



Discipleship as a Journey

A Guide for Triads

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Third Edition



Resources

	Psalms for the Journey	Resources for the Journey
Tugged	Psalms of Revelation- the inescapable God Ex: Psalm 139 Also: 8, 104, 49, 90	<i>The Reason for God</i> , by Timothy Keller; <i>So Much More: An Invitation to Christian Spirituality</i> , by Debra Rienstra
Touched	Psalms of Praise Ex: Psalm 103 Also: 33, 96, 98, 100, 111, 113, 117, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150	<i>Basic Christianity</i> , by John Stott; <i>The Jesus I Never Knew</i> , by Philip Yancey
Trained	Psalms of Wisdom Ex: Psalm 1 Also: 19, 37, 78, 112, 119	<i>Essentials of Discipleship</i> , by Greg Ogden; <i>Revolution of Character</i> , by Willard and Simpson; <i>One.Life</i> , by Scot McKnight
Teamed	Psalms of Ascent & Psalms of Zion Ex: Psalm 122 Also: 84, 120, 125, 126, 127, 133, 134; 15, 24, 46, 48, 76, 87	<i>The Household of God</i> , by Leslie Newbigin <i>Life Together</i> , by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Tested	Psalms of Lament Ex: Psalm 22 Also: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 25, 26, 27B, 28, 31, 35, 38, 39, 40B, 41, 42, 43, 44, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 69, 71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 83, 85, 86, 88, 89B, 90, 109, 120, 123, 126, 129, 130, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143.	<i>The Screwtape Letters</i> , by C.S. Lewis; <i>A Grace Disguised</i> , by Gerald Sittser
Tempered	Psalms of Thanksgiving Ex: Psalm 107 Also: 18, 21, 30, 32, 34, 40A, 65, 66B, 67, 75, 92, 116, 118, 124, 138.	<i>Mere Christianity</i> , by C.S. Lewis; <i>The Cost of Discipleship</i> , by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
enTrusted	Psalms of Trust Ex: Psalm 23 Also: 11, 16, 27, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131	<i>The Wounded Healer</i> , by Henri Nouwen; <i>Engaging God's World</i> , by Cornelius Plantinga <i>The Provocative Church</i> , by Graham Tomlin

1. What parts resonate with you?

2. See Discipleship as a Journey chart: Which of the stages of the journey of discipleship can you see reflected in the language of this psalm?

- v. Review your own journey of faith. Think of how God has worked in the midst of the joys and challenges, peaks and valleys of the journey thus far.

1. How has God’s work in the past affected your ability to trust God in the present?

2. How has God’s “cloud of witnesses” (other believers God has placed in your life) helped you learn to trust God?

3. As you navigate this journey of discipleship, God has created in you a reservoir of grace...a deposit that you are responsible and entrusted to share with others. Peter became a faithful steward of the grace he had received. As a forgiven ‘stumbling block’ and denier of the Lord, Simon-turned-Peter went on to become a bold witness to the risen Jesus and a faithful (but not flawless — see his conflict with Paul in Galatians 2) leader within the life of the early Church. He also penned two epistles written to persecuted 1st century churches, epistles which have become part of our New Testament (I & II Peter). Tradition records that he was a bold witness to the very end of his life, when he was crucified upside down outside of Rome during the reign of the Emperor Nero. Think about the grace you have received along your journey thus far. What are some next steps that you can take as a steward of the grace you have experienced?

II. NEXT STEPS: MULTIPLYING TRIADS. As stated in the last session, we intend to participate in Jesus’ mission to multiply disciples (Mt 28:18-20), who are learning to live under His loving reign in the whole of life. This step of multiplication is an active step of trust in Jesus’ promise. He assured those he commissioned: “I am with you...to the very end of the age” (Verse 20).

- a. The multiplying of triads is an intentional relationship-based process. This process is two-fold:
 - i. SEND ONE (sending a leader). Discerning together which member of your triad is being “sent” by God to “plant” a new triad. This involves assisting the “sent one” in prayerfully identifying potential partners for the new triad.
 - ii. ADD ONE (inviting a follower). Discerning who God is calling you (the “sending” pair) into a new journey through the stages of discipleship.
- b. Discuss together your plans for multiplication.
- c. Re-read Psalm 23 in another translation. Put this psalm into your own words as a prayer of trust in God for the next steps of your journey.

Discipleship Triads

A unique context for balanced, intentional, and realistic formation in Christ.

Purpose:

To be faithful to Jesus’ commission to multiply disciples (Mt 28:18-20). A disciple is one who, like Peter, has answered the call to follow Jesus, and through this journey is learning to integrate all of life under His reign.

