



**YOU'RE
INVITED...**

**Jesus' Invitations
Into a Life
of Discipleship**

Part One

Small Group Study Guide
Fall 2012

Sierra Presbyterian Church
Compiled by Pastor Mike Griffin

You're Invited!
Jesus' Invitations Into a Life of Discipleship
Schedule

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Passage:</u>	<u>Topic</u>
September 9	John 1:35-42	Come and See—Part 1: An Invitation to discipleship
September 16	John 1:43-51	Come and See—Part 2: The One who sees me
September 23	John 3:1-21	Come and See—Part 3: What it means to enter the kingdom (1)
September 30	John 4:1-42	Come and See—Part 4) What it means to enter the kingdom (1)
October 7	Mark 1:14-20	Come and Follow Me—Part 1: Abandoning all for Jesus
October 14	Mark 1:35-45	Come and Follow Me—Part 2: Into quiet places

Study #1- September 9-15

Theme: Come & See-Part One: An Invitation To Discipleship.

Text: John 1:35-51

Background:

Every Jewish child desired to be the disciple of a Rabbi (like a baseball player, pop star or doctor in our society). Disciples would devote their entire lives to becoming exactly like their Rabbi. Rabbi's were intense, creative, funny, and worth following. A common blessing in that day was; "May you be covered in the dust of your Rabbi."

Opening:

What did you want to be when you grew up? Why?

When was the first time you remember feeling drawn to Jesus? What was it about Jesus that drew you to him?

Discussion:

What is significant about the two disciples being disciples of John before they followed Jesus (v.35)? How do you think their previous experience as a disciple (which means learner or follower) prepared them to be followers of Jesus?

What was John the Baptist saying about Jesus when he described him as the "Lamb of God" (v.36)? (Look up Isaiah 53:6-7, Exodus 12:1-13)

What did the disciples do when they heard John's testimony about Jesus (v.37)? Do you think the disciples knew what they were getting into when they followed him?

What do you think the disciples wanted from Jesus? What were they looking for from him? (v.38)

*If Jesus were to ask you what you want from him right now, what would you say? What do you most need from him?

What are they asking for when they say; "Rabbi, where are you staying" (v.38)?

Study #2- September 16-22

Theme: Come & See-Part Two: The One Who Sees Me.

Text: John 1:43-51

Opening:

What do you know about the story of your birth?

What is the best news you've heard this week?

Discussion:

What difference is there between Jesus and traditional Jewish Rabbis in the way they attracted disciples?

How did Philip respond to Jesus' invitation to follow him (v.43)? What conclusions did Philip (v.45) and Nathanael (v.49) make about Jesus?

It is striking how regularly Jesus approached people from the perspective of their potential. Why is this important?

What do you think Jesus is implying about Himself in 1:51?

What apparently convinces Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God?

Why do you think Jesus said what He did to Nathanael in 1:50-51? How might you have felt if you had been Nathanael hearing these words?

From 1:50-51, does it seem that Jesus is satisfied with their level of understanding and belief? Why do you think he is or isn't?

In 1:51, Jesus is referring to Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:10-12. What is Jesus saying about himself by comparing himself to a staircase between heaven and earth?

What brought these five men mentioned in v.35-51 to Jesus? How much information did they have before they decided to follow him?

Study #3- September 23-29

Theme: Come & See: What it means to enter the kingdom (1)

Text: John 3:1-21

Opening:

What would you say is your most treasured possession?

If you were interviewing Jesus like this, what would you say to him first? What questions would you ask him? What would you want to know from him?

Discussion:

What are some of the things we can gather or learn about Nicodemus from v.1-2?

Why do you think that Nicodemus came to Jesus at night? How do you think he was feeling when he came?

What does Jesus say to Nicodemus about entry into the Kingdom of God (v.3-8)? How do you think spiritual birth may be akin to physical birth? How is it different?

What do Nicodemus' questions and responses show us about him (v.4, 9)? Nicodemus was obviously and intelligent man. Why do you think he was having such a hard time accepting and understanding what Jesus was saying?

