I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25-26
Overview

What do you mean by Intentional Disciple?

Few Christians would argue the premise that we are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. What “being a disciple” means and what that looks like in our lives, is a great deal more confusing. At St. Dominic’s, we invite you to engage the concept of discipleship head-on. Maybe you’re already a disciple. If so, hopefully you will discover how to be more intentional about your discipleship. Maybe you’re not yet a disciple. If so, hopefully you will enter into a deeper understanding of what it means to be a disciple and become more hungry to respond to Jesus’ call.

What is asked of me?

First, pick up a booklet at St. Dominic’s each month and follow along. If you can, attend one of the Explore (everyone is welcome) sessions offered each month. If you want to go deeper, sign up for a Small Christian Community. Small community will meet twice a month to discuss. We hope to be able to offer committed small communities and drop-in small communities as we get a better understanding of people’s interested. Please see the back cover for specific dates.

When did the Intentional Disciples initiative start?

St. Dominic’s kicked off the Intentional Disciples initiative in September 2013. We are gradually rolling it out to the whole parish. We hope to be able to connect people whenever they learn about the initiative or are ready to get involved.

What if I’m not sure how much of this I’m ready to do?

Pick up a booklet, and try it out. Pray about it.

I’m interested, but I just don’t have the time.

We understand that this will not fit everyone’s interest or schedule. We would like to ask you to pray for this initiative in the parish.

Jesus, let us hear your call anew.
Bless us with the courage to respond.
Clear away all barriers. Make us your disciples.
Each month we'll pick several scripture passages around an aspect or theme of discipleship. We'll spend the month exploring that theme, going deeper and challenging ourselves. September and October will be months we'll roll this out to the parish. We'll be forming small communities as we go. We plan to make this a yearlong initiative. Here's the planned format for each month:

**Week 1 - Explore**
Break open the scripture and explore discipleship. Our goal here is not just to understand how discipleship functioned when Jesus walked the Earth, we want to understand what discipleship means in our lives, today.

You can explore the scripture on your own through this book, or you can attend one of the presentations offered (see the upcoming schedule on the back cover).

**Week 2 - Share**
Consider joining a small community to discuss the meaning of discipleship to you. There is something powerful about gathering with others to explore our relationship with Jesus.

If you can’t join a small community, you can take time each day to pray the scripture and reflect on your own journey.

**Week 3 - Act**
This week we'll challenged ourselves to take some practical step exploring discipleship in our daily lives. We'll do this on our own, so if you're part of a small community, there will not be a meeting this week.

**Week 4 - Share**
Gather again in your small community or reflect on your own.
Intentional Disciples Live In Christ

To kick off this initiative, we asked:

Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? (Yes, No, I Don’t Know)
Was this question easy or hard to answer?
Is this an important question?
What would you need to be able to answer this question?

This month:

Starter

I now understand discipleship to be...

What do I believe Jesus offers his disciples?

What does this mean to me for becoming or not becoming an Intentional Disciple?
Week 1 - Explore

I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25-26

Part of being Intentional Disciples is listening to what Jesus has planned for us. Do we trust him? Do we want what he offers us? If so, what does this mean for us today and for the remainder of our earthly lives? We live in a world where most people don’t want to think about death, and we spend our lives living in fear of dying. As we heard last month, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love” (1 John 4:18). In fact, last month’s topic, Love, is the best lead into this month. If we want to understand what Jesus has in store for us, we have to remember that “God is Love” and Jesus is the fullest expression of God’s love for us.

If we can view everything that Jesus says to us, his disciples, in that light, then his plan for us is Love itself. Can we believe him? Can we trust that he will deliver? And, does it make a difference now?

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

John 3:16
When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days... When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world." [Jesus] said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?" ... Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Read prayerfully: What does Jesus have in store for us? What does this mean for the life of a disciple?
I Am Going To Prepare a Place For You

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life.  

Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.  

For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to his Son the possession of life in himself.  

And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man.  

Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation.

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me.  

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?  

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.  

Where (I) am going you know the way."  

Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?"  

Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.  

If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Read prayerfully: What does Jesus have in store for us? What does this mean for the life of a disciple?
Romans 6:3 Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. 5 For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. 7 For a dead person has been absolved from sin. 8 If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

Romans 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever possesses the Son has life; whoever does not possess the Son of God does not have life.

