



Come Follow Me – Leader's Notes

Objective of the study: Although it can stand alone, this study is designed to go along with the “Come Follow Me” movie using the faith journey of Peter to help those acquainted with Jesus become more closely connected to him and understand what is involved with discipleship—following him in their lives.

Approach

The introductory lesson is a viewing of the 30-minute movie plus discussion about the themes and impact from viewers. The remaining 7 lessons are set up to be used by viewing the approximately 5-minute movie segment and studying related Bible passages to understand its application for their lives today. To help the leader understand the flow and the participant catch or review the main points, paragraphs often introduce or follow the questions to give pause between questions or activities and provide a summary of what will be or was learned. The leader can decide how much of those paragraphs will be read (or merely referred to). Most lessons encourage the use of the Bible for the main account while the remaining Bible passages have been included in the worksheet to encourage circling or underlining key phrases and maximizing discussion time.

The Come Follow Me study is designed for flexibility. It can be used for a large group, small group, or individual study. The Bible study leader should not feel obligated to read every word and work through every question on the worksheets; but adjust the teaching approach based on time limitations, size of the group, Biblical understanding, and response of the participants. If time and approach do not allow a group to cover all the material, the leader may want to identify the passage in each section that most connects with the point and concentrate on it or assign for self-study the parts that could not be covered.

The recommendation is to work through the lesson ahead of time and choose 2–3 of the questions or series of questions to be small group discussions. Depending on the learning activity, give approximately 3–5 minutes for small groups (3–7 individuals) to work through answers (see Further Helps). The rest of the questions can be used for whole group discussions or quiet individual digging. Inject your own examples or insights. Be sure to provide time for reflection. Individuals need time to let God's word settle into their personal context both to prepare to answer a question (follow a 10-second wait rule) or in applying it to life (some quiet time to think, write down, or pray).

Suggestions for Session Flow

1. Start each session by capturing the joys, struggles, or concerns participants had that week.... Praying related to input and asking the Holy Spirit's guidance on the study.
2. Spend a moment recounting the main point of the previous lesson and touching on last week's assignment—how participants “put it into practice.”
3. Set the tone with the opening question—break into small groups when possible.
4. View the “Come Follow Me” video segment. Get feedback to find out what struck them most and what questions emerge from them (write them down and come back to those questions at an appropriate place in the lesson).
5. Dig deeper with each segment by working through the passages and related questions. If time is of the essence, merely draw their attention to key points in some segments so that you can slow down to better work through segments you (or they) determine are most applicable for them. Keep the flow on track but don't let it feel rushed during the class or crowded at the end.
6. Refer to (or go to) appropriate sidebar references where you can go deeper into the topics if needed.
7. End by recapping the main point, make assignments, (the Put into Practice section and/or those questions or sections you went through too quickly) and offer a closing prayer.

Addressing the concerns: The view of Christianity and the kingdom of God has become confused inside and outside the Christian Church. Using the interactions of Peter this study intends to clarify who Jesus is and what he came to do in order to address.

- The misconception that following Jesus is about gaining prosperity or health.
- The natural tendency to believe that salvation is based on what we do (good works/lifestyle).
- The unwillingness to accept God's will and plans over ours.
- The mistaken belief that repentance is a work that buys our way into God's good graces.
- The impression that merely belonging to an ethnic group or religious group ensures God's favor.
- The complacency of Christians that want discipleship without personal cost or change.
- The confusion and lack of urgency about the mission of the Church.

Map of Lessons

Introductory Lesson: Viewing the Movie and discussing the initial impact— "Questions for Reflection" may be used to guide the discussion.

Lesson 1: Looking Closely at Jesus' Life (Time: 0–5:22 = 5:22 minutes)

Movie Setting: The Last Supper in the Upper Room

Lesson Objective: By the end of the session all participants should be able to recognize how self-focused and self-absorbed our culture is today and how discipleship looks at Jesus' humble sacrificial service as motivation to serve others.

1. Grasping the self-centeredness that produces false expectations and wrong results for life.
2. Comparing Jesus' example of humility (foot washing) with the ways of the world.
3. Understanding that Jesus' ultimate sacrifice of himself washes us clean in his blood.
4. Adopting Jesus' attitude in putting others first and serving according to their needs.

