



Key verses: Mark 1:12-13, Mark 1:35-37, Mark 6:30-32

[This series is designed to be taught in any order, and each week focuses on a specific discipleship shape. In addition, some key thoughts on discipleship should be shared each week to connect the shapes and the discipleship focuses shared during the series – this week would be an ideal beginning with the introduction to discipleship.]

Let's pray before we get into God's Word for us tonight.

[Pray for the evening while focusing on how to be more like Jesus in the way He taught His disciples to live a Jesus-shaped life.]

Starting question: What is discipleship?

[Allow students to give their answers, and then expand on the idea of what true discipleship looks like.]

Discipleship is the process of following Jesus and helping others to do the same. It's more than just learning about Jesus; it's about becoming like Him and influencing others to do the same. A **discipleship culture** is an environment where this process is natural, encouraged, and embedded in every aspect of life. For us, this means engaging in a community where spiritual growth is prioritized and where we are actively involved in both learning and teaching.

Discipleship thrives in the context of meaningful relationships. It's not just about attending church or youth group; it's about forming deep, authentic connections with others who are also committed to growing in their faith.

In a strong discipleship culture, every member is empowered to take responsibility for their own growth and for the growth of others. This means that youth are not just passive recipients but active participants in their spiritual journey.

Question: So, how do we do that?

[You can allow student to brainstorm this, or just move on to the next point as time allows.]

1. Find a mentor

Seek out someone older or more experienced in faith who can offer guidance, support, and wisdom. This could be a youth leader, a pastor, or a mature Christian in your community. A mentor can provide valuable insights and encouragement as you navigate your spiritual journey.

[Share a story of how a mentor has helped you in your spiritual journey, or have a volunteer leader do this if time allows.]

2. Build peer connections

Engage with friends who share your faith and values. Forming a close-knit group with other young people can provide mutual support and accountability. Create opportunities to pray together, study the Bible, and discuss your experiences and challenges.

[Here you could ask students who they engage with at school or share a story of how you mutually helped your peers grow in an earlier stage of life.]

3. Be open and vulnerable

Authentic relationships require honesty and vulnerability. Share your struggles, doubts, and questions with others. This openness fosters deeper connections and helps you and your peers grow together.

[Feel free to include this as part of #2 and be willing to share a time that you had to be open and vulnerable to make a better connection, or how someone's vulnerability helped them connect with you or others.]

4. Serve together

Participate in service projects or mission trips as a group. Serving together helps build camaraderie and reinforces your shared values and commitment to making a difference.

[Ask the students for some ways that they are already engaging in serving and either ask them to brainstorm some more ways that they could use their gifts to serve or share some service opportunities your ministry offers.]

Building this new discipleship culture may sound simple, but it is important that we structure our journey well, so during this series, we will be focusing on a few different discipleship “shapes” as visual aids in our discipleship growth.

Tonight, we will be learning about the “Semi-circle”

The concept of the Semi-Circle Discipleship Shape provides a visual and practical framework for understanding how discipleship can be effectively structured and experienced. For students, grasping this concept is crucial for personal growth and for contributing to a thriving community of faith. As we explore the Semi-Circle Discipleship Shape, and its components, we will learn how we can apply these principles in our own lives and community.

[You can use the included visual aids in the teaching slides, or draw the shape yourself to highlight the key points, whichever you feel like would be more engaging to your students.]

Each half of the semi-circle represents different aspects of discipleship, essential for a holistic approach to following Jesus. Balancing these aspects, especially with a focus on rest and work, ensures that your spiritual journey remains sustainable and fulfilling.

The top half of the semi-circle emphasizes your personal relationship with God and includes components that are crucial for spiritual growth:

Abiding is the practice of resting in God’s faithfulness which involves rest and trusting in God’s provision for us.

Fruitfulness is the product of our work for God’s kingdom and it results in us being active living out our faith.

The bottom half of the semi-circle deals with how you live out your faith in relation to others and the world. It includes the two aspects of:

Pruning, which is an agricultural term for cutting away branches of a tree to provide more water and nutrients to other parts of the tree.



[These questions are all available for your use, but depending on your group, you may find it beneficial to “prune” some of them to allow for a discussion focus more suited to your group.]

A great beginning for this small group session, would be to walk through students through the six steps through a story in your own personal walk with God.

1. Observe – What is God doing in your life?
2. Reflect – What does this mean for you?
3. Discuss – Who did you talk to about this?
4. Plan – What should you do as you move forward?
5. Account – Do you have the resources/accountability to do this?
6. Act – Where are you at in living this out?

Questions:

1. What did you think of the idea of the circle?
2. What stages are most difficult for you as you process through what you are learning in life?
3. How can you practice being more observant of what God is doing in your life?
4. How can you make more time to be reflective?
5. What godly people do you have that you can discuss things with?
6. How do you usually make plans for the future?
7. Who do you have that holds you accountable in life?
8. What is holding you back from acting on your plans?

Application:

It would be great to close by asking students what they feel like God is doing in their lives, and where they are in the process of working through their Kairos moments. This could take some prodding, but simple questions like, “What is going on in your life?” can help students begin to observe how God is at work.

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