Read prayerfully: What does Jesus have in store for us? What does this mean for the life of a disciple?
When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Read prayerfully: What does Jesus have in store for us? What does this mean for the life of a disciple?
Key Insights

General

- God Is Love
- Jesus is God’s love incarnate
- Jesus invites into the life and love of the Trinity itself

Resurrection and Life

- This is not a resurrection, it is a resuscitation (i.e., Lazarus dies again)
- It does give us a foretaste, and gives Jesus an opportunity to talk about resurrection
- Notice that the story goes to the point of showing Jesus’ love for Lazarus
- Resurrection is only possible in an through the person of Jesus
- Resurrection “unbinds” us from the reign of death

I Am Going To Prepare a Place For You

- Eternal life is about hearing, believing, and even living (good deeds)
- Notice the explicit invitation into the life of the Trinity
- Notice the intimacy of Jesus coming to take us to him

Nothing Can Separate Us From the Love of God

- New life begins with Baptism (i.e., not just after we die)
- Forgiveness of sins is part of new life
- How can we more consciously connect with Jesus’ death and resurrection?
- How can we “possess” Jesus?
- Consider praying Romans 8:38-39 throughout your day

Inherit The Kingdom

- This is a well known reading, but do we really take it seriously?
- We need to love the world like Jesus loved the world
- Especially those most vulnerable
- Seeing them is seeing Jesus
- We don’t reach out to them to grasp eternal life. We reach out because we love like we have been loved.
Luke 12:13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." 14 He replied to him, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?" 15 Then he said to the crowd, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions." 16 Then he told them a parable. "There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. 17 He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' 18 And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods 19 and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!" 20 But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' 21 Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."

22 He said to (his) disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. 24 Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than birds! 25 Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your lifespan? 26 If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest? 27 Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. 28 If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? 29 As for you, do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not worry anymore. 30 All the nations of the world seek for these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides.

Luke 23:42 Then [The Good Theif] said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."
If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?  

No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."  

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.  

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.  

The Father and I are one.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life—  

for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us—  

what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

For God did not destine us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with him.
Recap & Prepare for Week 2

- Reread the scripture for this week.
  - Underline phrases that capture the essence of discipleship
  - Pick a phrase, one each morning
  - Write it on a slip of paper
  - Find seven times during the day to think about it and pray it

- Reflection questions:

  What does Jesus have in store for his disciples?

  Do I trust Jesus?

  Do I want what he offers?

  How do I begin to live this reality now?
Week 2 - Share

Individual Option
- Find 20-30 minutes where you won’t be interrupted.
- (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (Lectio Divina) in the group exercise below.
- (10-20 minutes) Spend time reflecting on the questions outlined above.

Advice For Participating In Small Christian Communities
- The facilitator’s role is to guide the flow of the meeting. They are not in the group to be experts. Help the facilitators by following their lead.
- During the discussion period, there will be multiple questions or topic for conversation. It is best to take them one at a time (i.e., let everyone share about one before moving to the next).
- Don’t attempt to give the “right answer.” Just share your experience, insights, and perspective.
- Please stay on topic (the questions asked).
- Pay attention to time. Keep your answers on the shorter side. You can always add more later.
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak (i.e., give others a chance to speak before sharing a second time).
- It’s ok to not share if you don’t feel comfortable, but challenge yourself to share occasionally.
- Give your attention to the person speaking. Please don’t start side conversations.
- Avoid asking follow-up questions. Let people share what they want to share. It is always good to affirm others.
- Avoid answering other people’s questions (i.e., taking on the role of expert).
How To Pray The Scripture Using Lectio Divina

● Goal:
  ○ Engage one of the scriptures at a deeper level
  ○ Allow the Spirit to teach our hearts
  ○ Provide fruit to lead into the discussion and sharing

● Steps (Should take 10-15 minutes):
  ● Lectio (Reading, 2-5 minutes)
    ○ A participant reads the scripture passage
    ○ 30-60 seconds of silence
    ○ A participant reads the scripture passage
    ○ As the scripture is being read, the participants are invited to find a word, phrase, image, or idea that resonates with them. We’ll call this the focus.
      ○ Example: Imagine reading the Our Father text from Matthew 6. People might focus on: "Thy Kingdom Come," "Lead Us," "Our," the idea of fatherhood, an image of God’s Kingdom, Do I forgive others? Etc.
  ● Meditatio (Meditate, 5-10 minutes)
    ○ Stay with the focus from above.
    ○ There are different ways to do this: Why does it resonate? What does it mean in my life today? Repeat it as a mantra. Imagine it. How is this connected to discipleship?
  ● Oratio (Pray, 1-2 minutes)
    ○ Whatever comes up in meditation, form into a silent prayer offered to God.
  ● Contemplatio (Contemplate, 1-2 minutes)
    ○ After speaking a prayer to God, sit and listen or rest in God’s love.
  ● This leads into discussion and sharing.
    ○ Start with insights from the prayer.
    ○ Transition to sharing about discipleship.