Core values:

- **Three:** the nimble size of three allows for flexibility, efficiency, and accelerated growth (reflecting the community of God as Trinity)
- **Balance:** three people (men with men; women with women) doing three things — studying, praying and serving...in three successive weeks: Week one — study together; Week two — pray together; Week three — help someone together, and so on.
- **An intentional curriculum:** the study portion of the triad is based on the seven stages of discipleship through the lens of Peter, a very human follower of Jesus.
- **Multiplication:** at the end of a six-month cycle through the seven stages of discipleship (praying and serving); the group *sends one* partner (to start a new triad) and *adds one* partner (to join the remaining two in a new cycle of growth).
- **Solidarity:** the group does not meet unless all three can do so. No one is left behind.
- **Support and celebration:** every four to six weeks, all triads will be invited to come together for a common meal, inspiration, and sharing stories and best practices.

For more on the core values of discipleship triads:

- *Seasons of the Soul*, by Bruce Demarist
- *Transforming Discipleship*, by Greg Ogden
- *Three is Enough Groups*, by Todd Hunter: <http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2009/threiseenoughgroups.html>

To start a triad:

Be informed — review the core values of the triad and the journey of discipleship material. Pray. Ask God to help you identify another partner who is hungry to follow Jesus with balance, intentionality and realism. Together pray about who to invite as your third partner. As a group, identify your “leading partner” and begin the journey.

For more information:

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The Tugged Stage

John 1:40-42
Luke 4:31-41

Leader preparation:

- Pray by name for your discipleship partners
- Review the stages of the Journey of Discipleship (see chart on center page of this booklet). Be prepared to introduce the journey, focusing on the first stage (the “Tugged” stage) in particular.
- Pre-read the Scripture passages in their context within the Gospels.
- Practice how you will re-tell these “Simon stories” in your own words (see below, II a.), without interpretation or elaboration (Note: we are assuming Simon was well aware of the healing of his wife’s mother by Jesus).
- Read through Psalm 139 in at least two translations. Note how this psalm provides a window into the heart of one who is being tugged by God.

I. Getting started

- a. Introduction to the Journey of Discipleship (See chart on center page of this booklet):
 - i. Our curriculum: The seven stages of the Journey of Discipleship form our triad curriculum. We will explore these stages through the lens of the Apostle Peter, someone we can all likely relate to.* The Gospels provide us with an honest glimpse of the life of a very human Simon-turned-Peter, and his messy journey of discipleship with Jesus. Along the way we will also engage various psalms. The Book of Psalms helps keep us real before God and one another along the journey. For more psalms and resources related to each stage, see page 23.
 - ii. How to view the stages of the Journey of Discipleship
 1. The stages are grounded in the real-life experiences of countless believers who have gone before us (called the “cloud of witnesses” in Hebrews 11:1 – 12:2).
 2. Our goal is to master the fundamentals of life in Christ. Mastery comes through practice and repetition. God’s way to growing His people up is to continually bring them back to the basics.
 3. We never complete the stages (till we see Jesus). The stages unfold over the whole of life. The Christian life is a long-distance race, not a sprint.
 4. The journey is never static. The Holy Spirit continually uncovers new layers of Truth and leads us into new breakthroughs and transformation.
 5. The stages are not experienced in a single linear journey (as implied in the chart), but as a life-long, cyclical process in which we revisit the stages over and over again at different levels.
 - iii. The goal of the Discipleship Triad is to multiply disciples. This is the mission of the risen Lord Jesus (Mt 28:18-20). Jesus promised his presence to those who participate in His mission of multiplication: “I am with you...to the very end of the age” (Verse 20). Without such a mission, groups can easily become in-grown. At the conclusion of the journey through the seven stages, the triad multiplies by a two-fold relational process:

The enTrusted Stage

John 21:1-19 Acts 1:1-14; 2:1-8, 14-24

Leader preparation:

- Pray by name for your discipleship partners. Pray in particular about the triad multiplication process.
- Coach one of your partners to share part of the leadership of the study
 - In preparing to tell the stories in John and Acts in his/her own words:
 - In leading part of the group discussion (see questions in section “d.” i, ii, and iii). Your part will be to lead questions iv, v, and vi.
 - Set a time to debrief together
- (See Discipleship as a Journey chart) Review the dynamics of the “enTrusted” stage of the journey of discipleship, and be prepared to explain these dynamics.
- Read through Psalm 23, a window into the heart of one who has come to trust God through the peaks and valleys of the journey of faith.
- For supplementary material on this stage of Peter’s journey: *A Fragile Stone*, chapters 13-18.

