



SESSION 17 CALLED

GOAL

The goal of this session is to deepen the teens' understanding of their call to be disciples of Christ, which means that they are called to spend time with Him, get to know His teachings, and, ultimately, love and worship Him.

KEY CONCEPTS

If we look at the example of the disciples, we see that we must first get to know Jesus by spending time with Him. It is through time spent with Him that the disciples learned His teachings and built an intimate friendship with Him, which allowed them to love and worship Him.

The Church has given us the tools we need to live out our call to discipleship. We find our strength and courage in the Sacraments of Confirmation, Reconciliation, and the Eucharist.

Jesus is calling each of us to be a disciple. By spending time in prayer, frequenting the sacraments, and using our gifts to glorify God, we can become the disciples we are called to be.

KEY TERMS

Disciples: Those who accepted Jesus' message to follow Him. Jesus associated His disciples with His life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to the disciples, and gave them a share in His mission, His joy, and His sufferings.

Sacrament: An efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:16-20, Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10

CATECHISM: 562, 1303-1305

ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The Engage is a modified *Summit* session followed by a game of imaginary hide and go seek. The Reflect dives into who the disciples were and how we become disciples, emphasizing the importance of prayer and the sacraments as tools to help us live out our call to discipleship. The Respond allows the teens to reflect on the nets they need to give up so they can follow Jesus more closely, and it includes a time of commissioning that reminds the teens that Jesus is calling them to be His disciples. The session ends with the Come, Holy Spirit prayer.

ENVIRONMENT

Gather in a comfortable environment where you all are able to sit in a circle facing one another. Consider meeting somewhere at the parish or at a local coffee shop, but always consult and follow your diocesan safe environment rules.

AS YOU GET STARTED

For a more challenging Engage, encourage the teens to “hide” outside of your meeting space, and let the guesser ask five questions to try to guess where the teen was hiding.

For a more creative Respond, give each teen the following supplies: paper, various magazines, scissors, glue, tape, colored pencils, and markers. Invite the teens to use images in the magazines or their drawings to create a collage of their nets. Encourage them to draw the nets they want to put down so they can follow Jesus as well as the gifts and tools they want to use to glorify Him.

ENGAGE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Welcome the teens to the session, and begin in prayer.

Summit (20 min)

Use the modified Summit session to lead the teens through a lectio divina based reflection on the Sunday readings.

Imaginary Hide and Seek (15 min)

Invite one teen to volunteer to be “it”; he or she counts to ten. During that time, the rest of the teens imagine where in the meeting space they would hide. The volunteer asks each teen three yes-or-no questions relating to where they were hiding. After the three questions have been asked, the teen guesses where the person was hiding. Play as many rounds as time allows, alternating who is “hiding” and “seeking” each round.

REFLECT

“Called” Teaching (20 min)

Use the following as a guide for a time of reflection:

Calling of the Disciples

Sometimes as we read the Bible, we think about the people as storybook characters. It can be hard to imagine them as real men and women, but the truth is that when we read the Gospels, we are reading about people who lived and walked this Earth. However, we do not take this simply on faith, as there is historical evidence that Jesus and His disciples walked and preached over 2,000 years ago.

The men and women we read about in the Bible are just as real as you and I. If you visit Rome, you will walk the streets where Sts. Peter and Paul walked. As I read the following passage from the Gospel of Mark, imagine you are one of the disciples; not simply story book characters, but normal human beings.

Read Mark 1:16-20, and ask the teens the following questions:

- What do you notice about these men?
- What makes these seemingly ordinary fishermen extraordinary?
- How would you respond if you were one of the fishermen in this scene?

As you were imagining yourself in that story, did you think, “That is crazy! They do not even know this man”? Did you think about the fact that fishing was their livelihood, that they had families and friends, that there were things they loved about where they lived? And yet, “immediately they left their nets and followed Him” (Mark 1:18).

We learn later in the Gospel that these men were far from perfect. But in this encounter, these imperfect men immediately followed Jesus. Their haste is the start of their discipleship. Although they would continue to stumble on their walk with Jesus, these flawed, searching men were the ones Jesus called to be His disciples, His most intimate friends.

