

celloutlines | week one

These Cell Outlines are written by ALOVE UK. They are available each week from our web site. For more information and other cell resources, visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk/love/resources.asp

Worshipping as Disciples

Focus: Matthew 14:22-33

You Will Need: Bibles, pens, sheets of paper

WELCOME

Who's the Leader?

Send a member of the group out of the room as the detective. Once they're gone select another member of the group who is going to be the leader. Invite the detective back in the room. The leader must lead the group in a series of actions without the detective recognising who the leader is. Whatever the leader does, the rest of the group have to copy (Hint: the slower the actions, the more difficult it will be to detect). It is the detective's job to determine which member of the group is the leader.

What is a Disciple?

Ask the group what they think of whenever they think of the word disciple or discipleship? Write their answers on a sheet of paper?

Explain that the English word disciple comes from the Latin discipulus meaning "a learner". In this sense, to be a disciple is to be a pupil or a follower, someone who learns from (and/or who copies) someone else. There are many examples of discipleship in the bible and, this month, we will be looking at four very strong examples of effective discipleship in the scriptures. This week we will be looking at the relationship most people would most naturally think of when considering discipleship – the relationship between Jesus and his 12 apostles.

What are the main differences between being a disciple of Jesus and being a disciple of anyone else? Write their suggestions on the same piece of paper as before.

The main difference we will focus on in this session is the fact that no other teacher or mentor in the bible was a figure to be worshipped. No matter how loyal or faithful a disciple was, they only ever worshipped God. When the 12 disciples worshipped Jesus, therefore, they were making a huge statement as to what they believed about him. And Jesus made an even bigger statement by allowing them to worship him.

WORSHIP

Witnessing a Miracle

Have each member find a space in the room. Encourage them to get comfortable (they can sit, kneel, lie down etc.) and close their eyes. Tell them that you are going to read aloud a well-known bible story three times. The first time you read it, they should just listen as they normally would. The second time you read it will be a much longer process. Tell the group that you want them to imagine themselves as one of the characters in the story. They can be Simon Peter, Andrew, Judas, any of the other disciples (anyone but Jesus). Explain that as you read the story the second time, you will ask them a number of

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questions throughout (a possible script is attached as an appendix) for them to fill in the blanks in their imaginations. Finally, you will read the same passage a third time straight through. Encourage them to once again put themselves in the middle of the story using all the extra details they imagined during the process of the second reading.

Do this exercise with the story from Matthew 14:22-33 (ending with the disciples worshipping Jesus). Leave a short space for silence afterwards for them to reflect on the exercise.

WORD

Reflecting Back

Bring the group back together and have them retell the story as if they were the disciples looking back and reminiscing on the time when Peter went out to meet Jesus on the water. Allow the characters to have differing recollections of the details. Spend some time focussing on how they felt throughout. If it helps (or if the group are struggling with the exercise) play the role of a stranger who has not heard this story before. Ask the group questions about what happened? Encourage them to go into as much detail as possible. When one character (say one who was playing Simon Peter) tells a small section of the story, ask what one of the other characters remembers about that same moment. When you get to the end of the story focus on two massive questions:

1. How did the disciples worship Jesus? What might this have looked like compared to the way we normally think of worship?
2. Why did the disciples worship Jesus? How did it feel when Jesus stepped into the boat after everything they'd just seen? Were they scared? Were they in awe? Did they worship because they were afraid of what might happen if they didn't? Did they worship because everyone else was doing it? Was there anyone on the boat who didn't worship Jesus?

Briefly look at Matthew 21:6-11 (the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem). How did the large crowds worship Jesus? How does this contrast or compare with how we imagined the disciples worshipping Jesus in the boat?

Should there be a difference between worshipping Jesus as a fan (perhaps when we first become Christians – or even before we become Christians) and worshipping Jesus as a disciple (as we get to know Jesus more and model our lives on his)?

WITNESS

Take time this week to think about your relationship with Christ.

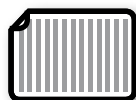
Are you a disciple? How does this affect the way you worship Jesus?

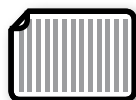
USEFUL RESOURCES

Film: Nooma – Dust by Rob Bell

Book: The D Pack (a new release from ALOVE UK in January 2009)

Book: Let my people grow – Mark Greene & Tracy Cotterell





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Appendix A – Witnessing a Miracle exercise (Possible Script)

1. Read Matthew 14:22-33 straight through:

²²Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. ²⁵During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ²⁸“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹“Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” ³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

2. Read the passage a second time, encouraging the group to imagine they are one of the disciples and asking questions throughout:

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side while he dismissed the crowd.

