



# DISCIPLES

Course Booklet

St James in the City  
& St Mary's, Wavertree

# DISCIPLES

*“For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that He has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.”*

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

Ephesians 2:10



INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the Disciples Course! The purpose of this course is to help us go deeper in our life with God and with each other as we work out what it means to follow Jesus from within our church communities of St James in the City and St Mary's Wavertree.

The course is split into four sessions each divided into 3 'Parts'. In each session we suggest watching each 'Part' of the video separately before discussing the associated questions in the notes below.

In this course you will see how God has been at work in our churches and what we believe He is calling us to today. You will see how YOU can be part of God's mission here and you will also discover some tools – LifeShapes – which will help to shape you in living for Jesus wherever you are, whether in church, at home, with friends, in the workplace, in the gym or anywhere else you find yourself day by day and week by week.

The irony of the Christian life is that it is only in surrender and service that we take hold of the true freedom and the life of complete fullness that Jesus offers so wonderfully to us. As the prayer, attributed to St Augustine, puts it *"O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and TO SERVE YOU IS PERFECT FREEDOM..."*

God's promise is that as we give ourselves to Him, He gives Himself to us! Our prayer is that, no matter how long you've been a Christian, you discover more of God than ever before and your life would be filled with increased joy, power and purpose from the Holy Spirit. So, come, expectant and prepared with all you've got and let's see what He has for us as we journey on together.

## INTRODUCTION

*“The cost of discipleship is indeed great. But the cost of non-discipleship is far greater. Non-discipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated through love, faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil. In short, it costs exactly that abundance of life Jesus said He came to bring (John 10:10).”*

**Dallas Willard *“The Spirit of the Disciplines”*  
(p.263)**

# 1

## PART 1 AN INITIAL THOUGHT

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### QUESTION

(to consider and chat through for a few minutes with your group):

*What were your first impressions of the church when you came in?*

We have quite a story to tell of how God has been at work in our churches over the years and how He has made us into what we are today with a clear vision to make disciples of Jesus Christ in our city.

So, in this first session we're going to look back at where we came from. We're going to meet some key people from our churches who stepped across the threshold of St James or St Mary's and, despite appearances, found themselves being caught up in something incredible God had for them.

SESSION 1  
HOW WE GOT HERE

# PART 2 SOME HISTORY

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- In 1775 St James opens for worship; in 1852 St Mary's opens for worship.
- In 1940 St Mary's is bombed and moves to the current building in 1952.
- In 1972 St James closes as a church and lies empty for nearly 40 years.
- In 2007 Bishop James Jones calls Rev Neil Short to talk about his vision for a resource church in the city centre that is aimed specifically at students and young people. A few months later in July 2007 Bryan and Alwyn Kernaghan hear God calling them on from Southport.
- In 2009 Jude Padfield meets Bishop James Jones in London and a clear call!

## SESSION 1 HOW WE GOT HERE

Not everyone's story is as dramatic as some of the ones we've heard here, nevertheless, we all have a story to tell and each of our stories is just as important as the ones we've heard. So we're going to have a few minutes to come back to our own journey and look at a couple of questions together:

**First, how did you get involved at St James or St Mary's?**

**And do you see God's leading as you've come here?**



# **PART 3 UP TO THE PRESENT DAY**

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So much has happened since the early days of St James being reopened. Jude and Hannah recount some of that journey on the video and the challenges along the way. But there is the joy of seeing God at work and growing His church as people have responded in faith. Just looking around at the many faces, past and present, who have become part of St James is such evidence of God's work among us. And the church continues to grow as together we centre our lives on Jesus and making Him known.

St Paul writes to the Corinthian Christians,  
*"You are a letter from Christ!"* (2 Corinthians 3:3).

In other words, the evidence for God is a life changed by Jesus. In that sense, we are all 'letters' from Christ, showing the reality of God we serve. That means that by simply showing up to services, events, group meetings and any other church based activity we add faith to others simply by being in the room (the discipleship practice of showing up)!

**SESSION 1  
HOW WE GOT HERE**

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE TOGETHER

Read Ephesians 1:3-7  
and 2:19-22 together  
and discuss the  
following:

**1**

What has God done  
for us and how has He  
done it? (ch.1)

**2**

What are we now in  
Christ? (ch.2:19)

**3**

What are we (and the  
whole church) built on?  
(ch2:20)

**4**

What have we  
become? (ch2:21, 22)

**5**

What do you think of  
all this? What  
difference does it  
make?

