

# Discipleship Foundations 1



## BIG Idea!

ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS REVEALS WE ARE KNOWN BY HIM.

As we read this section of scripture we see that both Mary and Thomas have encounters with Jesus. Jesus responds to each of them in different ways. Jesus calls Mary by name and shows Thomas his hands and side. Jesus deals with everyone's doubts and fears in a way that is appropriate to them and shows that he is connected to both Mary and Thomas in their weakness and fear.



## DIGGING Deeper!

Context:

It is the first day of the week after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and the disciples have discovered that the tomb is empty and there are a host of emotions flooding into their minds. There are multiple possibilities from the body having been stolen or hidden by the authorities, to having literally no idea of what is going on or maybe even the slim chance that he said he would rise again. All these possibilities must have been filling them with fear, doubt, grief and anxiety. Then Jesus starts to show himself in his resurrected body to those closet to him Mary and the disciples experience Jesus revealing himself and showing up. He appears in rooms that are closed and locked as he starts his 40 days of meeting and seems to repeat the message not to be afraid.



1

### PRAYER POINT

What can you pray for this week for yourself, your family and you friends?

2

### ACTION POINT

What do you want to do after reading and reflecting on this story?

3

### MISSION POINT

What does this mean in the way we think and pray for those who don't know Jesus yet?

**Start** by checking in with how everyone is doing and ask a state of your soul question.



**Today's Reading:**  
**John 20: 10 -31**

**READ** the verses out loud.

### **THEN and THERE**

Consider what was going on for everyone in the story. **Read Digging Deeper.**

**DISCUSS** what may have been running through their minds.

### **QUESTIONS to Consider**

1. What sticks out to you about this scripture?
2. Why do you think Jesus addresses Mary by her name but shows Thomas his hands and feet?
3. Discuss what it was like when you first encountered Jesus.
4. Why is it so important to our discipleship journey that we have an encounter experience with Jesus at some point in our lives?
5. What can we learn about God and about ourselves from this story?

**PRAY** for each other that we would continue to encounter Jesus in our lives.

# Discipleship Foundations 2



## BIG Idea!

### OUR RESPONSE TO A JESUS ENCOUNTER

We are called to repent, and be baptised. WE are invited to acknowledge our weakness and recognise that we need too put our old self to death and accept new life in Christ accepting that he will fill us with his spirit.



## DIGGING Deeper!

### Context:

Here we are after the day of Pentecost which is a celebration of the festival of weeks and is 50 days after the passover meal that Jesus had with his disciples. Jesus asked the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit and once they were filled with the spirit they went out to the streets. Peter stood up and preached up a storm. The reading doesn't include his words but they are well worth reading and pondering on. We pick the story up after this message and are drawn to the response of the people that were "cut to the heart". "What must we do?" They cried. And here we get the instruction from Peter that they must Repent.... Be Baptised...and Receive the Holy Spirit. After this 3000 were added to the number of disciples.



1

### PRAYER POINT

What can you pray for this week for yourself, your family and you friends?

2

### ACTION POINT

What action you think God might be asking of you after reading and reflecting on this story?

3

### MISSION POINT

What are the best ways to communicate to our culture in this day and age?

**Start** by checking in with how everyone is doing and ask a state of your soul question.



**Today's Reading:**  
**Acts 2: 14a,36-41**

**READ** the verses out loud.

### **THEN and THERE**

Consider what was going on for everyone in the story. **Read** Digging Deeper.

**DISCUSS** what may have been running through the minds of those listening to Peter preaching.

### **QUESTIONS to Consider**

1. What sticks out to you about these verses?
2. When was the last time you were "cut to the heart" because of a sermon or conversation you had?
3. How do we keep soft in heart so we don't miss God's voice to us, especially if you have been around church for a long time?
4. Have you experienced each of these steps in your discipleship journey?
5. Each one of you share your story of Repent,... Baptism ... and being filled with the Spirit.
6. **PRAY** for each other that we would continue to encounter Jesus in our lives.

# Discipleship Foundations 3



## BIG Idea!

JESUS CALLS US INTO A NEW COMMUNITY.

On the day of Pentecost Peter and the Disciples baptise 3000 new Christians. What follows is the formation of a new community. Yet, theirs was not centred around a common culture, ethnicity or political view. In fact, the *only* thing they had in common was a shared faith in Jesus Christ. As such, their community became one of inclusion, radical love and a commitment to one another to such an extent that they couldn't bear to be apart. They studied together, ate together and prayed together. Indeed, they were 'together' in every sense of the word.