I. Study guide:

- a. (Led by co-leader) In your own words, retell the stories of Peter’s experiences as he was “re-called” by Jesus and entrusted with a part in God’s mission. Simply tell the stories without interpretation or comment.
- b. Bias check: As a group, pray for the Holy Spirit to identify and challenge your own personal and cultural biases and to enable you to see God’s work and Word as God intended.
- c. As a group, read John 21:1-19, and Acts 1:1-14; 2:1-8, 14-24, listening for Peter’s perspective on these events.
- d. (Led together with co-leader) Group discussion:
 - i. What are some ways Jesus reveals Himself to Peter? What are some ways Jesus reveals Himself *through* Peter?

 - ii. Put yourself in Peter’s shoes (sandals). How might you react to being recalled by Jesus?
 1. Overwhelmed with gratitude
 2. Overwhelmed with unworthiness
 3. Other:

 - iii. Name other well-known servants of God in the Bible who, like Peter, had a history of failure. How does God redeem our failures, turning them into *assets* (rather than liabilities) for the fulfillment of His mission?

- e. Read Psalm 23, a window into the heart of one who has learned to trust God through the journey of faith.
 1. What parts of this psalm might have resonated with Peter?

(Tempered, continued)

bears fruit “hundredfold” (see Mark 4). One way to bear fruit is to multiply disciples (Mt 28:18-20) who — like Simon Peter — are growing into a fruitful life in Jesus. Through triads, we seek to multiply disciples through an intentional relationship-based process. This process is two-fold:

- i. SEND ONE (sending a leader). Discerning together which member of your triad is being “sent” by God to “plant” a new triad. This involves assisting the “sent one” in prayerfully identifying potential partners for the new triad.
 - ii. ADD ONE (inviting a follower) Discerning who God is calling the “sending” pair to invite into a new journey through the stages of discipleship.
- d. This “curriculum” through the seven stages of discipleship is designed to be repeated over several cycles, with a Sending/Adding component at the conclusion of each cycle. Why re-travel the stages?
- iii. The stages are grounded in the real-life experiences of countless believers who have gone before us (the “cloud of witnesses” in Hebrews 11:1 – 12:2).
 - iv. Our goal is to master the fundamentals of life in Christ. Mastery comes through practice and repetition. God’s way to growing his people up is to continually bring them back to the basics.
 - v. We never complete the stages (till we see Jesus). The stages unfold over the whole of life. The Christian life is a long-distance race, not a sprint.
 - vi. The journey is never static. The Holy Spirit continually uncovers new layers of Truth and leads us into new breakthroughs of transformation.
 - vii. The stages are not experienced in a single linear journey (as implied in the chart), but as a life-long, cyclical process in which we revisit the stages over and over again at different levels.
- e. Take time to talk and pray together about the SEND ONE/ADD ONE process.
- f. Continue to plan to share leadership of the study sessions (see leader preparation for the enTrusted stage).

1. SEND ONE (sending a leader). Discerning together which member of your triad is being “sent” by God to “plant” a new triad. This involves assisting the “sent one” in prayerfully identifying potential partners for the newly planted triad.
2. ADD ONE (inviting a follower). Discerning who God is calling to join you (the “sending” pair) into a new journey through the stages of discipleship.

II. Study guide:

- a. Listen to a retelling of the Simon stories.
- b. Bias check: None of us approaches Scripture with pure objectivity. No community, church, or small group is free from bias. To make matters worse, we are blind to our bias. We are blind to the ways our unconscious personal and cultural predispositions shape how we see and interpret the biblical text. Therefore it is essential that we cultivate the habit of reading the Scriptures in their intended context and seeking the Holy Spirit’s help. The Holy Spirit gives the Church the authorized “prescription lenses” for interpreting the Word of God as God has intended. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s help as you exchange your lenses for His own. This is an essential practice in the journey of discipleship under Jesus.
- c. Now read the passages: John 1:40-42 and Luke 4:31-41. Note the context of each of these passages (how these stories fit into the larger narrative).
- d. Questions for reflection and discussion:
 - i. How does Jesus reveal himself to Simon?

- ii. Put yourself in Simon’s shoes (sandals). What are some possible ways you might react to these encounters? Explain.

- iii. (See Journey of Discipleship chart) Review the seven stages of the journey. Note how Stage One fits into the journey.

- iv. Read Psalm 139. This psalm gives a window into the heart of one who is experiencing the inescapable presence and tug of God. Which words/phrases resonate with you?

- v. Think of the very first stages of your faith journey. How did you experience (or are you experiencing) the “tug” of God?

- vi. Think of people in your life (family and extended family members, co-workers, neighbors, friends, and so on) who are not yet followers of Jesus. Who do you sense is experiencing God’s tug at this time? How can you cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s tugging work in this person’s life?

- e. Give thanks to God for his “tugging” work in each of your lives!

(Tugged, continued)

III. Preparing for the next two sessions. One of the core values of the Discipleship Triad is balance. The way of Jesus involves a simultaneous, three-fold focus: inward (study and community), upward (prayer and worship) and outward (service and witness). We seek to follow Jesus with a healthy balance between all three. Next session we will focus upward in prayer. The session after that we will focus outward in service.

