiritual journey.

Time to prepare?

You will need: a clean, empty jar for each person (you could ask people to bring their own), around 20 lolly-pop sticks or strips of card per person, and access to pens/pencils.

Random acts of kindness

Decorate the jars (this could be done using glass pens or similar, or stickers, glitter glues etc). Invite everyone to write on each stick one thing that they can do to spread the love of God, and put them all into the jar. They can take the jar home, to pick tasks at random from the jar, and complete them. The frequency of this can be decided by you (or the congregation) – and will determine how much time the tasks should each take. For example, if you set the goal to be one a day for a month, the tasks should be things that they can complete in five minutes or less, eg take flowers to someone, or leave change in a vending machine/car park meter.

If you set the goal as one a week for six weeks, these could be bigger things like baking something for a neighbour/friend in need, or paint/write positive affirmations on rocks and hide them around your community.

Swap this out

Short on prep time? Swap out the hands-on activity with this simpler activity.

[Conversations against Mundanity](#) is a tool to help you to have real conversation, beyond the surface level. Choose a question card and three subject cards. Ask the group to vote for a subject, then have a discussion as a whole group, or in pairs.

Creative prayer

Draw a picture of three people you know who are interested in exploring God or spirituality in some way, or three people who you would like to encourage in their spiritual journey (you could also draw things to represent them). Use different colours or different materials to decorate your pictures.

Around the pictures, write some words that represent the things you'd like them to know or experience about God.

Ways to respond

Commit to having one conversation with one person this week in which you share your thoughts on a faith/spirituality related topic. It could be a friend or a stranger, and you might want to start by sharing with someone in your church, to build confidence before talking to someone who is a spiritual seeker. Share your plan with the person next to you, pin commitments to a board, or gather pebbles in a bowl to mark your commitments.

Prayer of blessing

Heavenly Lord,
Help us to open our eyes to the people around us who are searching for you.
Help us to be a blessing to them, as we journey together in seeking you.
Holy Spirit, give us the words when we don't know what to say.
Amen.

Keep exploring

- Need a boost of courage? Explore the '[everyone an evangelist course](#)' or explore other resources and courses to [build confidence in evangelism](#)
- [Conversations Against Mundanity](#) is a tool to help you to have real conversation, beyond the surface level.
- Find out more about how to [share your faith](#) through little life decisions.
- Consider [how the way you live your life](#) can help people to see something of God in you
- Find out more about what it means to [tell people about Jesus](#).
- Explore [creative ways to pray](#) and become more aware of Jesus' presence with you, and calling upon you.