



**Discover!**  
Finding Faith in Life

# GO OUT INTO THE WORLD!

HOW TO MAKE JOYFUL DISCIPLES!



saint mary's press  
*touching hearts. enlivening minds.*





**A**t the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus speaks his last words of encouragement and commissioning to his disciples: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; . . . and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19).

As catechists, we are forming disciples of Jesus. What does such a disciple look like? If we think of "the disciple of Jesus," we might think of five characteristics that apply.

True disciples:

- are in a growing personal relationship with Jesus
- connect with Christ through the Word of God, prayer, and the Eucharist
- love God, and others as they love themselves
- see Christ in all people
- live the teachings of Christ in everyday life.

**As catechists, we are called to model and teach what it means to be a disciple of Jesus! As catechists, we "act out" and articulate what these characteristics look like and mean in everyday life. How do we do this?**

## **1 WE MODEL & WE TEACH: A GROWING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS**

**As a catechist, your relationship with Jesus cannot be totally private. Share it with your children. Stop and pray aloud often.** Begin and end the class with prayer, of course, but also pause the class to say, "Let's stop and ask Jesus to help us listen and learn in the next few minutes" or, "Let's stop and thank Jesus for all the good things that we have talked about today"; or, "Let's take a few moments to just be quiet and be glad that Jesus loves each one of us so much."

**Your relationship with Jesus is not "all head" and factual information; make room in your teaching for a little heart and soul!**



## 2 WE MODEL & WE TEACH: A CONNECTION WITH CHRIST THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD, PRAYER AND THE EUCHARIST

Teach children to pray by giving them a short phrase based on Scripture to say quietly to themselves, over and over, like “Jesus is with me always” or “Jesus is with me, and I am with Jesus.” Scripture-based prayer is called *lectio divina* (holy reading) and this is how simple it really is! Share your own Scripture reading and meditations with the children: “When I was reading the Bible this morning, I realized that Jesus got discouraged when people didn’t listen to him. But we want to be the ones who listen to Jesus, don’t we?”

Continually remind the children that, when they receive Holy Communion, they are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, the very Person of Jesus, into themselves. Jesus truly lives in them, and they are given power to become more and more like Jesus—to live like Jesus, to think like Jesus, to act like Jesus, to love like Jesus.

## 3 WE MODEL & WE TEACH: LOVING GOD AND OTHERS, AS WE LOVE OURSELVES.

Through kindness, warmth, patience, respect, humor, good direction, and care, each catechist will model these loving qualities of the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28–31) in a unique way. Remember the old saying, “Your actions speak so loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying.”

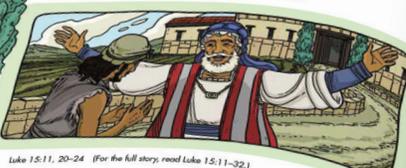
Highlight our mandate to “go out” and share the love of God in ordinary ways with others, wherever we are, right in our religious education setting, perhaps in the midst of group discussions. Remind your group that loving others can be as simple as giving respect, raising hands so that all can be heard, showing kindness when it would be just as easy to walk away.

# 4 WE MODEL & WE TEACH: SEEING CHRIST IN ALL PEOPLE.

Introduce the children to a wider world by using pictures, videos, and other means to show people of all nations and races. Use photos from mission magazines to illustrate posters and bulletin boards. Use photos from your parish's "sister parish" in a mission land, if your parish has one.

When possible, illustrate your lessons with local news stories of various food banks, charity drives, walks and runs for various causes, and other volunteer events in your community that help those in need. Highlight especially your own parish's efforts in this regard. **Ask representatives from parish groups to speak with your children and send flyers home inviting their families to participate in parish efforts to serve others.**

### The Forgiving Father



Luke 15: 20-24 (For the full story, read Luke 15:11-32.)

11 Jesus went on to say, . . . 20 "[The sinful son] was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with **pity**, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 21 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' 22 But the father called get the **prize** calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! 23 Then go and this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found."

**pity** a feeling of sadness for another person  
**prize** most valuable, best

### Understand It!

This story Jesus told could be called "A Foolish Son and His Big-Hearted Father." This son asked his dad for a lot of money and then left home. He wasted every penny. When he was starving because he had no money left, he wanted to go home.

The father could have been angry. Instead, he loved his son so much that he ran to meet him. The father hugged his son even before the son said he was sorry. The father was so happy to have his son back that he gave him a gift. He held a big party to welcome him home. Jesus wants us to know that our Father in Heaven is like this loving father. No matter how much we sin, God will always love us and forgive us. He always welcomes us back when we turn to him.

### Live It!

Think about a time when you behaved in a way that upset your mom or dad. What did you do to let them know you were sorry? How did they react? God is like a loving parent. He always welcomes us back when we turn to him after we've disobeyed his commandments. Thank God for loving you like the father in the story.

### Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

### Following Jesus

7

# 5 WE MODEL & WE TEACH: THE LIVING OF CHRIST'S TEACHINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

"WE BECOME  
DISCIPLES BY  
BECOMING  
LISTENERS  
AND LEARNERS  
TOGETHER UNDER  
THE LOVING GAZE  
OF CHRIST, OUR  
TEACHER."

The popular acronym WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) is a cliché, but it does give us the right question to be asking in our everyday lives! Remind the children that God put them in the world for a reason, and that reason is to go out and “be Christ to others” in their everyday lives.

Remind your group that each one of them is unique, and no one else can do what they can do. Remind them that only they can show the love of God to their friends and neighbors. No one else can show the love of God as they can! No one else can make the choices that they can make—to make things better around them, or to make things worse. As disciples of Jesus, their job is to make things better!

Through various communication tools, encourage families to think of themselves as a family of disciples, following Jesus together. The seasons of Advent and Lent lend themselves to family service projects and various kinds of family involvement in parish outreach. Keep families aware of available opportunities to live out the teachings of Christ in everyday life.

The word disciple comes from a Greek word meaning “to listen.” As disciples of Christ and members of his Church, we are a community of listeners. We listen to Christ, we listen to one another, we listen to parents, we listen to children. And, they, in turn, hopefully, listen to us as well. We become disciples by becoming listeners and learners together under the loving gaze of Christ, our Teacher. For he is “with us always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19).

*HOW IS YOUR HEART? ARE YOU IN NEED OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT?*

Your Ministry Care Team would love to come alongside you and help! Like you, we want your kids will joyfully discover the beauty of the Church's teachings, fall in love with Jesus and the Bible, and transform a learned faith into a lived faith!

*GET READY TO DISCOVER! 1-800-533-8095*