Mark 10:35-40, 14:66-72

Becoming a Disciple

We are each called to be disciples, just like Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, and the other apostles. As you read the Gospels, it is clear that people knew of Jesus. Lots of people gathered to hear Him preach or waited among the crowd in the hope of catching a glimpse of Him. It would be hard to find somebody in the United States who has never heard of Jesus, but simply knowing of Jesus does not make you a disciple.

Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John immediately followed Jesus, even though they did not know Him well. They did not have that intimate friendship with Him that they would later have, but they went with Him. They spent time with Him and got to know Him. This is how all relationships begin.

Think about your best friend. You most likely did not become best friends at first sight, as deep friendships take time to form. We are also called to spend time with the Lord, especially through prayer — putting ourselves in the presence of the Lord. That is what prayer is, putting ourselves in the presence of the Lord. A regular prayer life is one of the most essential elements of discipleship. Our discipleship must begin with this time with the Lord. As we get to know Him more, we will become more like Him. Our hearts and lives will be converted to His.

CCC 1248, 2558-2559, 2565, 2626-2643, 2705-2719

As the disciples got to know Jesus, they heard His teachings, asked questions, and, ultimately, had to decide if they believed Him. Some of Jesus’ teachings were hard for the disciples to accept, but they ultimately believed He spoke the truth.

John 6:60-69

The disciples continued to grow in their relationship with Jesus. They were no longer following a strange man, but their intimate friend. The more Jesus taught them, the more they learned what it meant to love and worship God.

Share a short testimony about how you went from vaguely knowing of Jesus, to spending time with Him, to learning about His teachings, and, ultimately, to coming to worship and love Him.

- Describe how you feel about your closest friend.
- Do you feel that Jesus is more of a stranger or a close friend to you? Why?
- What is one word you would use to describe prayer? Explain.
- Would you say you have a regular prayer life at this point? If not, what keeps you from spending time in prayer?

The Tools for Discipleship

As we see in the Gospel of Mark, discipleship is not easy. The fishermen had to cast down their nets; they had to leave their livelihood, families, and everything they knew to follow Jesus. However, Jesus left us the Church and the sacraments to give us the strength and courage to follow Him.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a great tool that will help you live out your call to discipleship. The graces of Confirmation will allow you to know Jesus more deeply.

Read CCC 1303.

Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, you will be united more firmly to Christ, your bond with the Church will be more perfect, and your baptismal graces will be increased and deepened.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is another great tool the Church gives us. We are imperfect, just like the men Jesus called to follow Him, but the Sacrament of Reconciliation allows us to confess our sins and be made new. Just as Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John had to cast down their nets, we too have to cast down our sins and vices so we are able to truly be in the Lord's presence and become more like Him.

- What would be the hardest thing for you to live without? Why?
- What gave the disciples courage to drop their nets and follow Jesus?
- Why do we need to leave our sins behind, through confession, if we want to grow closer to Jesus?
- Why do some people not want to go to confession? What would you say to encourage them?

The Mass is the greatest of all of the tools the Lord has given us to become disciples. It is in the Mass that we receive our Lord in the Eucharist. As we consume Him — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity — we are transformed into Christ Himself. The Mass is the highest form of prayer. At the Mass, heaven reaches down to Earth and we are invited into the heavenly liturgy.

CCC 1324-1327, 1374, 2177

Through the Mass, we also encounter the communion of saints. These men and women are present with us during the liturgy. When Jesus calls us to be His disciples, He does not expect us to be exactly the same. In the communion of saints, we see that the call to be a

disciple is not simply for one type of person. The saints make up a diverse crowd: people of all races and nationalities, rich and poor. There are scholars like St. Thomas Aquinas, lawyers like St. Thomas More, teachers like St. John Bosco, fathers and mothers like Sts. Louis and Marie Zélie Martin, Samurai warriors like Bl. Justo Takayama Ukon, and those born into very difficult lives like St. Josephine Bakhita, who was a slave for much of her life.

Include other saints who have impacted your life or the life of your parish.

God gave each of these saints different gifts to live out their discipleship. As they became more like Christ, they became more fully who they were created to be. They were able to use their gifts to worship and glorify God in their unique ways.

- Do you have a favorite saint? What do you like about him or her?
- Saint Irenaeus said, “The glory of God is man fully alive.” What does this quote mean? What would it look like for you to be fully alive?
- If you were to be a saint one day, what would you want to be remembered for, or what would you want to be the patron saint of? Why?

What Does This Mean for You, Right Now?

