

The Disciples: Servants-in-Training
(Disciple means 'follower of a teacher')

Theme: Serve God by serving others.

Opening Prayer: *Dear God, If our gift is to serve, help us to serve. Amen.*
(taken from Romans 12 v 6-7)

Games:

Champions: 'We are not all good at all things; we all bring a different ability.'

Organise the group into two teams. Explain you are going to find out who the champions are by setting tasks for each team, but the teams must choose a champion from their team to take part in each task. No team member can compete more than once – so pick your champions carefully. Leaders can keep points for the teams as each task is completed. (see resources for a list of challenges and equipment needed)

Giveaway Grab: Lay out some trays on a table at one end of the room with several small bits of paper on them. Each team member has a straw and a team bowl at their end of the room to put the bits of paper. On 'GO!', everyone rushes to the trays and tries to collect the paper pieces using the straw. Keep going until all the paper has been collected, then count how much each team has collected. Then produce 'Poor Penny!', a leader with an empty bowl and a suitably sad face. Poor Penny has an empty bowl, encourage the teams to race to transfer their paper into Penny's bowl the fastest. First team to finish wins.

Memory verse: "Do not forget to do good and to share with others." Hebrews 13 v 16
Write out the verse on two or more sets of card, enough for each team, and hide them round the room. After telling each team what colour cards they need, tell them they should **only** find pieces that belong to another team and generously give them to the other teams.

Introduction: A sharing bread activity – be aware of any wheat and gluten intolerances or allergies in the group. Sit everyone in groups of four or five and tell them you are going to give them some bread to share – don't give any further instruction than that. Then give out the sliced bread on a plate, making sure that each group has one less slice than there are people in the group. After a few minutes, ask the groups how they shared their bread. Point out that you didn't say it had to be equal shares and ask if anyone thought to share according to who was the most hungry or in need. Jesus helps us with what we need and he taught his disciples to do the same. (Link to the story.)

Story: Based on Acts 4 v 32-37 and Acts 6 v 1-7. This 'fiction based on fact' can be found in the resources and could be acted by the children as you read.

Application: We all have things we are good at. Name some things you are good at doing. Just like in our game earlier and in the story, we need to choose the right person for the right job. We can also use the things we are good at to serve God, especially by sharing that talent to help others. The disciples who were chosen for the job were good at organising the sharing of food and good at sharing the Holy Spirit with the widow. There is a very good reason for sharing with others like Jesus did – can you recall the memory verse? (*repeat the verse together*) And it goes on to say, 'because these are the sacrifices that please God.'

Prayer: The idea of this prayer time is just to spend time with God. Make the Faith Catchers together and try them out. The children can also colour them. You might like to play some gentle worship music in the background while they are doing this.

Resources: Funsheet, game resource, story, Faith Catcher template

Song: 'You make Me Happy' – North Kent Community Church, 'It's For You' CD

Equipment needed

- two hula hoops
- pack of playing cards
- paper and two straws
- two cups and a bowl
- two books
- two pens and paper
- two round balloons (deflated)

Use the challenges below or come up with some of your own. You only need enough challenges for everyone on each team to have one go.

Challenges

1. Hula-hoop the longest without stopping
2. Tell the funniest joke
3. Build the highest house of cards in sixty seconds
4. Draw the best dog or cat
5. Fetch ten small pieces of paper from a bowl across the room using a straw.
No touching the paper!
6. Arm wrestle your opponent
7. Whistle a recognisable tune – the most easily recognisable and tuneful wins.
8. Walk round the room with a book balanced on the head – no hands allowed. Increase the pace progressively. The first to drop their book loses.
9. Blow up the largest balloon without it bursting. Any burst balloons lose.

(Try this in role, with an old Scottish widow accent – yes, the Scots could have been in Jerusalem!)

My name is Tabitha. I am a widow. That means my husband has died and now I live alone with no one to look after me. I can't go out to work and I have no money but I often get a visit from these lovely people who bring me food.

These people are called Christians. I love it when the Christians come to visit me. You see, they always bring food but what I love the most is that they always talk to me about this wonderful man they follow. His name was Jesus and they've told me how he healed people and taught them to love each other.

And also how, one sad day, the Romans came and took him away and killed him. But, would you believe, three days later, they say, he came alive again!!! Oh, I do love to hear these stories about Jesus even though I get a bit sad that I can't meet him, you know, now that he's gone back to heaven to be with his Father. His father is God, you know.

I'd been thinking about those Christians and their stories a lot lately. I suppose it's cos they hadn't been to see me in a few days. I was really missing their stories and, I must admit, I was getting pretty hungry too. Anyway, it got to the point last week, I think it was Tuesday..or was it ...Wednesday..., anyway I was so hungry I was starting to get sick so I had to do something. I took myself out and went to see the Jews in the neighbourhood, they know the Christians you see and I thought they could find out what had happened to them.

Well it turns out, those Christians had been so busy helping other folk that they had almost forgotten about us poor widows, forgotten that we were desperate for food and just hadn't the time to send anyone to our doors.

Well, I felt a bit put out when I heard that. Maybe I'm not as important as some other folk, I still have my pride – I'm not going to beg!

You'll never guess who turned up at my door the next day though. Only two of those lovely Christians! Two young men called Stephen and Philip. Apparently, when the Christians realised they had forgotten us because they had been too busy, well, they were so upset they stopped what they were doing right there and started praying to God – asking what they should do to change things.

Then they chose seven of their people, men who were full of the Holy Spirit and God's wisdom, and put them in charge of delivering food and helping the needy people, like the widows.

Stephen and Philip were two of those chosen people and they said they would be bringing me food from now on. But there's more to tell you. When I asked them about the lovely stories the other Christians had told me and how much I wished I could have met Jesus, those two Christians said the most amazing thing! They said I could have the Holy Spirit with me too...and that it would be just like meeting Jesus himself! I was so pleased, I'd have been doing cartwheels round my little house if I'd been forty years younger.

Stephen and Philip helped me to pray to God and we asked him to send the Holy Spirit to me. Oh, it was glorious! That's when I knew God had chosen the right men, the men who showed me how to meet Jesus.

Oh, that's the door...that'll be Stephen and Philip again now. I must go and let them in, so I'll speak to you all later. Ta ta.