**6**

What are you most  
struck by in all you've  
heard today?

**1**

SESSION 1  
HOW WE GOT HERE

# NOTES PAGE







# **FOR THE COMING WEEK:**

Reflect on what you've heard; read through Ephesians chapters 1 and 2 (or all of it) as time allows, and make any notes on the notes page.

# **PART 1 AN INITIAL THOUGHT**

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The big idea of this session is to look at where we are now and the vision which we believe God has called us to in the present day.

Abi told her story of being connected to church and coming to faith (through Youth Alpha) then getting involved in church life. Consider the following questions together:

What do you think of Abi's story?

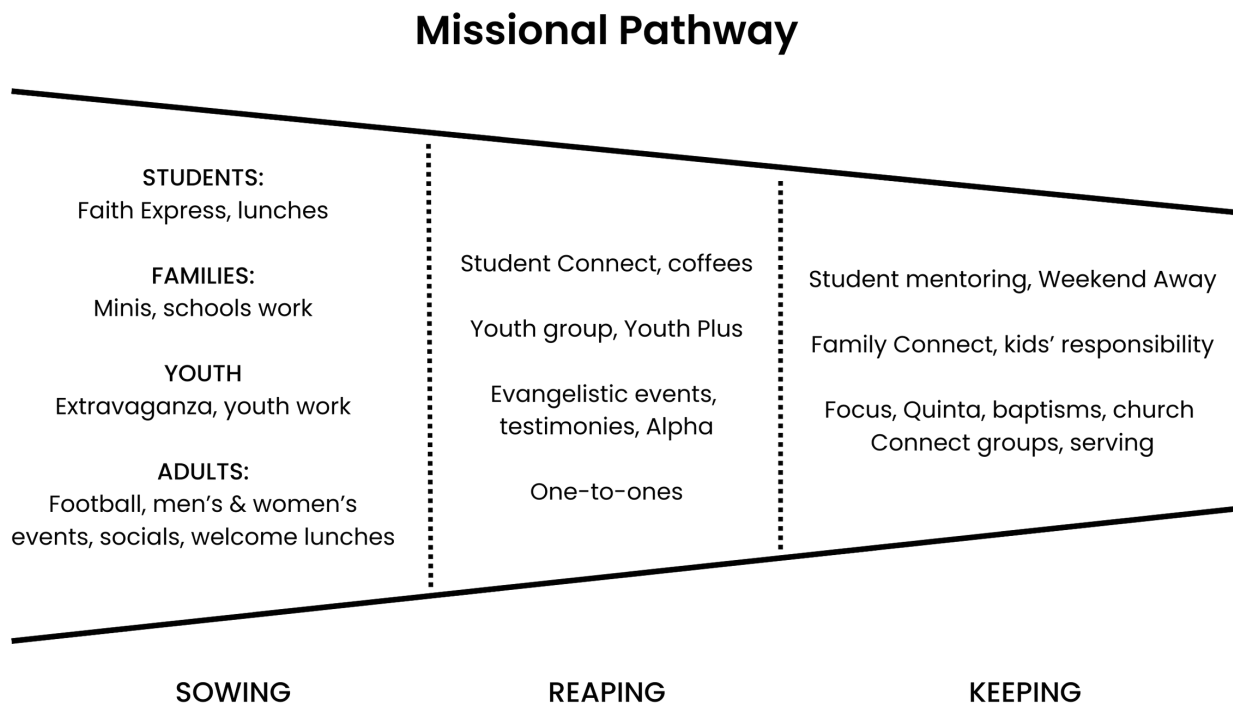
What do you think about being part of a church that wants to reach out to people of all ages, stages and backgrounds to share the good news of Jesus with them?

Could you see yourself being part of that?

**SESSION 2  
WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

## PART 2 THE HEART OF THE VISION

In the video, Jude and Hannah speak into God’s call on our churches today: for St James reaching and resourcing the next generation to be the church in our nation (as Abi’s story exemplifies) and for St Mary’s to continue as a vibrant, missional, fruitful parish church for the people of Wavertree. In all things helping people know Jesus, to find their place in our churches and to help others to find a personal relationship with Jesus.