So, how do you start living out your call to discipleship? First, you must lay down your nets. What is stopping you from following Jesus? What sins are making it hard for you to respond to His call? What relationships are preventing you from giving yourself to the Lord?

Share how you cast down a couple of the nets in your life to follow Jesus. Use discretion when sharing about sins, and also include practical things in your life that had to change like changing what TV shows you watched or how you spent your time to accommodate for prayer time.

Second, you must make prayer a part of your daily life. In order to hear the Lord’s call, you must quiet yourself. Spend time in prayer each day. Turn off your phone and sit in silence, read your Bible, or pray the rosary. It does not matter what form of prayer you use as long as you put yourself in the presence of God. As you commit to prayer, you will come to know Jesus more intimately. You will develop a greater understanding of His teachings, learn to listen to what He says, and begin to see Him not just as a historical man but as a man alive and calling you.

Third, you must frequent the sacraments. Call on the graces of your baptism and confirmation. Purify your heart through Reconciliation. Receive the Eucharist regularly. As you enter into prayer and the sacraments, you will become conformed to Christ, which will allow you to love Jesus as He loved the Father. As you become conformed to Christ, you will see the gifts He gave you more clearly. You will see how your uniqueness can allow you to glorify Him — whether it is serving Him through your school work, sports, artwork, or in the way you treat your family and friends. He made you specifically who you are; He made you to be a disciple. He wants you to drop your nets and follow Him, so you can be the disciple you are meant to be.

CCC 562

- What is one thing you can do today to begin growing in your relationship with Jesus?

RESPOND

Scriptural Discussion (15 min)

Begin in prayer, and read Mark 1:16-20. Following the reading, share the following reflection:

When Jesus called Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John, they immediately put down their nets and followed Him. What nets have you been holding onto? Right now, Jesus is calling you to follow Him. He wants you to get to know Him better, to learn about His teachings, and, ultimately, to love and worship Him.

Read Mark 1:16-20 once more and then use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- How do you think Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John felt when the Lord asked them to follow Him?
- What would be the hardest things for you to give up if the Lord called you to leave everything and follow Him, right now?
- What nets do you hold onto that you know the Lord wants you to put down? Do you have sins or vices that you have not been able to give up, friendships or relationships that are preventing you from following the Lord, or gifts that you are using for your glory instead of for God's glory?
- How can you more closely follow Jesus?
- What tools does the Church give you to live a life of discipleship? Have you taken advantage of these tools? Why?

What Are Your Nets? (15 min)

After the discussion, give each teen a copy of the *What Are Your Nets?* handout. Use the following to transition into the time of reflection:

We are each called to be a disciple of Christ. Although He calls us by name, most of us have nets that make it difficult for us to follow. Today, you have the opportunity to lay down your nets, to place them at the foot of the cross. Take a few moments to reflect on your nets; truly prepare your heart to lay them down before Christ, so you can follow Him and live the life of discipleship to which you are called.

Give the teens a few minutes to complete the handout. If time allows, ask the teens to share their answers to the questions.

Commissioning (10 min)

Set up a small crucifix on the table with a basket in front of it. Use the following to transition into the activity:

God knows that each of us is attached to something that holds us back from His plans for us. Today, you have the opportunity to lay down your nets, to place them at the foot of the cross. When you feel ready, fold up your handout and place it in the basket at the foot of the cross, offering your nets, your sins and vices, your relationships, and your gifts to the Lord.

Give the teens time to place their handouts at the foot of the cross. Once all of the teens have approached the cross, lead them in a final prayer, using the following as an example:

You have left your nets at the cross. You have given your vices, sins, and relationships to the Lord. What happens next is important. Will you get to know the Lord more deeply? Will you enter into an intimate friendship with the one who has called you by name? He longs to hear you answer “yes” to His call.

Lord, you call each of us to leave our vices, sins, relationships, and gifts at your feet, to become your disciples. This is a great call, a true honor, yet it can sometimes be difficult. Give us your grace and strength, so we can answer your call, daily. Helps us leave behind our nets, follow you, and grow in our love of you. May we follow in your footsteps and live our lives as true disciples, glorifying you in everything we do and with everything we are. Amen.

Closing Prayer (5 min)

Pray the Come, Holy Spirit prayer together, and give any final comments or instructions for upcoming meetings.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the Earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.