



MAKING DISCIPLES

PAULA CLIFFORD & JOHN PRITCHARD

Read John 1. 29-51.

ACTIVITY

The aim here is to get the group to think themselves into the characters of four disciples: Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael.

Divide into pairs: one pair will be made up of Andrew and Simon, another pair will be Philip and Nathanael. Each person should think about how their character feels about the situation described in these verses and discuss this with their partner. For example, Andrew may feel a bit miffed that although he was the one to bring Simon to Jesus, Simon gets special treatment (and don't forget that Andrew appears to have been one of John's disciples); equally Simon might feel embarrassed by this.

Encourage people to be really imaginative: let the character develop out of and beyond what the text tells us. Then bring the group together to discuss what they have learnt about the first disciples from this exercise.

EXPLORING THE BIBLICAL TEXT TOGETHER

- Verses 35-36 are effectively the beginning of the end of the ministry of John the Baptist. What is John's role in verses 29-36 (recognising Jesus, acknowledging his own inferiority, and so on)?

- Faith is not about credulity (like the White Queen in *Alice in Wonderland* who could believe up to six impossible things before breakfast). Faith is about belief in a person - in Jesus, the Son of God.

In these verses, in what different ways do people make a response of faith to Jesus (verses 36, 37, 41, 45, 49-50)?

- How does Jesus draw people to him (verses 38-39, 43, 48, 50-51)?

How does this compare with the way in which John the Baptist (v.36), Andrew (verses 41-42) and Philip (verses 45-46) bring the others to Jesus?

- Nathanael is described as a 'true Israelite', that is, a Jew whose understanding leads him to Jesus. (The fig tree may refer to Nathanael studying there.)

How does Jesus phrase his promise to Nathanael (v.51 seems to refer back to Jacob's dream in Genesis 28.12)?

LIVING FAITH QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Andrew and Philip are the first people on record to bring others to Jesus with the simple invitation 'come and see'. What are we inviting people to come and see today?
2. Befriending and understanding people is an important part of making them disciples. What strategies does your church have for simply getting to know one another? How can these be improved?
3. What do you think are the most helpful ways of enabling people to grow in their faith? How will you do this during, say, the next six months?



4. How can we better support people in our congregations with particularly demanding or high profile jobs?

FOR PRAYER

GROUP PRAYER

Have some Bible verses about discipleship printed on pieces of paper.

Invite group members to take one and read it out. Follow each reading with a short time of silence for reflection and silent prayer.

Verses could include: Matthew 10. 16 (mission of the twelve); Luke 10.41-2 (Mary and Martha); Luke 10. 27 (loving God and our neighbour); John 21. 17 (Jesus and Peter); Romans 15. 14 (instructing one another); 2 Corinthians 6. 11-13 (opening our hearts); various verses from Ephesians 4; James 2. 17-18 (faith and works); Revelation 2. 3-4 (patient endurance and love) and other verses from Revelation 2 and 3.

SOME FURTHER TOPICS FOR PRAYER

EITHER IN THE GROUP OR IN THE WEEK AHEAD

Give thanks for ...

- The people who first showed you Jesus
- The very many courses and published materials available to help us understand our faith better.

Pray for ...

- One another in our lives at work and at home.
- Those in the local church with particular responsibility for mission and outreach
- Our friendships with people who are not Christians
- Special services or events that are an opportunity to invite people to come and see
- The Holy Spirit's guidance in planning for the future.