Small Group Study For
Go Make Disciples: Building a Culture of Conversion and Discipleship for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

LEADER GUIDE
Special High School Classroom Edition
Go Make Disciples--Leaders Guide
High School Classroom Edition

Dig In (5 minutes)

Say: Who would like to share about the longest trip they have been on?

[Call on 2-3 students to share about their trips, then transition into the next section. Don’t spend too much time here and let them get away telling a lot of stories.]

Plant Seeds (5 minutes)

Say: Life is a journey, and it is one we are all on. Like Archbishop said, “We are all pilgrims on a journey, a Camino, to heaven...it’s a path marked with hills and valleys, over smooth and rocky terrain.”

Pray: We are going to begin with prayer:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord Jesus, we pray that you would help our hearts to be open to the power of these words, and give us the grace of your Holy Spirit to respond generously to all that you are asking of us through our shepherd. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sink Roots (20 min)

Say: Let’s close our eyes and focus our attention as I read several selected statements from Archbishop Coakley’s letter:

- “I call you disciples and go make disciples! This is why we are here! This is our mission.” -pg. 6
- “Missionary discipleship is the fruit of good soil. If the goal throughout our archdiocese is to make more disciples, then we must address these kinds of obstacles, and do all we can to prepare good soil in our hearts.” -pg. 15
- “Till the soil of your heart, be generous in your response to Christ. Say ‘yes’ to him and embrace the call to holiness. Be a disciples and accept his challenge to go and make more disciples!” -pg. 21

The theme of the whole Pastoral Letter is this: Be disciples yourselves and go make disciples of others.
How many of you have ever planted something? Most of us can at least remember planting a bean seed when we were in elementary school. Even if you’ve never planted anything, we all understand that you need good soil if you want to grow something. Jesus uses this analogy in Scripture. The powerful lesson for us is that if we want to grow in our spiritual life we need good soil. As the Archbishop says, “…we are invited to constantly cooperate with grace to expand our receptivity to God’s Word in our hearts. Indeed, the primary work of a spiritual life is to cooperate with God’s grace and cultivate the good soil in our hearts to rid ourselves of those things that compete, distract, and hinder our receptivity to God’s life-giving Word. The more good soil in our hearts, the greater our capacity to bear fruit for the Kingdom. Bearing fruit is the evidence of authentic discipleship.” -pg. 11

We are going to begin with reading about Jesus’ teaching on good soil. Turn to the table in your participant guide. In pairs, you need to read the Parable of the Good Soil in Matthew’s Gospel and answer the questions in the table. You have about 10 minutes to do this.

[Pair the students off with someone next to them and have them read Matthew 13: 1-9; 18-23 and fill in the together. You may need to explain for the students what each column is asking for.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Soil</th>
<th>What happens to the seed?</th>
<th>What is the meaning?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard Soil</td>
<td>Lack of understanding; unreceptive to faith</td>
<td>The Word never sinks in; the Enemy discourages you before you allow it to take root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Soil</td>
<td>No depth of heart; seed can’t sink roots</td>
<td>Trial and persecution come and we allow that to close ourselves off from the Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorny Soil</td>
<td>The seed takes root, but grows up alongside thorns and weeds, which choke growth</td>
<td>The cares of the world and delight in riches choke off the Word from our lives and kill the seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Soil</td>
<td>The seed sinks in a take root; the plant grows</td>
<td>The Word take root in our hearts and the plant is able to bear fruit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[After 10 minutes, have them share their answers to the chart with the whole group.]

Discussion Questions:

[Invite them to reflect on the discussion question at home in their own prayer time. Then, move on to Live It.]

What type of soil is in my life now? How is it affecting my relationship with Christ?
**Live It: (10 minutes)**

**Enemies to Growth:**

**Say:** If the aim is to get more good soil in our heart, then it makes sense to see anything that prevents us from doing anything that is an enemy to growth. Archbishop in the Pastoral Letter talks about our main enemies.

He says, “Continued growth as a disciple calls for an understanding of the enemies and dangers we will encounter along the way, so we can protect ourselves against them. The Parable of the Sower captures the effects of these enemies as Jesus talks about the rocky soil, and the soil filled with thorns. This soil limits fruitfulness and can prevent it altogether. Missionary discipleship is the fruit of good soil. If the goal throughout our archdiocese is to make more disciples, then we must address these kinds of obstacles, and do all we can to prepare good soil in our hearts.” -pg. 15

Let’s talk about these enemies from our own experience.