Lesson 2: Listening to Recognize the Truth (Time: 5:22–10:53 = 5:31 minutes)

Movie Setting: In the Upper Room—Chief priests in the courtyard, then disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane

Lesson Objective: By the end of the session all participants should be able to recognize several of the obstacles to accepting the truth and how discipleship is listening to Jesus as not only an authority but Truth itself in the flesh.

1. Comparing why some followed Jesus as the Messiah and others rejected him to follow their own path of righteousness.
2. Recognizing why Jesus has the corner on Truth as the Son of God and the heart of Scripture.
3. Capturing the consequences of not listening to him who is judge of all.
4. Applying the key truth of our absolute helplessness covered by the righteousness from God which is ours by faith.

Lesson 3: Learning to Obey God's Will (Time: 10:54–15:24 = 4:30 minutes)

Movie Setting: Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Capture

Lesson Objective: By the end of the session all participants should be able to recognize how mistaken we can be about the situations of life and how discipleship seeks to understand and willingly follow God's will—just as Jesus did as he went the way of the cross.

1. Identifying with times people totally misread situations and what God is accomplishing.
2. Observing Jesus' prayer and actions that seek "your will, not mine, be done."
3. Discovering ways to determine God's will for your life.
4. Appreciating how God can work the greatest glories through suffering (e.g. his death).

Lesson 4: Leaving Sin and Returning to God (Time: 15:25–21:09 = 5:44 minutes)

Movie Setting: Peter's Denial

Lesson Objective: By the end of the session all participants should be able to recognize their own weaknesses that fail to live up to expectations (ours and God's) and how discipleship is a life of repentance and faith that depends on the forgiveness that is ours in Jesus.

1. Seeing our sin as the root cause of guilt.
2. Recognizing that the God of Justice is a God to be feared.
3. Evaluating the essence of true repentance by working through Psalm 51.
4. Running to the God of Hope who loves us and forgives us on the basis of the precious blood of his Son—the reason we can confidently confess to him.

Lesson 5: Longing for Belonging (Time: 21:10–26:10 = 5:00 minutes)

Movie Setting: At the Sea of Galilee

Lesson Objective: By the end of the session all participants should be able to recognize why we have wandered from God and how discipleship is returning to the Father to live in the privileges of being his child—fully belonging to his family because of Jesus.

1. Recognizing how our self-interest alienates us from God like the prodigal son who ran away.
2. Returning again to be “at home” with the Father and receive his welcoming embrace.
3. Identifying with the joy of heaven as each sinner comes to repentance.
4. Living in appreciation of the personal and corporate blessings of belonging to God's family.

Lesson 6: Living the New Life in Jesus (Time: 26:11–28:16 = 2:05 minutes)

Movie Setting: At the shore of the Sea of Galilee

Lesson Objective: By the end of the session all participants should be able to recognize that life with Jesus isn't just an improvement, but a new life given by the Holy Spirit and how discipleship is setting all else aside to live in and for Jesus and the source of power to do so.

1. Appreciating that life in Christ is a new life, a new self that bears fruit out of love for Jesus.
2. Recognizing that there can be no divided loyalty; that those who want to follow Jesus must deny themselves and take up their cross.
3. Depending on Jesus' power and presence to stand strong against Satan and struggles.
4. Anticipating with excitement the final goal of our faith—being with Jesus in heaven.

Lesson 7: Leading Others to Jesus (Time: 28:16–33:30 = 5:14 minutes)

Movie Setting: At the mount of Ascension and then in the room at Pentecost

Lesson Objective: By the end of the session all participants should be able to recognize that our life with Jesus involves us in his mission and how discipleship is grasping the urgency of spreading the news of salvation to the ends of the earth.

1. Recognizing and adopting Jesus' concern and compassion for people harassed and helpless.
2. Identifying the different dimensions to the mission God has given his followers.
3. Appreciating how God brings glory to himself by using unlikely people to do extraordinary things in advancing his kingdom.
4. Depending on the powerful resource Jesus put at our disposal through the gospel and the Holy Spirit who effectively works faith in the urgent task ahead.

FURTHER HELPS FOR THE BIBLE STUDY LEADER

In preparing for teaching the course you will be thinking mainly of learning content. Once the class is underway, you will be just as concerned with the process of making learning “easier.” This includes influencing the dynamics of the learning environment: the way you present the information, the atmosphere you set, and the attitude you show toward the participants. It is extremely helpful for you, as the leader, to be well-informed of the topic and continue to learn.

