

AN EIGHT-WEEK JOURNEY HELPING FOLLOWERS OF JESUS  
REFLECT ON AND LIVE OUT THE ESSENTIALS OF DISCIPLESHIP.



# ESSENTIALS



## INTRODUCTION

Living in a world full of options means we are constantly bombarded by choice. We find ourselves with a never-ending supply of on-demand programmes at our fingertips, multiple opinions vying for our attention through our social media feeds, events and opportunities rapidly filling slots in our weekly planner and a vast array of options in the aisles of our supermarkets. Choice seduces us to see ourselves as consumers at every turn. Society conditions us to expect that we get to choose what we want, the way we want it, when it suits us.

*But how does all of this square when it comes to following Jesus?*

Perhaps we are tempted to view faith in Jesus as just one extra choice in a life full of options. Maybe we treat Jesus as some sort of special deal to pick off the shelf of the supermarket of life whenever we need Him most – grabbing prayer when trouble hits, reaching for the Bible when guidance is needed, or the church when we feel lonely.

Living as a disciple of Jesus cannot just be an optional extra. Following Him is not a special deal, a weekend activity or something we try to fit in around the edges of an already crowded life. In fact, when it comes to faith in Jesus, it is less about choosing options and more about coming to terms with essentials. Even though the things we do as followers of Jesus will never earn us salvation, a particular way of living always flows from having real faith in Him.

In a world crowded by countless stories and flooded with an ocean of ideas, disciples of Jesus need to allow His message, mission and method of living to ring out and rise above them all. This journey through the essentials of discipleship aims to help us do that. Through these eight sessions you will discover how it is essential for disciples to come to Jesus, respond to His call, share in community, take their place in culture, reflect His courage, accept the cost, take up His challenge and continue with Christ. Through Bible teaching, real-life stories and group discussion you will be better able to learn what it looks like to live out the essential aspects of following Jesus in your life.

*Enjoy the journey!*

# HOW TO USE

This guide works alongside the *Essentials* film series to provide a structure for group discussion, questions to reflect on and space for taking notes.

Discipleship works best in community, so making space to learn from God through talking with others and listening to their reflections will help you get the most from Essentials.

Each session is divided into the following sections:

## BEFORE YOU WATCH

Intro questions to set the scene and stimulate discussion before reading the Bible passage together.

## AS YOU WATCH

A heads-up of some things to listen for as you watch the *Essentials* film and a space to scribble what jumps out for you.

## AFTER YOU WATCH

A set of five questions taking the group through the journey below:



**REACT:** initial reaction to what you have just heard and seen.



**REFLECT:** a reflection on the Bible passage.



**APPLY:** a question that pushes towards what this practically means in your life.



**STORY:** an aspect of the personal story.



**RESPOND:** one specific thing you commit to do as a result of the session.

## BEYOND BEING TOGETHER

Some extra ways to go further in reading, reflecting or reacting to the theme.

# THE ESSENTIALS JOURNEY

## **PAGE 6** SESSION 1: *Come*

*COME AND SEE:* Discipleship starts with awareness of Jesus before activity for Him.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* John 1:35-51 / Charles McMullan and Stuart Hawthorne.

*STORY:* Roseanne Woods, Donabate Presbyterian Church.

## **PAGE 10** SESSION 2: *Call*

*FOLLOW ME:* The essential call of discipleship is to follow our master Jesus.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* Matthew 4:17-25 / Christoph Ebbinghaus and Andy Carroll.

*STORY:* Clodagh Sharkey, Ebrington Presbyterian Church.

## **PAGE 14** SESSION 3: *Community*

*SHARE LIFE:* We can't do discipleship alone.

We learn to follow Jesus as part of His church.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* John 17:20-26 / Pauline Kennedy and Gareth Maclean.

*STORY:* Malcolm and Harriett McDonald, Donegal Presbyterian Church.

## **PAGE 18** SESSION 4: *Culture*

*STEP OUT:* Disciples don't escape or embrace culture, but engage with it as they follow Jesus.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* Matthew 5:13-16 / Michael Wylie and Christoph Ebbinghaus.

*STORY:* Colin Ward, Sloan Street Presbyterian Church.

## **PAGE 22** SESSION 5: *Courage*

*SPEAK UP:* Disciples aren't just called to live well in culture, but also to speak up for Jesus.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* Matthew 10:1-16 / Gareth Maclean and Rachel Aicken.

*STORY:* Ross Munro, Carnmoney Presbyterian Church.

## **PAGE 26** SESSION 6: *Cost*

*DENY YOURSELF:* Following Jesus brings a cost in every area of our lives.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* Mark 8:34-38 / Norman Cameron and Andy Carroll.

*STORY:* Agnes Joyce, Drogheda Presbyterian Church.

## **PAGE 30** SESSION 7: *Challenge*

*GO MAKE:* The challenge of becoming disciples who make disciples.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* Matthew 28:16-20 / Stuart Hawthorne and Rachel Aicken.

*STORY:* Gillian Wilson and Julia Morrow, Moneydig Presbyterian Church.

## **PAGE 34** SESSION 8: *Continue*

*LOOK UP:* We never graduate from needing Jesus but continue following Him in every age and stage of life.

*BIBLE TEACHING:* Luke 9:28-36 / Charles McMullan and Michael Wylie.

*STORY:* Stanley McFarland, Second Saintfield Presbyterian Church.

## SESSION 1: *Come*



First and foremost, Jesus invites His disciples to come to Him – that’s how the story begins. Some ordinary men were invited to come and see Jesus. This invitation changed their lives forever. Our journey of discipleship also starts with coming to Jesus. We are invited to come and see Him; to look at His life, to learn from His example and to invite others to do the same.

# *Come*

## BEFORE YOU WATCH

*START:* In one sentence, what do you think is the purpose of the church? Write it down and then share your answer.

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*SCRIPTURE:* Read John 1:35-51 together.

*SEE:* How do different people 'come and see' Jesus in this passage?

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## AS YOU WATCH

As you watch the film, think about how the journey of discipleship started for these ordinary followers and what it leads them to. Write down your reflections in the space below.

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## SESSION 1: *Come*

*“I wonder does this describe our lives as followers of Jesus: those who follow, those who learn, those who seek to imitate Him and those who seek to share Him with those around us?”*

# *Come*

## AFTER YOU WATCH

 **REACT:** Share something that stood out for you from the film.

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 **REFLECT:** In what way do we sometimes mix up religious activity with knowing Jesus?

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 **APPLY:** Look again at John 1:39-41. What does “coming and seeing” Jesus look like in your life right now? How could you develop greater awareness of Jesus in your everyday life?

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 **STORY:** Roseanne tells the story of her encountering Jesus. How have you encountered Jesus in your life?

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 **RESPONSE:** In what practical, everyday ways can you help others around you to come and see Jesus?

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## BEYOND BEING TOGETHER

Following reading the passage, watching the film and sharing in discussion, write down what your understanding of a disciple of Jesus is now.

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***“When there’s an encounter with Jesus there is an urge to follow and know more about Him.”***