- a. Suggestions for your next gathering (prayer). Consider ways to put Psalm 139 into your own words. Read portions of the Psalm in a variety of translations. Thank God for His gracious tug in your lives. Ask God for a greater sensitivity and responsiveness to His tug in your life. Ask God for a greater sensitivity to the ways He is tugging the hearts of others who are a part of the ordinary routine of your life.
- b. Suggestions for preparation for the following session of service: Think and pray about the network of relationships in your ordinary routine of life. This likely includes relationships in family, extended family, church family, workplace, neighborhood, community, etc. Where are you aware of practical, physical needs? Where is there a need for practical help? (Ex. repairing, moving, cleaning, transporting, feeding...the practical needs of human beings and human organizations are endless!).

* For a helpful resource on the life of Peter: *Fragile Stone*, by Michael Card (InterVarsity Press)

iv. Reflect on your own journey. How have you experienced (or, are you experiencing — in the present) God’s work of deliverance and restoration?

v. See Discipleship as a Journey chart: Review the dynamics of the “Tempered” stage of discipleship. Some become hardened through the wilderness stages (ex. Israel in the wilderness), others are “tempered” ... leaving them more humble, broken, and receptive before God. What are some factors that distinguish how we react to our experiences in the wilderness?

vi. When we are delivered by God, we have a story (a “testimony”) to share. We are stewards of this story. We are responsible to share it with others so that they can also grow in trust and gratitude. How have your stories been a source of encouragement to others?

II. Preparing for the next sessions. A core value of the Discipleship Triad is balance. The way of Jesus involves a simultaneous, three-fold focus: inward (study and community), upward (prayer and worship) and outward (service and witness). We seek to follow Jesus with a healthy balance between all three. Next session we will focus upward in prayer. The session after that we will focus outward in service.

- a. Suggestions for your next gathering (prayer). Consider ways to put Psalm 107 (a psalm of thanksgiving) into prayer in your own words. Psalms of thanksgiving are voiced by both individuals and whole communities. Read portions of Psalm 107 in a variety of translations. Note the pattern embedded in the thanksgiving psalm. Consider using this as a pattern for prayer:
 - i. Call to praise and thanks
 - ii. Telling our story (“testimony”)
 1. Tell of our past trouble
 2. Tell of how we cried out to God
 3. Tell about God’s intervention in the midst of our trouble
 - iii. Call to praise and thanks
- b. Suggestions for preparation for the following session of service:
 - i. Continue to debrief recent opportunities you have had to serve others. What are you learning? How do you see God at work?

 - ii. Continue to think and pray about the network of relationships in your ordinary routine of life- family, extended family, church family, workplace, neighborhood, community, etc. What are additional creative ways that your triad can work together to meet practical, physical needs?

C. Preparation for final session (the “enTrusted” stage of the journey of discipleship): Healthy organisms multiply. They do not become in-grown. From the beginning of this journey, we have emphasized that the goal of the journey of discipleship is to

The Tempered Stage

Mark 16:7;
John 20:1-10;
Luke 24:34;
I Corinthians 15:3-5

Leader preparation:

- Pray by name for your discipleship partners.
- Coach one of your partners to share part of the leadership of the study
 - To determine and explain the context of each of the above verses (how they fit into the larger narrative in the Gospels).
 - To lead part of the group discussion (in part “c” below). Decide together who will ask what questions.
 - Set a time to debrief together
- See Discipleship as a Journey chart: Review the dynamics of the “Tempered” stage of the journey, and be prepared to explain these dynamics
- Read through Psalm 107, selecting passages that provide a window into a “tempered” heart... of one who is looking back on trials through the lens of God’s delivering grace and power.
- For supplemental material on this stage of Peter’s journey: *A Fragile Stone*, chapter 12.

I. Study guide:

- a. Bias check: As a group, pray for the Holy Spirit to identify and challenge your own personal and cultural biases and to enable you to see God’s work and Word as God intended.
- b. (Led by co-leader) As a group, read Mark 16:7, John 20:1-10, Luke 24:34 and I Corinthians 15:3-5, explaining the context of each passage. Listen for how these events might have affected Peter.
- c. (Led together with co-leader) Group discussion:
 - i. The angel at the empty tomb told the women to tell the disciples “and Peter” to meet the risen Jesus in Galilee (Mark 16:7). The Luke and I Corinthians accounts state that Peter was the first among the Eleven to whom the risen Lord revealed himself (though the details of this one-one encounter are left out of the biblical narrative). What do you think is the significance of Peter being singled out to experience his risen Lord?

 - ii. Put yourself in Peter’s shoes (sandals): Recall his history of bold profession and shameful failure before his Lord and his colleagues. What are some ways you would react to these experiences with the risen Jesus?