● Tips
  ○ There is no “right way,” do what works for you
  ○ Embrace the silence
  ○ Let God find you
Small Christian Community Process - First Meeting
(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)

- Welcome & Check In (5/10 minutes)

- Review Format (5/5 minutes)
  - Review the participant’s advice (page 14)
  - Prayer will be about 15 minutes
  - Review the prayer format: Lectio Divina (page 15)
  - Discussion will follow based on the prayer and the questions (page 13).

- Prayer (10/15 minutes)
  - Transition Passage: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)
  - Lectio Divina: John 11:17-44 (page 6)

- Discussion (30/45 minutes)
  - Begin with insights from the prayer experience
  - Discussing the reflection questions (page 13)

- Action/Request (5/10 minutes)
  - The practical exercise is listed on the next page
  - Participants can share thoughts and plans
  - Review date of the next group session
  - Participants can request prayers from the group
If you knew you only had six months to live, make a list of:

What things am I most grateful for?

What relationships need attention? (e.g., Who needs to know that I love them? What relationships need reconciliation?)

Actions (pick one):

1. If you are afraid that you have done something to harm your relationship with someone or with God, seek healing through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If you don’t know how to begin, set up an appointment with a priest.

2. If you trust in what Jesus offers us, talk to your loved ones about your beliefs.

3. Reach out to the “least” around you. Take the time to see Jesus in them. Respond to their needs with Jesus’ love.
Week 4 - Share

Preparing
- Continue to use the scripture phrases you highlighted when you prepared for Week 2:
  - Pick a phrase, one each morning
  - Write it on a slip of paper
  - Find seven times during the day to think about it and pray it
- Week 3 exercise:
  - Plan to share something about your Week 3 exercise
  - If you were not able to do it, plan to share your barriers.

Individual Option
- Find 20-30 minutes where you won’t be interrupted.
- (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (Lectio Divina) in the group exercise below.
- (10-20 minutes) Journal about the experience of the exercise from Week 3.

Small Christian Community Process - Second Meeting
(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)

- Welcome & Check In (5/10 minutes)
- Review Format (5/5 minutes)
  - Review the participant’s advice (page 14)
  - Prayer will be about 15 minutes
  - Review the prayer format: Lectio Divina (page 15)
  - Discussion will follow based on the prayer the Act exercise (page 17)
- Prayer (10/15 minutes)
  - Transition Passage: “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.” (John 14:3)
  - Lectio Divina: Matthew 25:31-46 (page 9)
- Discussion (30/45 minutes)
  - Begin with insights from the prayer experience
  - Discussing insights from the Act exercise
- Action/Request (5/10 minutes)
  - Review date of the next Explore session
  - Participants can request prayers from the group
Extra: Go to sleep each night and wake up each morning saying, “Surprise me Lord.”
Three Ways To Get Involved With Intentional Disciples

1. Pick up a booklet, and explore on your own. -or-

2. Attend an “Explore” session to learn about this month’s scripture. Everyone is welcome. - or-

3. Check out a Small Christian Community to join with others to go deeper.

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Upcoming “Explore” Sessions

Sunday, November 3, 10:30-11:30 AM, School Basement
Monday, November 4, 7:30-9 PM, Aquinas Room
Young Adults’ Session*, Wed., Nov. 6, 7:30-9 PM, Parish Hall
Thursday, November 7, 12:00-1:30 PM, Aquinas Room

* The Young Adults group is a community of single and married Catholic adults in our 20s and 30s; to find out more, visit: http://stdominics.org/youngadults

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Connect With a Small Christian Community

Contact Scott Moyer at scott@stdominics.org

We would like to start a Wednesday evening women’s group.
If you’re interested, please contact Scott.

Small Christian Community November Meeting Dates

Sunday: November 10 & 24
YAG (Sunday): November 10 & 24

Monday: November 11 & 25
Thursday: November 14 & 28