## SESSION 2 WHERE ARE WE NOW?



We explore the Missional Pathway which involves – ‘sowing’, ‘reaping’ and ‘keeping’.

The diagram gives different examples of sowing, reaping and keeping activities which can provide stepping stones for people to come into church, hear the gospel, make Jesus their leader, join the church and find their place in friendship, service and mission. We see examples of this in the video.

### **But what about you?**

- What do you like about church at St Mary’s or St James?
- Which bit of the ‘Missional Pathway’ do you most easily relate to and why?
- Which bit do you least relate to and why?

Where could you get more involved on the Pathway?  
Maybe...

- Helping at a welcome lunch
- Serving at ‘sowing’ events
- Helping with Alpha
- Committing to Connect Group
- Looking out for others, praying for the church’s ministry and outreach, praying for your own friends / neighbours / colleagues / family, personal evangelism etc.

# 2

## PART 3 DRIVING IT HOME

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### QUESTION

There are many people of all ages all around us, like Abi, who you and I can help to find real faith in Jesus. It really can happen! So, here's our final questions as we finish today.

Who can you think of in your life who doesn't yet know Jesus?

How can our churches help you to help others discover faith in Jesus?

What are you most challenged by today?

What are your next steps?

So we are a church that wants to bring as many people as possible into a personal encounter and relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We do that by 'sowing' the gospel into peoples' lives through prayer, serving and relationships; then by 'reaping' the results of the gospel in their hearts by helping them discover and follow Jesus for themselves; and then 'keeping' them strong in the faith through community, connect groups, Sunday worship, ministry, giving and service – all of which help us stay strong and yet more people discover Jesus for themselves!

### SESSION 2 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

# **PART 3 DRIVING IT HOME**

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# **2**

**IN THE WEEK AHEAD:** We invite you to use the following questions to reflect on the parable of the sower from Mark chapter 4 verses 1 – 20 as we think about how to be people who sow God’s word and watch God grow His Kingdom in their lives today. Be ready to share thoughts with others in your group next week.

What does the parable of the sower tell us about God?

What does it tell us about people?

How should we respond?

How does this fit with what we’ve been thinking about in this session?

**SESSION 2  
WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

# NOTES PAGE





# 3

## PART 1 AN INITIAL THOUGHT

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During the next two sessions we will take a good look at five words we call our LifeShapes, i.e. things that shape us in living for Jesus. First, a quick PAUSE.

Abi told her story of being connected to church and coming to faith (through Youth Alpha) then getting involved in church life. Consider the following questions together:

Look at Matthew 22:36–40 and Matthew 28:19–20.

Once you've read them, share together what you see as Jesus' priorities for His disciples from these two passages.

SESSION 3  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO  
FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (1)

# 3

## PART 2 INTRODUCING OUR LIFESHAPES

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Our 'LifeShapes' help us grow in our love of God and people and to play our part in making new disciples of Jesus today. This is where fullness of life is truly found.

Our first Shape is **LOVE**. Jesus says, "Love God with all your heart", we want to live out our love for God.

Shape number two is seen in our life together. To baptise people, as Jesus commands us to in Matthew 28, is to bring them into fellowship with the Church. We want to **LIVE** together in close and strong community.

Next is our focus on spiritual growth. Jesus tells His Church to "teach [new disciples] to obey everything I have commanded you". So, using our third shape, we want to **GROW** in our knowledge of Jesus and His Word and in our relationship with Him so that we become more like Him with every passing day.

SESSION 3  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO  
FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (1)

## PART 2 INTRODUCING OUR LIFESHAPES

Jesus told us not just to love God but also to love our neighbour as ourselves – which will mean loving them in word and deed, seeking the welfare of others and offering practical help when needed. So our fourth Shape is about learning to **SERVE**.

And, last but by no means least, is our fifth Shape to **BUILD** – and so by sharing the Good News of Jesus and serving our communities we want to be disciples who make a difference and help build God's Kingdom.

### Our LifeShapes:



Can you say them all without looking?

With the two Bible passages in mind, share which LifeShape you relate to the most, the least, and why.

# PART 3 HITTING THE LIFESHAPES

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## LIVE

LIVE means preferring others and recognising we all need others to live out our Christian life; it will mean putting groups, Sunday and connect group gatherings and relationships with other Christians as high priority on the calendar; that's a challenge in a busy life and especially if you're more of an introvert!