 - iii. Read portions of Psalm 107, a window into the hearts of those who have experienced the power of God’s deliverance and restoration. What language in this Psalm might resonate with Peter? What language resonates with you?

The Touched Stage

Luke 5:1-11

Leader preparation:

- Pray by name for your discipleship partners.
- Pre-read the Scripture passage. Note how this story fits into the context of the larger narrative of the Gospel text. Practice how you would tell this “Simon story” in your own words.
- (See Journey of Discipleship chart) Review the dynamics of the “Touched” stage of the journey of discipleship, and be prepared to explain these dynamics.
- Read through Psalm 103 in at least two different translations. Note how this psalm provides a window into the heart of one who is being touched by God.

I. Study guide

- a. Listen to a retelling of the Simon story.
- b. Bias check: As stated last session, we are blind to the ways our unconscious personal and cultural predispositions shape how we interpret and apply the biblical text. We need God to deliver us from our blinders. The Holy Spirit gives the Church the authorized “prescription lenses” for interpreting the Word of God as God has intended. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s help as you exchange your lenses for His own.
- c. Read Luke 5:1-11, being attentive to what Simon is thinking and feeling.
- d. Group discussion:
 - i. How does Jesus reveal Himself to Simon?

 - ii. Put yourself in Simon’s shoes (sandals). How might you react to this encounter with Jesus? Explain.

 - iii. (See Journey of Discipleship chart) Review the dynamics of the “Touched” stage of discipleship. Which of these dynamics do you think Simon is experiencing in his encounter with Jesus in Luke 5?

 - iv. Read Psalm 103. This psalm gives a window into the heart of one who has experienced the powerful and gracious touch of God. What language in this Psalm might have resonated with Simon? What language resonates with you?

 - v. Think of the early stages of your faith journey. How did you experience/are you experiencing the “touch” of God?

(Touched, continued)

- vi. How do you long for more of God's touch in your life as we make this journey together?
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- vii. Take time to thank God for His gracious touch in your lives.

II. Preparing for the next two sessions. One of the core values of the Discipleship Triad is balance. The way of Jesus involves a simultaneous, three-fold focus: inward (study and community), upward (prayer and worship) and outward (service and witness). We seek to follow Jesus with a healthy balance between all three. Next session we will focus upward in prayer. The session after that we will focus outward in service.

- a. Suggestions for your next gathering (prayer). Consider ways to put Psalm 103 into your own words. Read portions of the Psalm in a variety of translations. Thank God for His gracious touch in your lives. Ask God for a greater sensitivity and responsiveness to His touch in your life. Ask God for a greater sensitivity to the ways He is touching the lives of others who are a part of the ordinary routine of your life.
- b. Suggestions for preparation for the following session of service: Continue to think and pray about the network of relationships in your ordinary routine of life. This likely includes relationships in family, extended family, church family, workplace, neighborhood, community, etc. Where are you aware of practical, physical needs? Where is there a need for practical help? (Ex. repairing, moving, cleaning, transporting, feeding...the practical needs of human beings and human organizations are endless!).

- iv. Read portions of Psalm 22. This psalm gives a window into the heart of one who is experiencing life in the wilderness stage. What human emotions are expressed in this passage?
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- v. Think of your own faith journey. How have you experienced/are you experiencing the "wilderness"? How do you sense Jesus has worked/is working in the wilderness? How has He called you to respond?
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- vi. Think of believers in your life (family and extended family members, co-workers, neighbors, friend, and so on) who are experiencing the wilderness. What does a brother or sister in Christ need from others during this stage of the journey of discipleship?
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II. Preparing for the next sessions. A core value of the Discipleship Triad is balance. The way of Jesus involves a simultaneous, three-fold focus: inward (study and community), upward (prayer and worship) and outward (service and witness). We seek to follow Jesus with a healthy balance between all three. Next session we will focus upward in prayer. The session after that we will focus outward in service.

- a. Suggestions for your next gathering (prayer). Consider ways to put Psalm 22 (a psalm of lament) into prayer in your own words. Read portions of the Psalm in a variety of translations. Practice giving voice to the laments of those who are in the dark valley of the journey of discipleship. Consider the fact that Jesus himself prayed the lament Psalms as He experienced the human condition, particularly as He experienced shameful humiliation, rejection, and abuse leading to his execution. Thank God that He has entered the depth of human suffering, and for His solidarity with us in our own experience of suffering. Pray for those who are now in the midst of the dark valley. Pray for ways to be fully present to them in appropriate ways and for God to work in their lives.
 - b. Suggestions for preparation for the following session of service:
 - i. Continue to debrief recent opportunities you have had to serve others. What are you learning? How do you see God at work?

