

INVITED

exploring a relationship with Jesus

INTRODUCTION

Jesus invites all people into a relationship with himself. Disciples are those who say yes to Jesus' call to follow him. A disciple is a follower of Jesus who allows the life of Jesus to influence every part of his/her life to become more like Jesus in every way. Our relationship with Jesus grows as we respond to his invitations. This series looks at six important invitations Jesus makes in the gospels. How we respond to these six invitations from Jesus defines our life of discipleship and provides a framework for how we engage with others in faith and grow in our own! We are all invited by Jesus!

"Come and see"

John 1:35-39

Come and follow"

Matthew 4:18-22

"Come and rest"

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come and die"

Luke 9:23-27

"Come and fish"

Luke 5:27-32

"Come and receive the Spirit"

John 20:19-22

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"Come and See"

Opening Prayer

God of loving invitation, you are always seeking to draw people close to you. Draw us ever deeper into your saving love for us so that we might love you and our neighbor more and more every day. Amen.

Opening Question

When has someone told you to "Come and see" something that was truly amazing? What did you experience?

Scripture - John 1:35-39

The next day John was standing again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus walking along he said, "Look! The Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard what he said, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he asked, "What are you looking for?" They said, "Rabbi (which is translated Teacher), where are you staying?" He replied, "Come and see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Discussion

1. Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples "What are you looking for?"
2. How would you answer that question if Jesus asked you?
3. What do you think Jesus is inviting the disciples to come and see? What is being offered in that invitation?
4. Right now, in this moment, what has been your experience of Jesus...what have you "come and seen" of him?
5. What are you hoping to experience with Jesus?
6. What would it take to respond to that invitation? What would it look like to "come and see" with Jesus?

Big Idea

"Come and see" is an invitation to experience who Jesus is in relationship. It doesn't mean we have to understand Jesus perfectly first, but simply have some loving curiosity!

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"Come and Follow"

Opening Prayer

God of loving invitation, you are always seeking to draw people close to you. Draw us ever deeper into your saving love for us so that we might love you and our neighbor more and more every day. Amen.

Opening Question

Has there ever been a particular person that you learned a lot from? How did they teach you?

Scripture - Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people." Right away, they left their nets and followed him. Continuing on, he saw another set of brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father repairing their nets. Jesus called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Discussion

1. What do you think of this invitation to "follow me"? What does it mean?
2. What is a disciple? (the word literally means learner) Would you consider yourself a disciple? Why or why not?
3. "Follow me" expresses Jesus' desire for us. What does it mean to know you are wanted by Jesus?"
4. What do you think happens when we start following Jesus?
5. What does Jesus offer those he invites to follow him? What does he offer us?
6. What would it take to respond to the invitation? Following is a step by step journey. What is your next step?

Big Idea

Jesus loves us and invites us to follow him so that his ways become our ways. When we say yes to his invitation, we become Jesus apprentices so that, through grace and our obedience, our lives start to look more like his.

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"Come and Rest"

Opening Prayer

God of loving invitation, you are always seeking to draw people close to you. Draw us ever deeper into your saving love for us so that we might love you and our neighbor more and more every day. Amen.

Opening Question

When have you been the most tired or restless? The most rested and content?

Scripture - Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I'm gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves. My yoke is easy to bear, and my burden is light."

Discussion

1. What might have been some of the struggles or heavy loads carried in Jesus' day? What are the burdens we carry today? What makes us tired?
2. What do you think it means for Jesus to give us rest?
3. What does that invitation and promise tell us about Jesus?
4. A yoke connected oxen together to pull the plow. How does putting on Jesus' yoke give us rest?
5. What do you think Jesus wants us to learn from him as we're yoked together?
6. What would it take to respond to the invitation to yoke ourselves to Jesus and experience rest?

Big Idea

Jesus invites us to find our ultimate rest in him. He can handle our burdens. He can handle our struggles. Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in him. Being yoked to Jesus is a freedom of life that is amazing!

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"Come and Die"

Opening Prayer

God of loving invitation, you are always seeking to draw people close to you. Draw us ever deeper into your saving love for us so that we might love you and our neighbor more and more every day. Amen.

Opening Question

What is the hardest food for you to say "no" to? Why?

Scripture - Luke 9:23-25

Jesus said to everyone, "All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow me. All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me will save them. What advantage do people have if they gain the whole world for themselves yet perish or lose their lives?"

Discussion

1. Jesus makes this invitation right after Peter (one of his disciples) confesses him to be the messiah. Why does Jesus do it then?
2. This is a challenging invitation from Jesus. What makes it so hard?
3. What does it mean to "say no to ourselves?" What are some things Jesus calls us to deny or die toward?
4. What are some of the ways we try to secure or save our lives apart from Jesus?
5. A popular bumper sticker reads, "Jesus is my co-pilot." How does this invitation challenge that idea?
6. How does following Jesus change our priorities and lifestyle?
7. What would it take to respond to the invitation to deny ourselves and live sacrificially for Jesus?

Big Idea

Jesus invites us to lay down our ways and priorities in order to walk and embrace his ways and priorities. Abundant life, true life is found in Jesus and not in trying to secure it for ourselves by ourselves.

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"Come and Fish"

Opening Prayer

God of loving invitation, you are always seeking to draw people close to you. Draw us ever deeper into your saving love for us so that we might love you and our neighbor more and more every day. Amen.

Opening Question

What are some good and bad ways you've seen people recruit others to their cause/sell something?

Scripture - Matthew 4:18-19; 28:18-20

As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people."

Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

Discussion

1. What does it mean that Jesus uses fishing language in an invitation to fishermen? What does "fishing for people" even mean?
2. Jesus says he will show them *how* to do it...how does Jesus "fish for people?"
3. Jesus invites his disciples to "make disciples." Is this the same thing as "fishing for people?" Why or why not?
4. Fishing was done with nets, not hooks and with others in ancient Israel. How does this affect our understanding of making disciples?
5. How do we make disciples? How do we fish for people?
6. What would it take to respond to the invitation? What different "ponds" is Jesus calling you to fish?

Big Idea

Jesus invites us into the exciting and communal work of making disciples using the relationships and contexts already in place in our lives.

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"Come and Receive the Spirit"

Opening Prayer

God of loving invitation, you are always seeking to draw people close to you. Draw us ever deeper into your saving love for us so that we might love you and our neighbor more and more every day. Amen.

Opening Question

What power do you wish you had? Why?

Scripture - John 20:19-23

It was still the first day of the week. That evening, while the disciples were behind closed doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you don't forgive them, they aren't forgiven."

Discussion

1. Jesus makes this invitation to receive the Spirit after his resurrection. The disciples are afraid, and unsure. What does this invitation mean in that context?
2. What is the connection between receiving the Spirit and experiencing peace for the disciples and us?
3. What is the connection between receiving the Spirit and being sent by Jesus for the disciples and us?
4. What is the significance of Jesus breathing on them when making the invitation?
5. How have you experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? What has the Spirit empowered you to do?
6. What would it take to respond to the invitation to receive the Spirit and be sent as Jesus was sent?

Big Idea

We receive power in the form of God's personal presence dwelling in us for the work of engaging in and continuing Jesus' saving mission in the world.



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Wrap-Up

What is the biggest thing God is saying to you after this study and these conversations?

What are you going to do about it? What are your next steps?