### Ideas for putting LIVE into practice:

- Participating in Sunday worship gatherings
- Being an active member of a Connect Group
- Making spiritual friendships
- Getting alongside others
- Inviting others in / doing life with others / taking initiative in friendships
- Getting involved
- Helping out

### Bible verses:

Acts 2:42-47

# 3

## SESSION 3 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (1)

# 3

## PART 3 HITTING THE LIFESHAPES

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### GROW

GROW is building habits and disciplines to help us grow in our relationship with Jesus. For some this comes much more naturally, but for others of us it requires a lot of effort and we can end up feeling guilty for not praying or reading our Bibles like we feel we should. The key is to be honest with God and ourselves and simply tell God our struggles and to ask others for ideas and prayer. Try new things and just have a go! Something will work at some point and all the lights will go on!

### Ideas for putting GROW into practice:

- Read and listen to the Bible (study, Lectio, Psalms, BIOY)
- Develop patterns of worship (e.g. playlists at home)
- Pray (set prayer, prayer lists, soaking prayer, tongues, etc.)
- Read / listen to books and podcasts for learning and spiritual growth
- Silence, solitude and Sabbath
- Journal
- Give generously to all people and especially to God's work

### Bible verses:

Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:10;  
Colossians 3:16-17



## SESSION 3 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (1)



# NOTES PAGE

## LIVE

Write your own additional ideas and verses here:

## GROW

Write your own additional ideas and verses here:

On a scale of 1 – 5, if 1 is a struggle big time and 5 is your absolute hotspot – where would you place yourself from 1-5 when it comes to living out the shapes of LIVE and GROW?

Why is that?

If you're lower down what could you do to move up the scale? If you're high up, how could you use that in church and to help others to grow in it?

Our Shapes help us follow Jesus. And following Jesus is a real joy, there's nothing like it, but it's also a challenge and requires real effort. Jesus says:

*"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross daily and follow me."* Luke 9.23

We really do believe the effort is so worth it because – when we put the effort in – we will grow in all directions. We will grow in ourselves, as a church and in number as God works by His Spirit through us.

# 3

## SESSION 3 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (1)



# 4

## **PART 1 AN INITIAL THOUGHT**

How did you get on with the first two Shapes (LIVE & GROW)?

What difference would they make if you went all in to live them out on a daily basis?

**SESSION 4  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO  
FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (2)**

# PART 2 HITTING THE LIFESHAPES

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## SERVE

There is a sense in which every Christian is called to SERVE – whether in the workplace, among family and friends or at church. Jesus says, “The greatest among you will be your servant”, Matthew 23:11. He even set us an example to follow when He washed His disciples’ feet, John 13:15. St Paul describes himself as a ‘slave’ of Christ. So living out our faith and becoming more like Jesus involves serving in one way or another!

### Bible verses:

Mark 10:42-45; Romans 12:3, 11; Philippians 2:3-8; Colossians 3:23-25; 1 Peter 4:10-11

### Ideas for putting SERVE into practice:

- Offer small acts of service (hoover, wash up, put chairs out)
- Ask God where you can serve Him / others then look for the opportunities
- Complete your Shape profile (following on from this course)
- Get to church, group, work etc. early to see how you can help
- Identify a local community / social justice cause and offer help
- Meditate on Jesus in the gospels and seek to serve as He has served you
- Look to help others even / especially when it feels uncomfortable



## SESSION 4 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (2)

# PART 2 HITTING THE LIFESHAPES

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**Bible verses:**  
Matthew 28:19–20;  
2 Corinthians 4:1–7;  
5:20; Romans 1:16–17;  
1 Peter 3:15

## BUILD

We know that before He ascended to heaven, Jesus promised His disciples that He would be with them 'till the end of the age' as they fulfilled the Great Commission (Matthew 28:20). And that's a great thought as we move on to our BUILD shape.