 - ii. Continue to think and pray about the network of relationships in your ordinary routine of life- family, extended family, church family, workplace, neighborhood, community, etc. What are additional creative ways that your triad can work together to meet practical, physical needs?
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- c. Preparation for the next study session: Continue to share leadership in your triad's study sessions. (See leader preparation, for next session).

The Tested Stage

Mark 8:27-38
John 18:1-27

Leader preparation:

- Pray by name for your discipleship partners. Pray in particular about who is the right person to be sharing leadership with, one who can potentially be “sent” by your group to launch a new triad.
- Coach one of your partners to share part of the leadership of the study
 - Preparing to tell the stories in the texts in his/her own words:
 - Pre-read the passages, noting how these events fit into their context in the larger Gospel narrative
 - Practice telling the story of these events without comment or interpretation
 - Debrief: Set a time to debrief how it went
- (See discipleship chart) Review the dynamics of the “Tested” stage of the journey of discipleship, and be prepared to explain these dynamics.
- Read through Psalm 22, selecting passages that provide a window into the heart of one who is experiencing the testing (or “wilderness”) stage of the journey of discipleship.
- For supplementary material on this stage of Peter’s journey:
A Fragile Stone, chapters 5-11.

I. Study guide:

- a. (Shared with co-leader) In your own words, retell these stories of Peter’s disappointment and failure... without interpretive comments.
- b. Bias check: As a group, pray for the Holy Spirit to identify and challenge your own personal and cultural biases and to enable you to see God’s work and Word as God intended.
- c. As a group, read Mark 8:27-38 and John 18:1-27. Try to imagine the depth of Peter’s emotions and thoughts in the midst of these experiences.
- d. Group discussion:
 - i. How does Jesus reveal Himself to Peter?

- ii. Put yourself in Peter’s shoes (sandals). What are some possible ways you might react to these experiences? Explain.

- iii. (See Discipleship as a Journey chart) Review the dynamics of the “Tested” stage of discipleship. This stage has also been called a time in the “wilderness,” or “valley” or “dark night of the soul.” What is the place of testing in the larger journey of discipleship? Some of God’s most faithful servants (Ex. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, the early Christian Church, Mother Teresa, C.S. Lewis, and on and on) have gone through the deepest and darkest valleys. Why do you think this is so?

The Trained Stage

Matthew 4:22 – 7:29

Leader preparation:

- Pray by name for each of your discipleship partners.
- Listen to the entire Sermon on the Mount on an audio Bible in one sitting (You can listen to each chapter of the Bible on this audio Bible site, using the ESV: <http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/>).
- Note how the “Sermon on the Mount” fits into the larger narrative of the Gospel of Matthew.
- See the “Discipleship as a Journey” chart: Review the dynamics of the “trained” stage of the journey of discipleship, and be prepared to explain these dynamics.
- Read Psalm 1, an observation of the “two paths”: the way of the wicked and the way of the wise. Note what it means to be trained in God’s way of wisdom
- Supplemental reading: for an excellent introduction to the Kingdom of God according to Jesus, see *One Life*, by Scot McKnight.

I. Study guide:

- a. Introduce how Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” fits into the larger narrative in Matthew’s Gospel.
- b. Bias check: The central theme of Jesus’ message was the Kingdom of God (the phrase appears more than 50 times in Matthew alone). As we open the Scriptures, particularly the parts where Jesus teaches on the Kingdom of God, we will experience tension. This tension reflects a confrontation between the values of the Kingdom of God and the personal and cultural predispositions that we carry into the text. Working through this tension is a vital part of the “training” stage of the journey of discipleship. The temptation is to try to reduce this tension, to find ways of explaining away the controversial words of Jesus (for example, saying, “what Jesus really meant was...”). It is essential that we avoid this temptation. Training in discipleship involves sitting under the whole message of Jesus, even when it subverts the values that our culture holds dear. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s help as you approach the teaching of Jesus.
- c. Listen together to the entire text of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount on an audio Bible. Be attentive to how Peter (as one of the disciples who first sat under this message) might respond to the words of Jesus at this stage in his journey of discipleship.
- d. Group discussion:
 - i. Put yourself in Peter’s shoes (sandals). What are some ways you might react to Jesus’ teaching? Explain.

- ii. The theme of the Sermon on the Mount is the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the “good life” according to Jesus. How does Jesus’ picture of the “good life” compare to our culture’s picture of the “good life”?

- iii. Some have compared Jesus' training in the Kingdom to "naturalization"...the process immigrants complete in preparation for citizenship in the United States of America. The journey of discipleship involves preparation for living as full citizens of the Kingdom of God. We are called to live a dual identity — to live as citizens of the Kingdom of God, yet to live fully human lives within the routines of ordinary life in this world. This makes us "resident aliens." What about this dual identity do you find most exciting? What do you find most challenging?