*Explain the three enemies that we face and the obstacles those enemies present in our lives. Then, as a class, come up with aids that overcome these obstacles. These can be things that God provides or habits and virtues we can foster in our lives. Below are just some suggestions of aids that overcome the obstacles of discipleship.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enemy</th>
<th>Obstacles</th>
<th>Aids to Overcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The World</td>
<td>Busyness and distractions</td>
<td>- Quiet, silent prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Scripture reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pray the Rosary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibilities: family, school, job, sports, clubs, etc.</td>
<td>- Praying with your family or friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Taking Sundays off from work or sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Go to youth group/Bible Study/etc. to grow in holy relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noise: TV, music, social media, etc.</td>
<td>- Choosing to not listen to music when in the car/the store/in line/walking around/etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Only checking social media a few times a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Turning social media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| My Own Weaknesses | Too much value on our own comfort and ease | - Offer your place in line to someone behind you who only has a couple of items  
- Park in the farthest parking space from the door  
- Get up 10 minutes earlier and read the daily readings  
- Do homework at the kitchen table instead of your bed |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Neglecting prayer and skipping Mass | Pray with another person;  
Create a place in your room to remind you to pray  
Put an app on your phone that reminds you to pray | - Abstaining from meat on all Fridays, not just during Lent |
| Temptation: food, enterianment, sex, etc. | | |
| The Devil | Makes sin look appealing and desirable | - Write a list of all the reasons you shouldn’t commit a sin and what the sin does to hurt us |
| | Looks for weak places in us and tempts us there | - When you feel tempted, stay a Our Father, Hail Mary, or Come, Holy Spirit and as God and Mary to help you |
| | Convinces us that sin is “not that big of a deal” | - Pray the Stations of the Cross (even if it’s not Lent) and meditation on Christ’s death for your sins |

**Reflection Questions:**

*Again, invite them to reflect on these questions at home during their personal prayer time.*

1. How have I experienced these enemies in my life?
2. Is there a particular place in my life there I seem to be more vulnerable? What weak place is the Devil tempting me? How can I overcome that?
Say: We all have places where we are more vulnerable. Satan likes to find those and attack us where we are weakest. We need to know what obstacles are in our way so that we can fight temptation when we are facing it. We must cultivate good soil where the Word of God can grow, rather than hard or rocky soil that allows Satan to win.

Take It To Prayer: (5 minutes)

Say: One of the times the Parable of the Sower appears in the Mass reading schedule, it is couples with Isaiah 55 as the Old Testament Reading. We are going to close our session by reading this passage together and meditating on it.

Read: [Read Isaiah 55: 10-13 or have a student read it for you]

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

“Yet just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
And do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
Giving seed to the one who sows
and bread to the one who eats,
So shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me empty,
but shall do what pleases me,
achieving the end for which I sent it.
Yes, in joy you shall go forth,
in peace you shall be brought home;
Mountains and hills shall break out in song before you,
all trees of the field shall clap their hands.
In place of the thornbush, the cypress shall grow,
instead of nettles, the myrtle.
This shall be to the LORD’s renown,
as an everlasting sign that shall not fail.”

The Word of the Lord.
R./ Thanks be to God
Say: Take a moment to meditation on this passage and this question:

This message from Isaiah gives us great hope. God’s Word, which we can also think of as the “seed of faith,” never goes forth and returns empty or void. What am I being called to change in my life so that the Word can bear fruit in me?

[After a moment of reflection, continue on]

Say: It is good to reflect on this parable and what kind of soil is in us, but that is not all we are asked to do. Archbishop makes it clear in his letter that as disciples we are called to go make disciples of others. The plants that grow from our rich soil are called to bear fruit, and as the Archbishop says, “Bearing fruit is evidence of authentic discipleship” (pg. 11). How are we, practically, called to bear fruit in this world? In your participant guide there is a list of things you can do to bear fruit, and I encourage each one of you to pick one activity as a follow up to today’s reflection.

1. Serve in some way either alone, with your family, or friends.
2. Help another family out who needs it.
3. Join a Bible study or Discipleship group.
4. Get involved at your parish in some ministry.

[Lead the students in an Our Father to close.]

Notes:

- In order to save time, you may choose to do the Good Soil chart as a whole group. You can have a student read the parable aloud and then, as a class, fill in the chart.
- To extend the lesson for more time, you can give them time to reflect on the reflection questions in class. You could have them write, share with a partner, share with the whole class, or a combination of all those things.
- Another way to extend it is to read the article from Aletia on How the Parable of the Sower Can Change Your Life ([https://bit.ly/2Sz3I4V](https://bit.ly/2Sz3I4V)) and answer the following questions in writing, as pairs, or as a whole group as time allows.
  - How does reading the Parable of the Sower challenge you?
  - What are signs that the Word of God has taken root and is growing inside a person?
  - How is the Word of God alive and active in the Church? In you?
  - What practical things can I do to better prepare the soil of my heart to allow God to grow in me and transform me?