

Week 1 – Follow Me

January 3, 2021

Group Discussion Guide



(~90 minutes needed)

Begin with 5 minutes of silence and prayer (7-10 minutes)

As you begin this week talking about following Jesus, start out with five minutes of prayerful silence.

(Why silence? Our world is so busy, distracted, and bee-like, with technology filling in any gaps. With all that motion, it can be hard to hear others and hear the voice of God. As we gather together, let's press pause and enter into a moment of quiet so that we can hear what God is saying to us, directly and through others.)

After a few moments of quiet centering, have someone in the group pray this prayer from Thomas Merton and lift up your group time together.

My Lord God, we have no idea where we're going. We do not see the road ahead of us. We cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do we really know ourselves, and the fact that we think we're following your will does not mean that we are actually doing so. But we believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And we hope that we have that desire in all that we are doing. We hope that we'll never do anything apart from that desire. And we know that if we do this you will lead us by the right road, though we may know nothing about it. Therefore, we will trust you always though we may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. We will not fear, for you are ever with us, and you will never leave us to face our perils alone. Amen.

Read this overview (1 minute)

We know everyone here is at a different place in their faith, and growth looks very different on a case-by-case basis. What does it look like, though, to grow from wherever we are now to continually making disciples? **What's Next** will help us to unpack and highlight possible next steps.

This week, we're looking at following Jesus intentionally throughout 2021 – not just in word, but in practice.

One of the hardest things about following Jesus is that sometimes we don't feel like we have a very good map to do so. We have the goal to follow him. We even have the desire. We WANT it! But how? What does that look like? Practically?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to that question. Every person is different. So, what would it look like for us to move forward into 2021 with an intentional plan that is based on the life of Jesus, informed by God's Word, and guided by the Holy Spirit?

That's what we'll talk about today.

Scripture and debrief in small groups (30 minutes)

Split your group into triads to read the following Scriptures and debrief the sermon together.

- How would you describe the state of your faith as you begin this new year? Does it feel vibrant? Stagnant? Like you're going around in circles? Explain.
- How did Sunday's message deepen your faith? How did it challenge you as a disciple of Jesus?
- **Read Luke 5:5-11, 27-28.** In his sermon, Dan homed in on the words spoken to Jesus in verse 5: "Because you say so, I will." Do you feel this is the cry of your heart? Why or why not? If not, what gets in the way? If yes, how have you gotten to the place where you can say this?
- **Read Luke 14:18-20.** What are some common excuses that draw you away from full-on, radical discipleship to Jesus? **Read John 6:60, 66-67.**
- Did you complete your Rule of Life practice for 2021? How was that experience? What are the rhythms you will try to pursue to follow Jesus well this year?

Transition back to one large group for recap and Rule of Life discussion (30 minutes)

Ask a few questions about each person's time in their smaller groups:

- What were some insights that came from your smaller group discussions?
- Take turns sharing with the whole group your 2021 Rule of Life. Then, after one person has finished, pray over that person. If people aren't quite sure what to share, have them answer questions like the following:
 - What was the practice like for you? How did it feel?
 - What did you like about this practice?
 - What are your daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly rhythms to follow Jesus this year?
 - How can we, as your group, help keep you accountable in these rhythms?

Finish with prayer (10 minutes)

Finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.