 - iv. Read Psalm 1. This psalm gives a vivid picture of two paths: the way of the wise and the way of the wicked. What are some characteristics of the way of the wise? How is one trained for the way of wisdom?

 - v. (See the Discipleship as a Journey chart). Review the dynamics of the "trained" stage of the journey of discipleship. Those who do not move beyond the "touched" stage are like the shallow soil in Jesus' parable of the Sower (See Mark 4:13-20). They quickly sprout, but their hearts remain shallow, with little room for roots. When trouble or adversity comes, their sprouts quickly wither. Take time to pray for God's plowing work in each of your lives.
- II. Preparing for the next two sessions. One of the core values of the Discipleship Triad is balance. The way of Jesus involves a simultaneous, three-fold focus: inward (study and community), upward (prayer and worship) and outward (service and witness). We seek to follow Jesus with a healthy balance between all three. Next session we will focus upward in prayer. The session after that we will focus outward in service.
- a. Suggestions for your next gathering (prayer). Consider ways to put Psalm 1 into prayer in your own words. Read portions of the Psalm in a variety of translations. Thank God for his work of plowing human hearts. Ask God for a greater depth and rootedness in your faith, and for opportunities to help others get rooted in the kingdom of God.
 - b. Suggestions for preparation for the following session of service:
 - i. Debrief recent opportunities you have had to serve others. What are you learning? How do you see God at work?

 - ii. Continue to think and pray about the network of relationships in your ordinary routine of life — family, extended family, church family, workplace, neighborhood, community, etc. Where are you discovering practical, physical needs? Where is there a need for practical help? (Ex. repairing, moving, cleaning, transporting, feeding...the practical needs of human beings and human organizations are endless!).

- iv. See Discipleship as a Journey chart: Review together the dynamics of the "Teamed" stage of discipleship. Notice that this stage is in the very center of the journey. How does the teamed stage relate to the other stages of the journey?

- v. In North America, we live in a culture strongly dominated by individualism, consumption, and entertainment. Many see Church as a "commodity" rather than as a community ...as an "event," rather than as a journey in life together. How does discipleship under Jesus give us a positive alternative to these cultural distortions of the Church? What helps us move from being consumers to becoming co-investors in the body of Christ?

- vi. Read Psalm 133. This psalm gives a window into the heart of one who is experiencing the joy of what it means to belong to a united community of faith. Give thanks for the solidarity that comes from the Holy Spirit.

- II. Preparing for the next sessions. A core value of the Discipleship Triad is balance. The way of Jesus involves a simultaneous, three-fold focus: inward (study and community), upward (prayer and worship) and outward (service and witness). We seek to follow Jesus with a healthy balance between all three. Next session we will focus upward in prayer. The session after that we will focus outward in service.
- a. Suggestions for your next gathering (prayer). Consider ways to put Psalm 133 into prayer in your own words. Read portions of the Psalm in a variety of translations. Thank God for the gift of His community, the Church. With all our flaws, we are the body of Christ. Christ loves His Church. Thank God for the way He unites us in Christ, shapes and refines us, and leads us to greater health and teamwork in Christ. Ask God to forgive the ways we approach His body as a commodity rather than a community. Pray for those who have not yet experienced the "Teamed" stage in the journey of discipleship.
 - b. Suggestions for preparation for the following session of service:
 - i. Debrief recent opportunities you have had to serve others. What are you learning? How do you see God at work?

 - ii. Continue to think and pray about the network of relationships in your ordinary routine of life — family, extended family, church family, workplace, neighborhood, community, etc. Where are you discovering practical, physical needs? Where is there a need for practical help? (Ex. repairing, moving, cleaning, transporting, feeding...the practical needs of human beings and human organizations are endless!).

 - c. Preparation for the next study session: Consider how you can start sharing leadership in your triad's study sessions. Suggestion: share the storytelling part of the next study, which features how Peter experienced the "Tested" stage of discipleship (see leader preparation, for next session).

The Teamed Stage

Luke 8:1; 9:1-6, 10

Leader preparation:

- Pray by name for each of your discipleship partners.
- In the teamed stage the disciples gather around Jesus, hearing and seeing him demonstrate the Kingdom of God. Jesus sends them out together, and they report back together. Read Luke 8:1; 9:1-6 and 10 within the larger context of Luke 7:1 – 9:10. Note the powerful words and works of Jesus that Peter and the other disciples witnessed first-hand during this stage. Practice how you would summarize the story of these experiences. Include the story of their first mission assignment and debriefing.
- See Discipleship as a Journey chart: Review the dynamics of the “Teamed” stage of the journey of discipleship, and be prepared to explain these dynamics.
- Read Psalm 133, a window into the heart of one who is experiencing the joy of belonging to the community of God’s people.

