



Discipleship **Ideas for the Iowa District West**

Introduction

The following “Discipleship Ideas” from the readings are not intended for any other purpose than to provide ideas of application from each reading that may be included in the taught and preached Word for this particular Sunday to help teach a life of discipleship. L.C.M.S. pastors are gifted at preaching Law and Gospel, but often lack in the matter of personal applications to the Word. This tool is for no other reason than to offer some seeds of thought to do that.

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS - SERIES C

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From C.P.H. About the Cover: The ability to hear is a wonderful blessing from God. We hear the singing of the birds, beautiful music, and our children’s first words. Throughout life, we learn and understand so much just from hearing. God tells us that our faith comes from hearing Christ’s words. As Jesus, at an early age, visited with the teachers in the temple, He, too, learned, “and all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding.”

First Reading; 1 Kings 3:4–15

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” ⁶And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but

have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. ¹⁴And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

¹⁵And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Solomon was a willing worshipper. He made huge sacrifices to God and seemed to make the matter of worship a constant matter in his life wherever he went. But he also remembered his people and led them to the realization that God is good to us as well (as evidenced in the feast he provided for all his servants). The model of Solomon is certainly for us as well. By the grace of God in our lives, we can and will want to willingly worship and offer to God our sacrifices of prayer and devotion. We will wish to serve those around us we care about. Even our willing financial sacrifice will come about as a result of God’s goodness to us

Epistle Reading Ephesians 1:3–14

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: This reading is filled with the richness of the Gospel in such full measure it seems that is all it contains. The final verses of the reading spell out perhaps the most specific application we can glean from this reading. “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth . . . and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit . . . to the praise of his glory.” By the grace of God given us in the Holy Spirit we are able to believe through the hearing of God’s Word to the praise of God’s glory. This is an on-going matter we can achieve out of love for God and His rich grace lavished on us all as a result of God’s grace at work in us.

Gospel Reading:**Luke 2:40–52**

⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Gospel Discipleship Notes: In this reading along with the two previous ones we see the activity and importance of sincere worship. Like King Solomon, the boy King Jesus was anxious to engage in worship and learning and growing in the wisdom and knowledge of God. Herein lies the application so clearly taught in each of the readings and such an appropriate reminder for the people of God so early in the year. Developing a desire to worship and offer our praise and thanksgiving to God and grow in the knowledge of His Word is such a wonderful thing we can do solely by God's grace at work within us.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read 1 Kings 3:4–15

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. ¹⁴And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

¹⁵And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

1. What was special about Gibeon that it had become a great high place?
2. Can you name of any other times that God revealed Himself or His will to people through dreams?
3. God blessed Solomon in giving more than he had requested. How is that like the way in which He treats us today?
4. After making such generous sacrifices at Gibeon, why return to Jerusalem to offer more?
5. How did Solomon witness his gratitude to God to others and how are we like him in this modern age?
6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Ephesians 1:3–14

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

7. What does it mean that God has “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”?
8. How are God’s people predestined and does that mean that some are not?
9. What is meant by the words, “he has blessed us in the Beloved”?
10. We are predestined not only to receive spiritual blessings, but also for a purpose. What is that purpose?
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Luke 2:40–52

⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the group they went a day’s journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” ⁴⁹And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰And they did

not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

12. Why was going to the Passover in Jerusalem something this holy family did each year?
13. We read that “all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers” meaning that there was obviously much interaction between Jesus and others (particularly elders of the people). What might this suggest to how adults should interact with the children of the Church?
14. According to many translations, Jesus responded to his earthly parents saying, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” The Greek literally says, “Did you not know that I must be about the things that are of my Father’s?” What does this mean and how can we harmonize these two ways of translating this response?
15. What was meant that Mary treasured up these things in her heart?
16. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline (Leader's Guide)

Read 1 Kings 3:4-15

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

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¹⁵And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

1. What was special about Gibeon that it had become a great high place?

This is where the tabernacle had first been kept when the people took over the promised land and therefore where the most sacrifices had been offered.

2. Can you name of any other times that God revealed Himself or His will to people through dreams?

This was a frequent way in which God is said to have made known His will. The angel of God spoke to Abraham in a dream (Genesis 15:12), Jacob (Genesis 28:12-15, Genesis 31:11), and Joseph (Genesis 37:5-10); the prophets during the Captivity (Daniel 2:19; Daniel 7:1), and Joseph spoke of Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:25) as sent from God showing that God not only revealed Himself or His will through His people, but also through those who did not know Him as God. There were others as well, these are but a few of the most remembered times in the Old Testament.