What does Jesus say about himself as the "Son of Man" (vv.13-14)? If you were Nicodemus and you were familiar with the story about Moses lifting up the snake in the desert (Numbers 21:4-9), what would you be thinking at this point? Why did Jesus have to be lifted up?

Read John 3:16, why do you think some people have trouble accepting such a simple concept? What barriers have you had to overcome to accept this promise?

What can we learn about the Father from the fact that he voluntarily "gave" His own Son so that we can have eternal life? What does this act reveal about the meaning of love?

***Is there any deep-rooted anger or fear in you that makes it hard for you to fully believe this truth about the Father?**

How is Jesus' coming into the world, like light entering into the world? What does this say about how most people respond to light? What will people do who seek to live by the truth?

What happens to those who do not believe in Jesus? What do light and dark represent in these verses? Why don't people in darkness move to the light?

No decision on Nicodemus' part is recorded here but John 7:51 (Nicodemus tries to defend Jesus) and John 19:38-42 (He accompanied Joseph of Arimethea in taking Jesus' body, preparing it for burial, and laying it into the tomb).

Application:

Are there any questions you have related to the themes or issues we have talked about tonight?

What aspects of a person's life demonstrate that he or she has been transformed by the new birth? To what extent does this happen all at once, and to what extent does it take time?

What "new things" have you experienced in your relationship with God recently?

How is this interaction a model for your own efforts at evangelism? How can you present these truths in a way that your friends will understand them?

***Commit yourself to praying for one person you know to be reborn in Christ.**

NOTES:

Study #4- September 30-October 6

Theme: Come & See: What it means to enter the kingdom (2)

Text: John 4:1-42

Opening:

If you knew someone who could read your mind, would you want be around that person? Why or why not? How would that person make you feel?

What can you remember about your first encounter with God in a personal way?

Discussion:

Read John 4:1-9. Who speaks first- Jesus or the woman? What does the women say that indicates her surprise that Jesus is speaking to her? What stereotypes/barriers is he breaking through in this encounter?

What was the Samaritan woman really saying in reply to Jesus' question, "will you give me a drink?" (v.7-8)

Read John 4:10-18. What is the difference between the water from the well and the kind of water Jesus offers? What does Jesus want from the woman before he gives her his water?

What does Jesus mean by "living water"? Why do you think he chose water as his metaphor? What does that tell you about Jesus' skill as a teacher?

How does the woman respond when Jesus explains, "the water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life"?

Read John 4:19-26. What do you think is Jesus' purpose in letting the woman know that he knows her life history? How does this bring him closer to his objective or draw the woman to discover who he is?

What do you think it means to worship God in "spirit and in truth"? How can you develop this kind of worship in your life?

What does the woman say or do in this passage that shows how she feels about herself? What does Jesus say or do in this passage that shows how he feels about her?

Why do you think Jesus tells this woman he's the Messiah? As you look at what the woman does after her encounter with Jesus (verses 27-30, 39-42), what do you think was his ultimate purpose in causing her to face the truth about herself?

What is nourishing to Jesus according to vs. 32-34? How have you been nourished by doing God's will in your own life?

What is Jesus calling the disciples to by what he says in vs. 34-38? What do the disciples learn from the encounter with the Samaritan woman (vs. 31-38)?

How do the Samaritans from the town come to believe in Jesus? How is this similar or different from your own experience?

Application:

What are some things-besides God- that fulfill you? What are some steps you could take this week to let God alone quench your spiritual thirst?

Who are the Samaritans in your life- the groups of people that you have traditionally stayed apart from for one reason or another? How has God been nudging you toward them?

How is your style of sharing the Messiah with others like Jesus' approach to this woman? How is it different? How will your sharing style change because of what you've learned in this story?

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Study #5- October 7-13

Theme: Come & Follow Me-Part 1: Abandoning all for Jesus.

Text: Mark 1:14-34

Opening:

What has been your high and what has been your low in the last week?

What is one television show, sports team, or musical group that you “follow”? When did you start following and why? What do you do to keep up with them?

Discussion:

Looking over the entire passage, what are some of the actions, which show the power and authority of Jesus?