I. Study guide:

- a. Briefly summarize the disciple’s experiences watching Jesus in action in Luke 7:1 – 9:10. Tell the story in your own words... without interpretive comments.
- b. Bias check: As stated earlier in our journey, we are blind to the ways our unconscious personal and cultural predispositions shape how we interpret and apply the biblical text. Therefore it is essential that we ask for the Holy Spirit’s help. The Holy Spirit gives the Church the authorized “prescription lenses” for interpreting the Word of God as God has intended. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s help as you exchange your lenses for His own.
- c. Read Luke 8:1; 9:1-6 and 10, being attentive to how Peter might respond to this first-hand experience with the ministry of Jesus.
- d. Group discussion:
 - i. How does Jesus reveal Himself to his disciples (including Peter)?

Put yourself in Peter’s shoes (sandals). What are some ways you might react to these experiences? Explain.

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- ii. Note: Jesus never sent His disciples out alone; He sent them in teams (See Mark 6:7; Luke 10:4). Why do you think Jesus sent his disciples in teams? What are some advantages *and* challenges of being part of a team? ...of being a part of a church?

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- iii. Reflect on your own journey of faith. How have you experienced (or how are you currently experiencing) God’s call into the teamwork of His body, the church?
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Discipleship as a Journey*

A developmental model based on the Parable of the Soils (Mark 4:1-20)

**This is a linear representation of a process that is most commonly experienced in a cyclical pattern, shaped by the Sovereign work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, in the unique context of each person's life situation. . Source: Paul Dugan 4/11 Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church pdugan@wcpres.org*

The Sower at work	Watering (softening hearts)		Plowing (cultivating hearts)		Weeding (removing growth inhibitors)		Fruit-bearing (multiplying kingdom fruit)
Signposts	Tugged	Touched	Trained	Teamed	Tested	Tempered	enTrusted
Some common dynamics along journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questioning life as it is ▪ Dissatisfaction with status quo ▪ Sensing there is more ▪ Searching for answers ▪ Becoming receptive to God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The love of God breaks in thru the Holy Spirit & his people ▪ Turning from self rule (sin) and toward God ▪ Forgiveness experienced; salvation received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic training in gospel-based life in the kingdom of God ▪ Grounding in the fundamentals of Christian belief, behavior, worship ▪ Introduction to the dynamic role of Word & Spirit in faith and life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serving in & thru Christ's body; discovering and employing spiritual gifts ▪ Participating with Christ's people in his work in the world ▪ Initial productivity & joy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hit "the Wall" ▪ Experience of disappointment, adversity, loss, suffering ▪ Questioning God, one's beliefs, etc. ▪ Ego challenged ▪ "Dark Night" of the Soul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seasoned, grateful faith ▪ Back to basics, with theological depth & humility ▪ Recognition of God's presence and purpose in the midst of the pain & mystery of human experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delight in God, God's people & God's mission, grounded in his unconditional time-tested love ▪ A sacrificial, 'no-strings attached' love for others ▪ Equipped to walk with others along their journey
Peter's journey of disciple-ship	<p>John 1:41-43 -- Introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew, given a new name by Jesus.</p> <p>Lk 4:38-41 -- Witnessed Jesus' healing work in his own family.</p>	<p>Lk 5:1-11 -- Experienced Jesus' personal power & grace, responds in repentance, called to follow Jesus; begins to reorient all his life around Jesus.</p>	<p>Mt 4:22 – 7:29 – Sits under the Master's teaching on the dynamics of a kingdom-shaped lifestyle.</p>	<p>Lk, chapters 7 & 8 -- Followed Jesus, observing Jesus' kingdom message & ministry in action.</p> <p>Lk 9:1- 6, 10 -- Sent by Jesus into ministry, experiences God's working through him, reports back in joy.</p>	<p>Mk 8:27-38 – Scandalized by Jesus' predictions of suffering; Confronted with his own misguided expectations</p> <p>John 18:1-27 – Made bold promises of loyalty, but, under pressure, denies knowing Jesus, resulting in bitter regret and guilt.</p>	<p>Mk 16:7 – Was personally singled out to hear the good news of Jesus' resurrection.</p> <p>John 20:1-10 -- Personally witnessed the empty tomb.</p> <p>Lk 24:34; I Cor 14:3-5 -- Was the first of the Eleven to whom the Lord appeared in his resurrection body</p>	<p>Jn 21:1-19 -- Graciously "re-called" and re-commissioned by Jesus.</p> <p>Acts 1: 3-14; 2:1-4 -- Experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Acts, chapters 2-5 – Boldly (but not without miss-steps and conflict: see Galatians 2:11-14) bore witness to the risen Lord in word and deed, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Penned epistles to suffering church: 1-2 Peter. Martyred under Nero.</p>