How do you feel about Jesus sending you off in the boat? Are you glad for the break? Did you want to stay and help him dismiss the crowds? Do you feel dismissed yourself? Do you feel privileged to be amongst the other disciples in the boat?

What kind of a boat is it? How big is it? Have you had to climb up into the boat or step down into it? Is the wood smooth or rough?

What time of day is it? What is the weather like at this point?

Do you know where you’re going? What is your role on the boat? Are you in charge? Are you navigating? Are you rowing? How comfortable are you with the prospect of sailing?

After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.

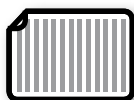
Can you see Jesus going up the mountainside at this point? Is it one of the other disciples who have told you that Jesus went up the mountain? Are you surprised by this? Do you know what he’s doing up there? Were you expecting him to follow in another boat? Are you feeling abandoned or do you trust him?

When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Do you know what’s happening? How are you feeling about the wind and waves? How bad is it? Are you scared? Do you know how to work a boat? Do you have a job to do? Do you get seasick? How far away from shore are you? Are you wondering where Jesus is?

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the

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disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

How are you feeling? What are you thinking? Do you recognise Jesus? Do you think it's a ghost? How do you react? Are you one of those screaming? Are you doing something to try to escape? Are you dealing with this practically or has all common sense and reason flown out of the window? What are you thinking about the reactions of everyone else around you? Do you even notice?

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

What is your reaction to this? Do you believe him? How far away is Jesus at this point? How clearly can you see him? How clearly can you hear him? Do you shout anything back? Are you relieved? Are you skeptical? Are you even more afraid? What are you doing right now? Are you standing? Are you rowing? If so is it towards or away from Jesus?

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

If you are Peter what are you thinking? Why have you reacted the way you have? What are you expecting the response to be?

If you are one of the other disciples what are you thinking about Peter right now? How are you reacting to his challenge?

"Come," he said.

Can you believe this? Do you believe Peter will actually do it?

Peter are you afraid? Do you believe that you'll be able to walk on the water?

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

How are you feeling as you watch Peter step out of the boat? Does he lower himself out of the boat or does he jump? Do you believe that he'll do it? As you watch him begin to walk on the water how are you feeling? Are you saying anything? Are you calling out? Do you wish it were you? What are you thinking about Peter? What are you thinking about Jesus?

If you are Peter how does it feel to be out of the boat? Did you expect the water to hold you up? Are you surprised by this? How secure does the water feel under your feet? How cold is the water? Does the water lap over your feet or do you bob up and down with the waves?

But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

How far away from the boat is Peter at this stage? What causes Peter to focus on the waves? Is it a particularly large wave or a strong gust of wind? Does someone shout something out to distract him? How quickly is Peter sinking? When he cries out is it a cry of panic or of trust? If you are one of the other disciples how do you react to this? Do you try to save Peter? Do you go to jump in after him or try to bring the boat round to him? Are you too stunned to do anything?

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

Does Jesus rush over and pull Peter up as quickly as he can or are his actions more calm and measured? What expression does Jesus have on his face? How much of Peter is under water at this point? If you are Peter what does Jesus' hand feel like? Is it cold to the touch or is it warm? Has he caught you by the

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hand, arm, waist, etc? How firm is his grasp?"

You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

What tone of voice does Jesus use when he says this? Who is he saying it to? Can the disciples on the boat hear him? What is your response to this question? Do you try to reply verbally? How would you answer it? How does the question make you feel?

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

Is Peter walking on water again by the time he climbs into the boat or is Jesus having to pull him on board? Does the wind completely stop the moment Jesus' feet hit the wood or is it more gradual? Is this a shock or have you come to expect these things? Are you amazed? Do you even notice the weather? What are your feelings towards Jesus at this point?

Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

What does this look like? How do you worship Jesus in this moment? Do you sing? Do you bow on your knees? Do you laugh? Do you hug him? Do you dance? Do you ask him questions? Do you retell the story? Apart from "Truly you are the Son of God" do you say anything else to Jesus? How are you reacting compared to the rest of the disciples? Are you going along with them or are you doing something different? How do you feel about the other disciples around you? Have you worshipped like this before or does this feel new? Have you worshipped Jesus like this before? Why are you reacting in this way? Is it a reaction to Jesus walking on water or to the wind dying down or to both or to something else entirely? How is Jesus reacting to all this worship?

3. Read Matthew 14:22-33 straight through one more time and encourage the group to take into consideration all the questions they answered when listening to the story a third time.

4. Leave a couple of minutes of silence for the group to reflect on the exercise.