## DIGGING Deeper!

### Context:

Pentecost took place during a particular Jewish festival known as 'The Shavuot', which commemorated the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, as well as the beginning of the wheat harvest. As this was a pilgrimage festival, the city of Jerusalem was hosting a great diversity of people from as far away as Rome and Parthia!

These were people who spoke different languages, who grew up in different cultures, each having different priorities and goals. Moreover, these were people from across the social spectrum. Rich and poor, young and old.

Yet, despite all that separated them, these early Christians formed a community of radical love. They shared everything in common, meeting regularly and selling possessions to help anyone in need. They did all this not because they had to... but because they wanted to! Their being 'together' wasn't something they *did*, rather it was something they *were*. And sure enough, this community began to attract others from within the community because they had something special. A type of community that had never been seen before.



1

### PRAYER POINT

What can you pray for this week for yourself, your family and you friends?

2

### ACTION POINT

How do you feel about community and Church after reading and reflecting upon this story?

3

### MISSION POINT

Consider the patience and grace of these early Christians. Where and to whom do we need to show this kind of grace and patience?

**Start** by checking in with how everyone is doing and ask a state of your soul question.



**Today's Reading:**  
**Acts 2:42-47**

**READ** the verses out loud.

### **THEN and THERE**

Consider what was going on for everyone in the story. **Read Digging Deeper.**

**DISCUSS** what are the things that divide us today? What would it take to see us become a community like the one we see in Acts 2?

### **QUESTIONS to Consider**

1. What sticks out to you about these verses?
2. Have you ever experienced a 'culture shock'?
3. How can we navigate our differences?
4. What are the strengths of differences in community?
5. How can we help form communities that are inclusive and loving?

**PRAY** for each other that we would continue to encounter Jesus in our lives.

# Discipleship Foundations 4



## BIG Idea!

BEING SO CAPTIVATED BY THE GOSPEL THAT WE CAN FORGIVE THOSE WHO HARM US.

Though he found himself at the mercy of a kangaroo court, Stephen couldn't help but share the good news of Jesus Christ. In fact, so captivated by the Gospel he was, Stephen's very nature became Christ-like. Just as Jesus did on the day of His execution, Stephen prayed that God would forgive his attackers. Even in this terrible scene, we see the grace of God at work, allowing Stephen to pass peacefully



## DIGGING Deeper!

### Context:

As the Jesus movement grew, the religious leaders of Israel became increasingly concerned. In spite of His execution, there were claims that this lowly Galilean had been raised from the dead. That He truly was the long awaited Messiah. To the religious leaders this movement represented a distortion of Orthodox belief, not to mention a threat to their authority. Against this backdrop of rising tensions, Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:1-53) was the final straw. No longer would these ridiculous claims be tolerated. Stephen would serve as an example and a warning; abandon your beliefs or face a similar fate.

In the weeks that followed, the followers of Jesus were greatly persecuted. A young, zealous Pharisee named Saul of Tarsus (Acts 8:1-3), who himself was present and approved of Stephen's murder, took it upon himself to destroy this heretical movement. The great irony is that Saul's persecution of the Church actually forced the Gospel message out into the neighbouring regions. The Gospel had gone international. Saul didn't know it yet, but his ministry to the gentiles had already begun...



1

### PRAYER POINT

What can you pray for this week for yourself, your family and your friends?

2

### ACTION POINT

What might God be showing you about this story?

3

### MISSION POINT

If someone asked you to explain the Gospel today, what would you say?

**Start** by checking in with how everyone is doing and ask a state of your soul question.



**Today's Reading:**  
**Acts 7:54-60:**

**READ** the verses out loud.

### **THEN and THERE**

Consider what was going on for everyone in the story. **Read Digging Deeper.**

**DISCUSS** what are the things that divide us today? What would it take to see us become a community like the one we see in Acts 2?

### **QUESTIONS to Consider**

1. What sticks out to you about these verses?
2. What do you find challenging about this story?
3. What encouragement can you draw from this story?
4. What does it mean for Jesus to be "standing the right hand of God?"
5. What do you think about Stephen praying for his attackers' sin not to be held against them?
6. How can we live like Stephen in our everyday lives?

**PRAY** for each other that we would continue to encounter Jesus in our lives.