Leading the sessions should be flexible to the context of the lives of the participants, whether old or young, learning and learned Christian. Participants need to see how timeless Scriptural messages are connected to everyday life today. Determine what the participants may already know and build from that. Involve them as much as possible in the discovery of answers and how it will apply to their lives. Be sensitive to the time factor but give opportunities to ask questions without getting too far off track.

The lessons are designed with recognition of differing learning styles in mind—those who absorb best by listening, those who need to talk in smaller settings, those who need to view things on the screen or on the page. It would be good for the leader to keep in mind and incorporate the following tenets of adult learning if it isn't the leader's primary teaching style:

- Self-directed—giving some freedom for the class to express what they most want to learn.
- Experience-oriented—building off the rich personal and professional experiences of those present.
- Task-directed—giving the individual an activity that will help the learning.
- Problem solving—providing time and resources to find solutions that especially apply to them.
- Immediate feedback—testing out what was learned and how it will apply to life.

Be conscious of the time but also be inconspicuous about it. Participants have heavy demands of their time and appreciate when it is respected. Start on time and end on time. Make the sessions worth their time. Know what the main points need to be. Be prepared to only lightly touch those elements you don't have time for.

Preparation

- Work through the study on your own to capture what God is communicating to you personally.
- Prayerfully picture each participant and their situation and choose the best questions to apply to their spiritual or situational needs.
- Think of the timing and involvement levels of your sessions. Determine how many questions the group can realistically cover in the time you have. The goal is not to get through all the material but to ensure the key points are covered and the group leaves with the main point.
- If the group is large, find ways to break out several times during the class into smaller discussion teams to encourage wider participation and more personal connection. Small group time is a valuable component that builds group learning, support, and accountability. These times also provide a pause from the heavy content. The process provides opportunities for individuals to share personal challenges as well as practical lessons and stories that will benefit other small group discussion and learning activities

The following are suggestions for small group discussions and learning activities. Remember that the first small group discussion will help show the participants how these discussions will happen throughout the course. Take time and be clear to set the expectations when you organize the first small group discussion. When it is time for small group discussion, it may be helpful to...

1. Shuffle the leadership for each small group discussion to get everyone involved. One way of doing that is suggesting who will be the leader this time (*e.g. most children, fanciest dressed, most humorous, oldest, earliest birthday...*). This provides a bit of a mental pause (often humor) and a break to build the relationships before moving forward.
2. Clarify specifically what you are expecting of them. Provide any extra detail ahead of time needed to help them work together as a group.
3. Tell them the time limit they have. Generally speaking, when assigning these small group learning activities, it's better to point to the clock and say, "It's 8:05, we have until 8:09 for this activity." Many meeting rooms don't have visible clocks and not everyone's watch is synchronized. Avoid saying, "I'll give you 7 minutes for this activity." It sounds condescending and controlling. Better to say, "We have until..." or "Use the next seven minutes..." Then, when there is one minute left, come back to the front and announce, "One-minute left."
4. When the time is up, focus attention again to the front. Have the leader for one table at a time briefly share just one helpful comment from their discussion. Go to the next table without comment and have them add something new. If they have nothing new to add, they can pass. Keep the pace moving. Decide how much information you want to solicit. Don't feel you have to exhaust everything they have talked about. Savor moments of humor before moving on.

When assigning small group or learning activities, it's best to get out of the way. Don't "hover" over the tables, "mingle," or ask, "how's it going here?" Let them work. Make them think, wrestle, and figure it out together. That's how people learn. Each session can end with a Small Group Reflection time to capture the "Aha" discoveries and how they will apply to individual life.

Room arrangement

The seating arrangement can exert a strong influence on group dynamics. Be conscious of the hindrance of sitting in rows (lecture style). Participant engagement can be enhanced by arranging participants in groups of 3–7 people (or in a way that they can easily slide into that size grouping). Tables give them a point of common contact and allow them to sit comfortably for writing in their worksheets. If possible, use round or square tables. This provides more eye contact with each other, facilitate equal group discussion, and can be arranged so that everyone has a view of the facilitator. The following are some of the most common arrangements (depending on the type of room and resources available):