### Ideas for putting BUILD into practice:

- Praying for 3 to 5 people who don't yet know Jesus (e.g. the L-HOP model)
- Help out with church events and Alpha to help others discover Jesus
- Learn to share your story; do evangelism training (e.g. Brighter Course)
- Look at resources like The Word 121, Discovery Bible app and ask a friend to explore something like this with you
- Use the Caleb questions to see who needs mercy, help and God's love
- Join social justice initiatives, e.g. Citizens Liverpool, Love Your Neighbour
- Go on a short term mission trip (and come back inspired!)
- Join in with a local mission movement

## SESSION 4

# 4

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (2)



# NOTES PAGE

## SERVE

Write your own additional ideas and verses here:

## BUILD

Write your own additional ideas and verses here:

# **PART 2 HITTING THE LIFESHAPES**

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**Bible verses:  
Matthew 18:20;  
Hebrews 10:19-25;  
1 John 4:19-20**

## **LOVE**

LOVE requires commitment – at times it will be a real challenge but it's the best thing we can do (as the Shorter Westminster Catechism says our chief end is to "Glorify God and enjoy Him forever"). This gives us energy for living for Jesus.

In a nutshell, LOVE is about loving God which will mean spending time in His presence each day; making corporate worship a priority; putting God first in all of life; committing to exploring and living out His purposes for your life.

**Write your own additional ideas and verses here:**

# **4**

**SESSION 4  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO  
FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (2)**

# PART 2 HITTING THE LIFESHAPES

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## LOVE

Ideas for putting LOVE into practice:

- Being prepared and involved in Sunday worship (taking notes, listening to others, prayer ministry, offering encouragement to others etc.)
- Pursuing God through prayer, Bible reading, Connect groups
- Getting to prayer meetings, Kingdom Come and other times of fellowship
- Going on retreat (where at all possible – even if a half day is all you can do)
- Understanding your dominant spiritual pathway
- Get a mentor, spiritual director or simply hang out with godly people!
- Attend Focus, Quinta, annual church retreats
- Grow into practices, reading and the sacraments

On a scale of 1 – 5 again, where would you place yourself when it comes to living out the shapes of SERVE, BUILD and LOVE and why?

# 4

If you're lower down what could you do to move up the scale? If you're high up, how could you use that in church and to help others to grow in it?

# **PART 3 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER**

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So that's where we've come from, where we are now and what we're about as a church seeking to live out God's purposes here right now. We are a growing family on mission together, building God's Kingdom. We will continue to keep these LifeShapes at the forefront our minds as we continue to live and work together as a church for God's glory in the world. So you'll see them on our notice boards, on our websites and social feeds. You'll frequently hear them talked about on Sundays, in connect groups, prayer gatherings and in other meetings.

There will be a Shape focus each month in the life of our churches. And you can use them in your own personal times with God or perhaps journal through them termly or take one a month to grow in your own discipleship and connection with the church. You'll find a summary page overleaf as a quick access guide which you can put in your Bible or note book or somewhere where you can see the LifeShapes each day.

## **4**

### **SESSION 4 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (1)**



# **PART 3 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER**

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Whether you've been around a while or you're new to St James or St Mary's, you are an important part of the church here. So in addition to these Disciples sessions you'll have the opportunity to move on to the SHAPE Course which will help you look at your passions, your gifts and how you can fit into God's plan for us as we journey on together.



# **4**

## **SESSION 4 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS HERE? (1)**

## LIVE



### HOW AM I LIVING IN COMMUNITY & GROWING IN MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS?

Sunday worship gatherings; member of a Connect group; making spiritual friendships; getting alongside others; doing life with others / taking initiative in friendships

## GROW



### HOW AM I GROWING AND BEING STRENGTHENED IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

Bible (study, Lectio, Psalms, BIOY etc.); worship (e.g. playlists); prayer (lists, soaking, tongues, daily offices etc.); books and podcasts; silence, solitude and Sabbath; giving generously

## SERVE



### HOW AM I GROWING IN SERVICE TO GOD AND OTHERS?

Small acts of service; ask God where I can serve Him / others; complete S-H-A-P-E profile; help others even when uncomfortable

## BUILD



### HOW AM I BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM IN WORD & DEED?

Praying for 3 to 5 people who don't yet know Jesus; help out with church events and Alpha; social justice initiatives, e.g. Citizens; go on a short term mission trip (and come back inspired!)

## LOVE



### HOW AM I EXPERIENCING & GOING DEEPER INTO GOD'S LOVE?

Sunday worship; prayer; Connect groups; Kingdom Come; retreat; reading; godly friendships; Focus; Quinta