3. God blessed Solomon in giving more than he had requested. How is that like the way in which He treats us today?

God gives far more by His grace than we can either ask or imagine as we read in Ephesians 3:20-21. All of our lives are evidence of that truth. Specifically we can identify numerous ways in which this has been evidenced.

4. After making such generous sacrifices at Gibeon, why return to Jerusalem to offer more?

The Ark of the Covenant had been moved there along with the tabernacle, this was not the place where the temple would be built and Solomon was simply taking this opportunity to offer praise and thanks to God for what God had revealed to him. Solomon was one who desired to worship whenever and wherever he could.

5. How did Solomon witness his gratitude to God to others and how are we like him in this modern age?

He made a feast for his servants, including them in his celebration of God's goodness toward him. We do the same in our times of celebration when we host feasts in our homes. Hopefully we also make it known to others that this is as a result of God's goodness to us like Solomon did.

6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read: Ephesians 1:3-14

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7. What does it mean that God has “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”?

While all blessings come from God, we are generally inclined to think only of those blessings which are material. Spiritual blessings in the heavenly places are those blessings that personally come to us from God which confer His salvation, love, forgiveness, eternal life, spiritual knowledge and growth, peace that surpasses all understanding, etc.

8. How are God's people predestined and does that mean that some are not?

God's people are predestined "in love" to be "adopted" into His family of faith. All people are predestined for salvation, being adopted into God's family, the problem is that some stubbornly resist this spiritual blessing imparted to us by the Holy Spirit.

9. What is meant by the words, "he has blessed us in the Beloved"?

The "Beloved" is a reference to Jesus Christ. It is in Him we are blessed.

10. We are predestined not only to receive spiritual blessings, but also for a purpose. What is that purpose?

The purpose is so that "we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory" which means we are to live out our lives in honor to God through what we say, think and do. We aren't just saved eternally to do nothing about making God's love known to others. They too, need to know the spiritual blessings of God in their lives.

11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Luke 2:40-52

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⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

12. Why was going to the Passover in Jerusalem something this holy family did each year?

The Law of Moses required the attendance of all males at the three feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Exodus 23:17; Deuteronomy 16:16), but the followers of Hillel (a Jewish scholar of that day) held the Passover to be binding upon women as well as men. Therefore the yearly journey to Jerusalem may be understood as an indication of devout obedience. This was something fulfilled in Christ, but also modeled by His earthly parents.

13. We read that “all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers” meaning that there was obviously much interaction between Jesus and others (particularly elders of the people). What might this suggest to how adults should interact with the children of the Church?

Answers will vary.

14. According to many translations, Jesus responded to his earthly parents saying, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” The Greek literally says, “Did you not know that I must be about the things that are of my Father’s?” What does this mean and how can we harmonize these two ways of translating this response?

The things of God are always centered in the place where God comes to His people and transfers His grace to them. As Lutheran Christians we know this to be where the Word and the Sacraments are present to bring God’s grace to people. We come to the house of worship or place of worship to be about the things that are of God where He transfers to us His grace and favor. The same was true for the child Jesus.

15. What was meant that Mary treasured up these things in her heart?

Mary didn’t understand what this was all about at the time, but being able to save the comments, the words, the whole experience in her heart was to be able to recall them all and make sense of them by God’s grace at a later time. This is true treasure.

16. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

As the child grew up both hearing and doing God's Word and will, so also we find ourselves growing in wisdom and knowledge of God's mercy. We are gifted by God to be about the things of the Heavenly Father in our Church, our homes, and in all aspects of our lives. It is to this we are predestined as the children of God. As Solomon asked for wisdom and discernment and yet received far more from God, so also do we. As modern disciples of Christ may our hearts and minds be filled with the things of the Father and the joy of serving Him in our lives.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Heavenly Father, Solomon asked for wisdom and discernment and the young boy Jesus grew in wisdom and understanding. As the adopted children of God, grant us such wisdom and understanding as well, that we might know Your will, receive Your gifts with grateful hearts and serve You willingly and joyfully as we grow in the riches of Your grace. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**