What is the good news that Jesus shares in v.14-15?

As he starts to share his message, Jesus says, “the time is fulfilled,” what does he mean by this?

What does it mean for the kingdom of God to be near? Would you say it is still near today? Nearer? Farther away?

Thinking about the core of Jesus’ message (vs. 14-15), what two forms of response does Jesus call for in relationship to the gospel? What do they mean?

(Repent- To turn, return, turn around, change direction)

(Believe- Live as though something were true)

What in Jesus’ message (vv.14-15) or call (v.17, 20) would cause these four men to leave their businesses to follow Jesus? What attracted them to Jesus? How did they reflect belief and repentance?

*What in Jesus’ message caused you to follow him or keeps you from following him? What did you give up to follow him? How did your family feel about your decision? *What in Jesus’ message would you say causes people to follow him? What keeps them from following?

What do you think is significant about the way Jesus called the four fisherman (vs. 16-20)? (Rabbi/Teacher calling students to follow him. He talked about fishing with fishermen).

What are some of the things the four men left behind? How do you think Zebedee felt about his sons' actions?

Do you think these men understood what Jesus was calling them to? Why or why not?

What do we learn about Jesus in the stories that follow (v.21-34)?

What was the message about Jesus when it started getting around the region (vs.27-28)?

Why do you think Jesus prohibited the demons he encountered to speak about who he was at this point (v.34)?

How does Jesus exercise his authority differently from kings and dictators and other human authorities?

Application:

What makes following Jesus so difficult today? What makes people stop short of following?

What is something you have given up or left behind to follow Jesus? What do you think Jesus might want you to give up now?

Would you describe yourself as a “fisher of men”? Why? How can you become a more effective “fisher of men”?

Looking at our immediate area, what kind of language or illustration do you think would be effective in reaching people for Christ?

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Study #6- October 14-20

Theme: Come and Follow Me-Part Two: Into quiet places.

Text: Mark 1:35-45

Opening:

Richard Foster- “We must go away from people if we are going to be truly with people. If we are going to meet men and women, we must first meet with God.”

Where do you go, and what do you do to get away from others? How do you refuel?

Would you say you are more of an extrovert or an introvert? Why?

Discussion:

Why do you think that Jesus went away by himself (v.35)?

Looking back, what had Jesus been doing the previous day that may have led to his need for getting away?

Or The quiet and solitude of verses 35-39 are quite a contrast from the previous events. What do these verses reveal about Jesus' priorities?

If he is the Son of God, why did Jesus need to pray? What are the implications of this for us, and our need for prayerful connection to the Father?

How would you describe Simon's agenda for Jesus (vs. 36-37)? Why were they searching for Jesus? How does it compare with God the Father's agenda? Whose agenda does Jesus follow?

What does Jesus reveal in his response to Simon (vs. 38-39)?

What do you think Jesus received out of his time in prayer (vs. 38-39)? (Renewed connection to the Father, renewed sense of vision and purpose, renewed energy)

Why wouldn't Jesus just stay there where he already had a following, where people were already searching for him?

Why does he want to go to other places when his popularity was growing there?

What motivated Jesus to heal the man with leprosy (v.41)? Do you think there is a connection between time alone with God and compassion for the needs of others? How have you seen this connection in your own life?

Why did Jesus tell the leper, “go show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing” (vs.43-44)?

How do you think that Jesus felt when the leper did not follow his warning (v.45)? When the crowd forced him outside the towns? Why did Jesus not want him to say anything?

Application:

Read vs. 35-39, looking for ways we can emulate Jesus. How can Christ’s actions (in vs. 35-39) be an example to us?

When is the best time for you to be alone with God? How do you balance activity and solitude or action and meditation?

What steps would you need to take to have a more balanced life that allows for time alone with God?

Who are the lepers in your community? The people you are afraid to touch?

***Exercise: Spend time in prayer, praying; “Be still and know that I am God.” First pray the whole phrase and then shorten it by subtracting the last word until you get down to the word “Be.” Leave 30 seconds or so in between each phrase.**

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